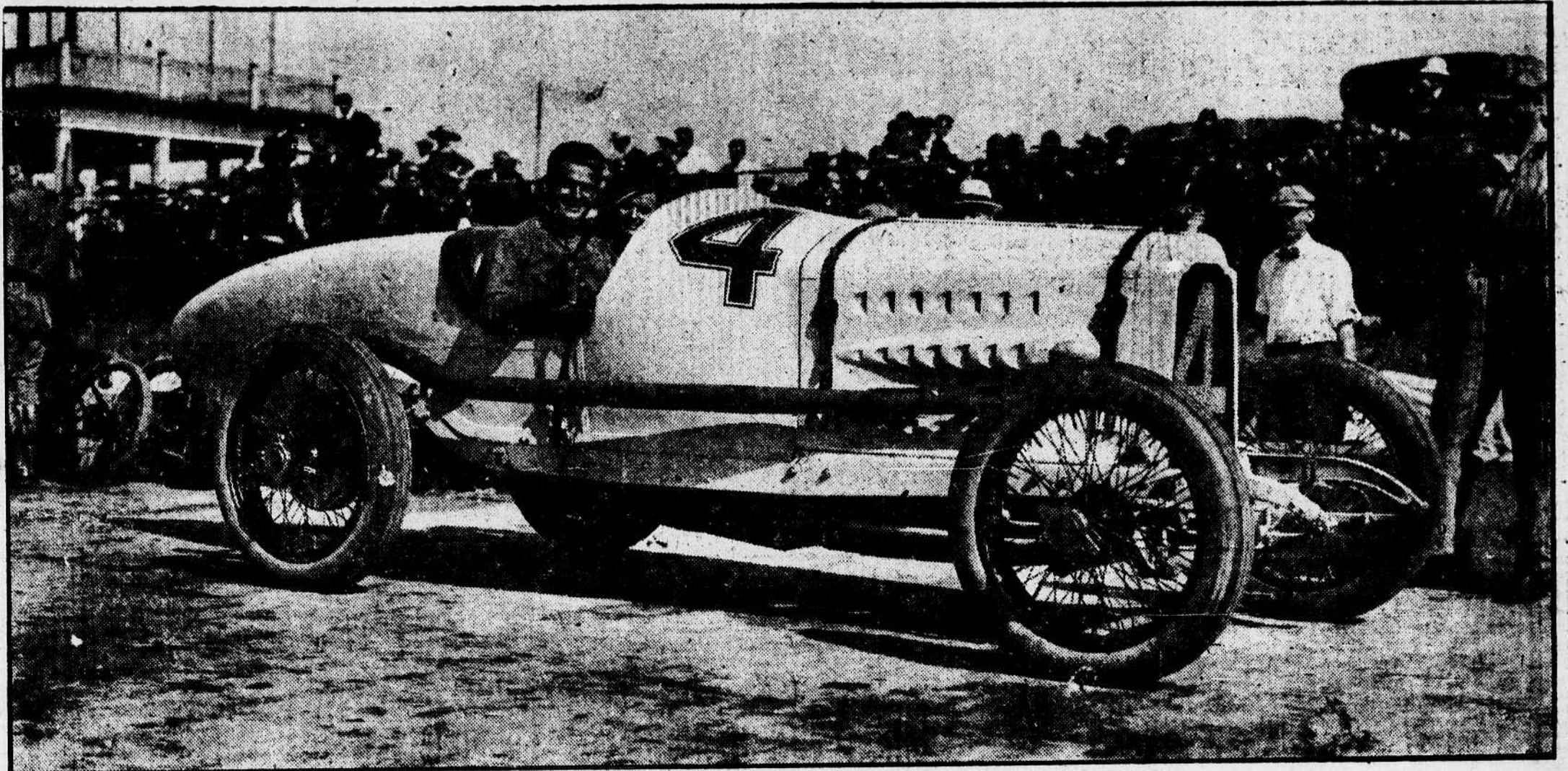


A Mile in Twenty-Four Seconds With De Palma



RALPH DE PALMA IN THE MACHINE WHICH BROKE ALL RECORDS AT DAYTONA, FLA.

The Celebrated Speed King Tells of His Sensations as He Flitted Along the Florida Sands to a New World Record of 150 Miles an Hour.

BY JACK HUGHES.

WHEN a new page is written into history it is as important to know about the man who made it as it is interesting to know how he made it; and where science, daring, sportsmanship and skill comprise the basic elements of the achievement, the task of perusal is readily transformed into a privilege flavored with virtue and delight. An all-American car and a daring automobile driver have played the leading role in the latest chapter of world thrills.

