



VEE LINE

NUMBER 40

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SHOULD VEE RULES BE INTERNATIONALIZED?

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Sorry about the December issue being so late. Excuses ranged from strikes, through Asian flu and the occurrence of the holidays, to bad weather. It took over a month to get it printed. It would have been held up, anyhow, until the booklet were received, so they could have been sent together, but it wasn't necessary.

Sorry about this one being so late, too. Excuses — well, I don't really have any, except that I just couldn't seem to get my heart into that 1300 business. It seemed necessary to get it across though, somehow — whether you're for it, or against it, or indifferent, you should know what it's all about, anyhow.

As I've done every year about this time, I'm going to predict again, "This is going to be the biggest year ever for Formula Vee!" Last year lived up to its predictions — inquiries answered were over 4,000, as compared with 1,300 for 1966. We didn't quite make 600 members by the end of the year, but we started 1968 with that many — number 600 was in the mail New Year's Day! We started 1967 with 338. Over 2,000 of the inquiries were in response to Whit Tharin's article in *Road and Track*, and they are still coming in! In fact previous articles in several magazines are still bringing in inquiries — to a greater extent now than they were several months ago. Reports from a number of areas where drivers' schools are in progress during the winter give new records for the number of Vee drivers enrolled, already — just wait till the racing really gets under way again!

Among the various aspects of Formula Vee discussed at Freeport was the difference between Vee drivers and other Formula drivers when going into a corner. You know — the Junior blasts past on the straight, starts braking much earlier than he has to, so the Vee driver passes him while still on the straight, really, due to late-braking him. Then the Vee driver takes the corner just about at the limit, while the Junior driver takes it "on rails," waiting till he's safely straightened out before pouring it on and disappearing into the sunset. When a really good Vee driver graduates to a good Formula car, and drives it like a Vee, look out! It can't be done? You mean the Vee suspension is actually better, or something, so that the car itself, rather than the driver, is responsible for that famous cornering ability? Come on!

Speaking of Vees and Juniors, the Junior drivers will have fewer occasions in the future to watch the Vees go by in the corners. Last year the SCCA directive against running Vees with the other Formulas was rather mildly worded, but this year it's repeated in stronger language: "... The supplementary regulations. . . shall provide for separate practice sessions and races for Formula Vee. Stewards of the meeting are authorized to waive this restriction in exceptional circumstances, but are cautioned to exercise extreme care in approving a waiver."

SHOULD WE GO 1300?

As was reported in *Competition Press*, Volkswagen of America would like very much to see one set of universal rules for Formula Vee, which was, of course, the original idea. Until Porsche upset the applecart, FVI was making pretty fair progress in that direction, but there's no point in belaboring that point at this point. The question is, "What now?"

Actually, there's not even that question. When (not "if") FIA adopts Formula Vee officially, international Formula Vee will be 1300cc. It's that simple. The real question then, is "What are we going to do?"

Don't panic! We don't *have* to do anything. We can sit tight, continue to race SCCA under our present rules, probably indefinitely, and let the rest of the world go FIA. The Grand Bahamas Grand Prix will probably still be available for those wishing to change their cars and race for real money and international fame, and *nothing* need be changed. However, let's explore the question of switching to the 1300, anyhow.

Right off the bat, that's an oversimplified statement of the problem. There's more involved than merely overhauling your engine, which you'll do sooner or later, anyhow. There are other differences, too, between the U.S. and European rules which would have to be compromised—

1. They allow only sedan ring-and-piston gears, while we allow transporter, too.

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WHAT 1300?

Despite the fact that Porsche introduced Formula Vee to Europe with the new 1300cc engine, that engine is *not* in use there today — not to any extent, anyhow. A 1300 engine, yes — but not *the* 1300 engine. Volkswagen said it couldn't be done (VeeLine #23); but evidently the word didn't get down to the troops, so they proceeded to scramble 1200 and 1300 parts, coming up with an engine superior to either of the standard versions. Volkswagen now furnishes a booklet with complete instructions for doing it! I've been promised a copy, but in the meantime. . .

