

ROAD OF BROKEN DREAMS

This year's Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 had as much tragedy, intrigue, and reversal of fortune as it did triumph.

STORY BY >> PETER BROCK

With SCORE celebrating its historic 40th anniversary of the Baja 1000, every team in the sport was relishing this year's 1,296-mile run to Cabo San Lucas with as much enthusiasm as dread. By terminating the race at the very southern tip of this racers' secret paradise, the logistics, practice and strategies required to persevere and win against the elements and terrain would total more than all the other seasons' events combined. That almost incomprehensible distance, the second longest in SCORE history, would require something more than a tough 24-hour racer's mentality, even for the fastest teams, because the reality of the situation made it closer to twice that combination of body-pounding and mind-numbing hours the field and its hundreds of support crews would be working.

Over the last few years, the Baja "Mil" has morphed into something larger than the Off-Road Nation's annual year-end bash. It's become an international gathering of wheeled competition that's now shared by top racers of every kind. Drivers who simply can't make time in their normal schedules to race off-road in the middle of the year make special efforts to ensure they have something on the starting line for the 1000. It's the one event of the year where all who strap into a bucket seat for the pure fun of racing at the limit don't want to miss. It's the place where, against all rational thinking, all sorts of new equipment debuts, but what the Hell...it's Baja!

Juan Flores and Jim Mihal finished 8th in class driving their Porter/Chevy with a time of 33 hours and 43 minutes.