For nearly eight years "Wild" Bob Burman's name bore the flying start records of the measured mile and kilometer distances for automobile speeding, and the figures of 25:40 seconds for the mile and 15:88 for the kilometer had stood up under the challenge of every contender since that redoubtable driver crowned himself with those victories on Daytona Beach in a "Blitzen" Benz on April 23, 1911. Racing cars have been smashed and their wreckage removed from the course, lives have been chanced and lost and thousands upon thousands of dollars have gone in fruitless efforts to lower these marks, the energies

finally culminating in a cessation of all great sporting events with the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Germany some two years ago.

Ralph De Palma, the intrepid Italian driver, had participated in the long series of exhibitions, but staking, as he did, fortune, life and reputation, neither himself nor any of his colleagues had attained the goal when he donned the uniform of Uncle Sam and marched off for war. Meanwhile "Wild" Bob, who was idolized in the world of automobile sports in his day, had met with a racing accident out west and left the world behind. But he went to his grave with the satisfaction of knowing in his last hours that his colors still were flying and his name lived as the undefeated king of his time.

When Ralph De Palma was mustered out of the service he started immediately upon a new line of mechanical ideas, and within a few months he had crowned himself with these victories over the same course where Burman established his:

One mile, flying start... 24.92 seconds
 Kilometer, flying start... 15.86 seconds

Thus the news was flashed through the world of a new speed king having ascended the last round of the ladder of all speed on Daytona beach on February 12, 1919.

The intensifying speed at which De Palma was traveling when he made these records approximated 150 miles an hour. This meant that for every second consumed while covering that mile the driver was actually going over 216.65 feet of ground.

At the end of the hair-raising dashes De Palma was overcome by emotion as his friends jammed around his car to offer congratulations. The



RALPH DE PALMA.
 Holder of world's record.

bulletlike racer had heaved to the sand, owing to its marvelously contoured system of design, and there never was anything like the jumping and skipping experienced by Burman while making his record in the Blitzen Benz.

Tribute to his car was the first thing that De Palma uttered, then to the memory of the famous rival who set up the record he was taking down with every fleeting second, and to the veteran associates with whom he had grown to fame in many a hard-fought race on every kind of course

in America. These were uppermost in Ralph De Palma's mind during and immediately after the record-breaking run on the sands of Daytona Beach.

"I went to the starting point with all confidence," he said, "because in previous tests I was satisfied that the airplane motored car would do at least 150 miles an hour. The beach was soft, but still fair enough for fast traveling; the timing device was working like a charm; Fred Wagner was wielding the flag—this was the hour for a new world's record.

In my mind at the moment was an account of Bob Burman's experience in the Blitzen Benz, when he set the world's record that had lasted for eight years and lived after poor Bob had gone himself. He was quoted as saying that he bumped and leaped and jumped and battered his way along the sands in a really hair-raising experience.

"Well, to go immediately to the finish, I rode as if in a limousine on a boulevard. Here and there, for a fraction of a second, would be an interval of side swaying that probably looked terrible to the spectators, but it wasn't so bad from the inside of the car. In front of me and around me was the high, tenuous, humming sound of the beautiful working twelve cylinders. Behind me was the machine-gun roar of the exhaust. Down the glittering beach the yellowing course leaped toward the front wheels and disappeared alongside me with something of motion-picture unreality in its disappearance.

"The ease with which the car rode, the unflinching performance of its mighty power plant, reminded me of the development in automotive engineering that has come within the

Bob Burman's Record, in a German Car, Had Stood for Eight Years. Auto Racing for the Sheer Love of It—A Case of Nerves.

eight years since Burman rode these sands to fame. The more recent years, with their stress of war, have quickened that development. Two of the products of it are better distribution of weight, insuring a more even riding quality and higher speed. These were in my favor. Another great factor working for me was the perfection of streamline design brought about by the airplane engineering experience of the war. Head resistance was cut to the vanishing point, and the great retarding factor, vacuum drag at the back of the car, was reduced to the minimum.

"Burman didn't live and race in the day of these perfections, and as I reflected on his wonderful mark of 141.73 miles per hour, and thought of the time it was made, April 23, 1911, the wonder of his achievement grew on me. It was really a most remarkable triumph. I gave a lot of my thought immediately before the race and during it, too, to 'Wild Bob' Burman. He and I were intimate friends, often pitted against each other on the speedways, and I remember him with affection and esteem. But I gave some thought, too, to the fact that Bob made the record in a product that was 'made in Germany,' the Blitzen

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