The engine is basically the 1200. The 1300 crank (longer stroke), heads and manifold are used, but the 1200 pistons, rods (shorter than the 1300) crankcase, and cylinders are retained. Spacers are installed under the cylinders to compensate for the longer stroke, and the pistons are modified to clear the crank at the bottom of the stroke. I believe the manifold has to be shortened slightly, and there must be a few other incidental items, as the booklet has 30-some pages. The retail price of the necessary parts would be less than \$100 in this country. It is *not* legal in SCCA!

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

After five years of ever-increasing success, after having led the rest of the world to Formula Vee, how can we have suddenly come to the point where we may have to follow if we want to keep up? Well, it actually started more than two years ago.

In the Fall of 1965, although Formula Vee had been going great guns here, and was well established in Canada, South Africa, and Australia, Volkswagen officially still maintained a policy of "no race participation" and was, presumably, unaware of any connection with the Class. It was the Porsche organization, then, which contacted FVI, seeking information on not only the cars, but also on racing procedure, rules, and suggestions for promoting the Class in Europe. After some correspondence, they decided that in principle it had good possibilities, but (their extensive experience in racing showing through) it would have to be unleashed a bit to appeal to Europeans.

They bought 20 U.S. kits (Beach and Formcar), but they didn't go out searching for wrecked 1200 Beetles — they assembled them with the then-new 1966 VW1300 components. The cars were furnished to VW and

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SHOULD WE GO 1300?

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2. They prohibit combining the seat and gas tank in one unit, but several of our builders are doing this.
3. They allow collector pipes and megaphones on their exhaust systems.
4. They allow "first oversize" cylinders.
5. They allow reshaping of combustion chambers while we forbid it.
6. Their system of combustion chamber measurement is different, but apparently allows higher compression ratio.
7. They include the ball-joint 1300 front suspension.
8. Their generators serve merely as bearing housings for the fan shaft - they remove the armatures entirely.
9. They allow the 4 1/2" wide VW rims.

There are a few other rough spots, but that will give you an idea. No really drastic differences, but still points which would have to be ironed out. The Europeans at Freeport appreciated our position of being first on the scene, and were actually somewhat embarrassed by the present situation. It is certain, then, that some compromises could be expected from them in these areas of difference.

I was asked, at "that" meeting, if the FVI membership would switch to 1300cc. There was hardly time for a ballot, so I can only hope my answers were in line with your thinking -:

1. SCCA would actually have to make the decision, but it is very unlikely they would make such a drastic change without almost unanimous approval of Vee owners.

2. At Freeport, with the lure of thousands of dollars in prize money, free accommodations in luxury hotels and the best publicity such an event has ever had, fewer than 50 U.S. Vees were signed up. This would indicate that around 3% of the U.S. Vee owners were interested in international competition. The rest of them would have to have some other incentive to go to the trouble and expense of altering their cars to a new set of rules.

3. FVI rules were, in effect, *the* international rules, wherever Formula Vee existed, and with the exception of Europe, still are. On that basis alone, I predicted, there would be opposition to our acceptance of European rules as the international standard.

4. Except for the obvious - and dubious - advantage of having our cars go a little faster, what other argument could be presented for a change?

Some of the answers to this last question were that the 1300 engine is now the standard production engine at Volkswagen, even though it is not being sold here, so it won't be obsolete as soon as the 1200 will; we should meet Europe half-way, at least, in eliminating the embarrassing situation of two Formula Vees; with FV as an international FIA class, there would be many more opportunities for participation in international racing; presumably there would be more opportunities to cash in on professional type racing, at least for the better drivers; the entire Class would gain a great deal in prestige if it had International Championship status.

When I expressed doubt that even those arguments would convince an overwhelming majority of Vee owners that they should switch, the question was put, "All right - just what *would* it take, to get the U.S. to switch to the 1300?" Well, that was obviously a question I couldn't answer, so I'm passing it on - "What would it take to get *your* approval?"

Volkswagen is aware that such a switch would involve actual expense, in addition to sacrifice of national pride, established tradition, and other intangibles, and is willing to compensate for it to some extent, at least. For openers they asked, "Would a complete set of conversion parts for \$50.00 be acceptable?" I don't know. Would it? What's *your* price? Let's have some comments - lots of them! In addition to the engine itself, let's hear what you think about the other differences in the rules. What compromise would you insist on? What's *your* price for making a switch?

SO THERE!

Swiped from Harriet Gittings' "Vee Marque" section in FRA's "Open Wheels" (Harriet just happens to be the editor):

"Says James D. Patterson in reply to a question: 'There is nothing in the Formula Vee Rules that allows reshaping of the cylinder head combustion chamber. If it was legal the rules would say you could do it. The thing to keep in mind is: unless a modification is specifically allowed, absolutely no changes may be made to the standard VW components as derived from 1200 series Type 1 U.S. model Volkswagens.'"

Well, that's plain enough!

CORRECTION

In the November VeeLine it was reported that the builder of the Canadian "Huron" Vee was no longer in business. He reports that that statement is somewhat exaggerated - he is not only still building Vees, but is adding a GT-type fiberglass body for VW conversions. That's Downtown Porsche Service, 125 Huron St., Toronto 2B, Ontario.

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MORE CHEATING?

There is increasing concern regarding cheating in Formula Vee:

"While buying a new set of tires last week I was asked by their man why I was still using heavy wheels! It seems that the cult of "go-fasters" are acid-dipping, etc., to reduce unsprung weight..." ". . . Heads seem to be the area for rule stretching - cut off guides, re-worked combustion chambers. . . ." ". . . One supplier has tried to get us to buy a 1300cc kit, with the comment 'all the guys are using them.' "

So I'll say it again! If they're going too fast - protest 'em! For some of these alleged violations you wouldn't even have to put up a teardown deposit - 1300 heads have the manifolds entering at a slant. Fans with blades removed are easy to spot. Illegal wheels are pretty obvious (standard VW 1200 wheels weigh 13 lb. 3 oz. by the way). It's hard to keep illegal suspension a secret. If you are pretty sure there's something illegal inside, take a chance and put up the protest fee. It's the only way we're going to keep FV on the track.

There have been several suggestions for instigating voluntary teardowns by drawing lots between one of the first three finishers, which seems to work pretty well where it's practiced. It does have the drawback that it may not catch the suspect. Herman Adams of Rome, Ga., suggests a more foolproof approach.

" . . . I haven't done any Vee racing - YET - but I have done a lot of drag racing, and I could tell you something about cheating in engine work. The South is noted for its cheating.

"Sometimes ten or fifteen drivers would get together and form a pool and take a democratic vote on who we should protest. You could tell pretty well from the ones not wanting to join the pool who was cheating BAD. (The rest were just taking their chances.) A pool arrangement sets up the fact that *someone* is going to get protested, even though no one member may have the money to set it up. Also, this group deal is kind of like a firing squad - the individual can go away with a smaller guilt complex, and lose fewer friends."

Well, how about that for an approach? Under the present SCCA requirements you'd have to draw straws to see which one would sign the protest, too; but as long as everyone understood the procedure it would, as he says, be a much less personal thing. How about giving it a try?

And, again - especially if the protest hinges on one of the "gray" areas in the rules (like fan blades, for instance) appeal the decision if it's not found illegal by the local officials. After one appeal on such a subject, the Court of Appeals will announce a decision which will be binding throughout SCCA. It will be published in *Sports Car*, and should practically eliminate any further question on the subject. In case of doubt, give me a call - I might even go to the extent of financing the appeal fee.

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT FIA?

What *is* FIA? I'm not going to try to answer that — not completely, anyhow. I don't even know whether it's a "he" or a "they" or an "it." And judging from comments made at Freeport, I'm not entirely sure anyone else knows either. I think it's something like the "Establishment," or maybe the "Mafia."

The letters stand for "Federation Internationale de l'Automobile," and it is "the only international authority entitled to make and enforce rules for the organization and conduct of automobile competitions." The "Automobile Competition Committee for the United States" (ACCUS-FIA) is recognized by the FIA as the "National Club" of the U.S., and has sole authority for the control of international automobile competitions in the U.S. And SCCA is delegated the authority to "sanction FIA-listed events" by ACCUS. FIA pronouncements are issued in French, and any disputes or arguments or apparent discrepancies in their rules are due to improper translation. No one knows just how it's done, but FIA sets international racing rules, determines car classifications for international racing, "lists" international events and licenses international drivers. It *controls* international racing.

"So what?" is probably the reaction of 99% of U.S. Vee drivers. We race all over the U.S. and even into Canada, and who needs FIA? Well, Europe does. Where we cross state lines with only a white sign along the side of the road to remind us, they cross national boundaries. They may race in eight or ten nations during the season. Did you realize that West Germany, England, and Oregon are all about the same size? That Austria is about the size of South Carolina? That Holland, Belgium, and Massachusetts are about equal in area? That Denmark and Switzerland are smaller than West Virginia? Sweden is one of the largest countries — nearly as big as California, and France is almost as large as Texas! You can understand, then, that "international" is a word with real meaning in Europe, and that FIA can't be ignored! Their racing is *principally* international, and their relationship with FIA is somewhat like ours with SCCA.

An FIA license, then, was required at the "Grand Bahamas Grand Prix" because it was an "FIA-listed event." However, it is more than likely that it was actually listed as being for "Formula 2" cars, inasmuch as FIA has never recognized Formula Vee as a distinct, separate class. And that's the basis for another angle on "What Happened at Freeport?"

The question of FIA recognition of Formula Vee was probably the loudest item of discussion at "that" meeting. "Red" Crise claimed that he had obtained everything but the signatures for FIA approval of "his" 1500cc Formula Vee Class. The Europeans claimed that they'd made the same progress toward FIA adoption of the European Formula Vee Rules. "Red" was the equal of the Europeans in volume, but an impartial observer would have awarded the argument to the Euro-

peans on points — they cited more FIA "names" as being on their side. The final decision will be announced by FIA itself, of course, and probably in the near future.

Assuming that the European version gets the nod (and it's a safe assumption), how will that affect us? Well, actually not at all, necessarily. We'll still be able to run our Vees in SCCA Regional and National events, all the way to the National Championship. However, *international* Vee races, included in SCCA-sanctioned, FIA-listed events would be run under European rules. Presumably you could get an FIA license and run your SCCA Vee, but you'd never become the International Champion with 1200cc.

This is going to be a rather bitter pill to swallow — and believe it, we'll have it to swallow. We invented Formula Vee, nursed it through its formative years, sent it out into the world, where it justified our pride and predictions, and now it's about to turn on us. Having proved that Formula Vee *could* not only exist, but also thrive, without change — having spread that gospel throughout the world — it looks as if we'll be on the outside, looking in, just when Formula Vee really achieves official International Class status — unless we change.

NEXT YEAR'S GRAND PRIX

As was reported here last month, reaction to the 1500cc engine was quite varied at Freeport. Despite the fact that differences in lap times between the 1200 and 1500 classes were unspectacular (you'll find as much variation between cars in any Regional), some of the U.S. drivers, at least, were convinced that they were driving bombs! "Red" Crise's enthusiasm for his "new class" was boundless — in fact he gave it practically full credit for the undisputed success of the entire week, and was more convinced than ever that it would "save Formula Vee."

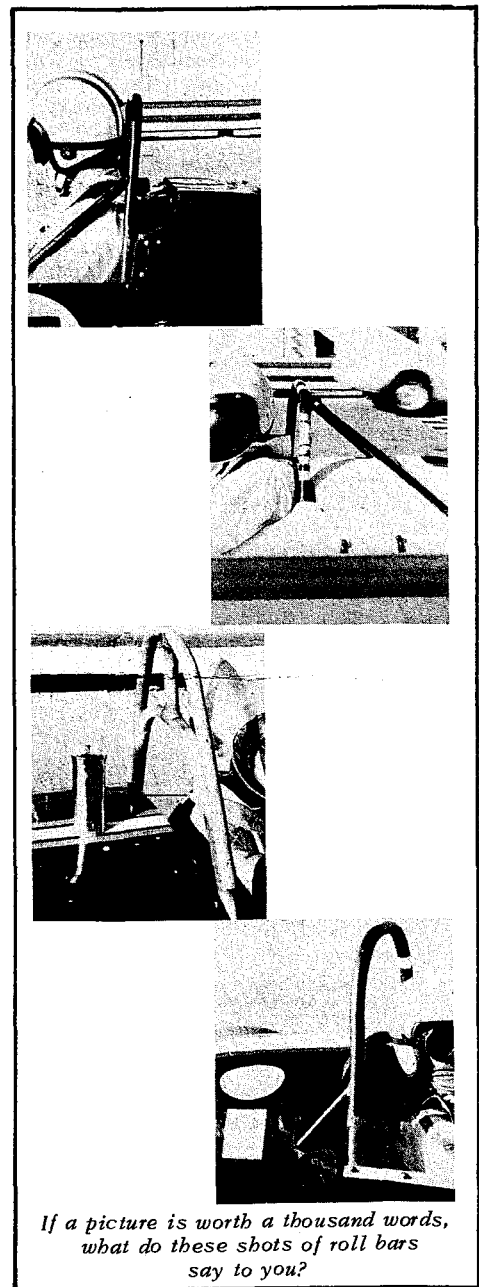
(After the "big" race, in which prizes had been posted for the first four 1200's, as well as the overall winners, he was bemoaning the fact that there was only one 1200 to pay off. He'd actually been watching nine of them, all through the race!)

The Europeans, however, were unimpressed. They insisted that their 1300's are a standoff for the 1500 — possibly a bit inferior on low-end acceleration, but definitely superior on top end speeds. The representatives of Formel V Europa went even further — they stated that Europe would boycott next year's Grand Prix if it were run again under special rules. They would conform to U.S. rules, they said (though they would, of course, prefer their own), but would not again build special engines and modify cars for just one race. After some discussion, it was suggested that perhaps *both* U.S. and European versions could be run, just as there were two this year, except that each class would conform in all respects to the rules established in its home territory.

This proposal met (almost) unanimous approval. However it left unanswered the problems of drivers wishing to enter *both* classes, 'as many of them did last December — there are other differences, in

addition to engine displacement between European and U.S. rules. The obvious conclusion was that there would have to be *some* deviations allowed, after all, at any international meet. However, it was agreed that such deviations should be only within the framework of existing rules — compromises in areas of *present* differences — rather than the introduction of any additional ones.

The final conclusion wasn't really a conclusion, but it was agreed that further discussion would be held, between European and U.S. representatives of Formula Vee and "Red" Crise, before the rules for next year's Grand Prix are announced. "Red" didn't commit himself to accept the results of such a meeting — "I'll listen, and I'll consider them; and if I like them, I'll accept them. But in the Bahamas, I set the rules!" Chances are, considering the alternative of a European boycott and possible loss of VW cooperation, he'll decide he likes them. Or it could be that the decision will be made by FIA.



If a picture is worth a thousand words, what do these shots of roll bars say to you?

HOW DID IT HAPPEN

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Porsche agencies throughout Europe, who "sponsored" drivers in special races arranged at strategic locations. With that kind of promotion, acceptance of Formula Vee in Europe was much more rapid and enthusiastic than it had ever been anywhere else.

Rules for the Class were adopted by ONS for 1966. I never saw a copy of the original ones, but they apparently were considered too liberal after the first year. The next year practices such as drilling "cheese holes" in the moving components — for lightness — were abolished and they were brought more into line with ours.

By then, Volkswagen had not only acknowledged parenthood, but was also bragging about it. The French Ministry of Youth and Sport hailed it as a training medium for future French driving champions and cooperated in establishing a racing series in Formula Vees for amateurs only. A number of Formula Vee Associations were formed, as well as an overall international organization, "Formel V Europa." (This, in itself, was somewhat of a miracle — you've heard of the "Common Market," haven't you? Would it surprise you to hear that France later pulled out?)

When VW (the parent company) did decide to get into racing, they got into it with both feet. They have sponsored a number of entire race series, both National and International, as well as providing substantial prizes (like new Volkswagens) for selected individual events. Their sales organization is actively engaged in promoting Formula Vee, even to the extent of acting as sales outlets for the Vee builders. They sponsored the various Vee associations — in fact the English distributor is the Formula Vee Association of Great Britain. The VW engineering department compiled an all-inclusive checking procedure for Vees (such as I've been promising here for a couple of years) and

have furnished complete kits of the appropriate gauges, mikes, dial indicators, etc., to each country. And furnish competent inspectors to do the checking!

With that kind of support and encouragement, it's not really surprising, then, that Formula Vee is well on the way to being even bigger in Europe than it is here.

NEW ERA?

A great deal has been written about the recent "Grand Bahamas Grand Prix for Formula Vee." It was a huge success! However, the most significant event of the entire week has so far received only scanty attention from the press. "Auto-week" gave it a few inches under the heading "VW of America Holds Meeting To Discuss One Set of Vee Rules."

The fact that European and U.S. representatives of Formula Vee were able to meet together and discuss their differences is of great significance, but the key words in that heading are "VW of America." Even less than two years ago the official Volkswagen line from Germany was "no participation in racing." Nevertheless, VWoA, since the summer of 1965, has been "assisting" Formula Vee in the U.S. Not directly — in defiance of company policy — but as far as they could within those limits. Its company publications have frequently "suggested" ways in which dealers might assist without overstepping the line, FVI has been supplied with shop manuals and other assistance, prize money has "appeared" at Nassau, several of the distributors have recently been posting prize money for U.S. races, etc.

This article, however, marks the first public acknowledgement by Volkswagen of any active participation in Formula Vee in this country. What does it portend? That's impossible to answer, but consider Volkswagen's present participation in European Formula Vee and draw your own conclusions. (The fact that Art Railton, VW Public Relations Vice President, arrived at Freport directly from Germany was no doubt pure coincidence.)

MORE MONEY

Formula Vee may yet become self-supporting for a few, at least. Another builder, "RaceCraft," announces an "assistance program" for drivers of that make — based on the purchase price of the car, kit, or components. For National Races, it is 10%, 5%, and 2½%, and for Regionals it is half that amount. RaceCraft is new to the Vee program, but has been involved with other classes for several years. They are about to introduce their own version of a Formula B-C car in the near future.

THOSE AUSSIES!

Formula Vee has gone over so well in Australia that it has been the inspiration for another similar (?) class. They are now drawing up rules and specifications for a "Vee Sports Racing" class. It is intended for "Aztec" type cars, with Formula Vee type rules to keep them in line. How about that? I'll keep you posted.

UNCLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Formcar, stripped to bare frame & rebuilt and painted. Completely race-ready with tow-bar and lights. Good tires. \$850. Gerald Day, 1414 Lincoln St., Monessen, Pa.

FOR SALE: '63 Formcar with outstanding record, Goodyears, towbar, ready to race. \$795. Trenton Brown, Route 2, Louisville, Tenn. 37777. Phone (615) 982-3062.

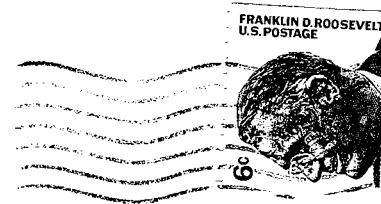
WANTED: Two or three other people in or around Greater Boston area to join as partners in purchase and racing of a Vee. George Nolfi, 383 Harvard St., #110, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Phone 876-2436.

FOR SALE: Bobsy, 1965 Factory Nassau car. Professionally maintained, fresh engine, never pranged. Two concourse firsts, good race record. \$1900 — let's talk. Carl Closs, 1462 Clubview Blvd. So., Worthington, Ohio 43085 (614) 885-3479.



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