



John Morton's Datsun traverses the outside of turn nine as Horst Kwech's Alfa comes up on the inside. The pair staged an even better battle than the record 11,700 fans anticipated. Kwech took the flag first, but was disqualified the next day for a rules infraction, and Morton was given the win.

(Tom Montgomery photo)

2.5 CHALLENGE GRID

No. 46-John Morton Datsun 510 1:17.69, 88.042mph	No. 3-Horst Kwech Alfa Romeo GTV 1:18.20, 87.465mph
35-Mike Downs Datsun 510 1:19.31, 86.244	93-Lee Midgley Alfa Romeo GTA 1:19.81, 85.704
34-Nels Miller BMW 2002 1:19.94, 85.564	69-Don Pike BMW 2002 1:20.06, 85.436
97-Vic Provenzano Alfa Romeo GTA 1:20.52, 84.948	4-Harry Theodoracopoulos Alfa Romeo GTV 1:20.71, 84.748
83-Hans Zierich BMW 2002 1:20.90, 84.549	45-Bob Tucknott BMW 2002 1:20.91, 84.538
33-Carl Fredricks BMW 2002 1:21.02, 84.424	47-Ole Anderson Volvo 142 1:22.71, 82.639
2-Bert Everett Alfa Romeo GTV 1:22.79, 82.619	99-Loren St. Lawrence BMW 2002 1:22.95, 82.459
39-David Burns Alfa Romeo GTA 1:23.30, 82.113	95-Charles Thieroit Alfa Romeo GTA 1:23.43, 81.988
98-Gary Blodgett Datsun 510 1:23.90, 81.526	21-Gerry Gregory BMW 2002 1:23.91, 81.516
79-Richard Gordon Volvo 122S 1:24.36, 81.081	18-Phil Boering Datsun 510 1:24.82, 80.641
1-Heinz Eckhardt Toyota Corolla 1:26.00, 79.535	17-P.J. Daly Datsun 1:26.47, 79.103
96-Bob Christiansen Saab 99 1:27.89, 77.825	77-Pete Mills Opel Kadett 1:32.29, 74.114
12-Terry Enk BMW 2002 1:37.77, 69.960	22-Sal Fox Austin Cooper 5 No time

More on:

Kwech's Alfa Loses On Disqualification

(Continued from page 1)

had reached its midnight hour. However, in post race tech inspection, the fuel cell container on Kwech's Alfa was found to be too large and, after long deliberation and an endless series of checks and rechecks that continued throughout the morning today, Kwech was disqualified and Morton given the victory.

No series in SCCA history has been more hotly contested than this year's small sedan TransAm, and with the series championship hanging on the outcome of the race here it was a go-for-broke situation for both teams. A Datsun victory would tie the series in points, but by virtue of more first place finishes, Datsun would carry the Championship. An Alfa victory meant undisputed claim to the title.

So the stage was set when qualifying opened Friday. Morton and teammate Mike Downs circulated the 1.9-mile Laguna Seca course at 1:17.69 and 1:19.31 (88.042, 86.244mph) respectively, with Kwech sandwiched in between at 1:18.20, 87.468mph.

BACK-UP POWER

Lee Midgley gave Alfa some back-up power by setting fourth fastest time at 1:19.81, 85.704mph, followed by the BMWs of Nels Miller and Don Pike to

round out the first three rows of the grid.

There was little help for Datsun in the way of supporting independents with the next Japanese product well down the list in 17th starting spot where Gary Blodgett had put his 510. Kwech's teammates Harry Theodoracopoulos and Bert Everett were well off the pace in eighth and 13th on the grid.

FUELING A FACTOR

Since yesterday morning's qualifying session was run on a damp track, Friday's times held.

The question facing both teams was fuel consumption. And although fuel was indeed the final decider in the series, it was in a different way than expected.

Prior to the race, BRE's Pete Brock revealed that although Downs could probably go the 110 miles without a stop, Morton, with a somewhat heavier foot, would probably have to make a pit stop.

Kwech was non-committal on the refueling subject prior to the race, but in fact in his case it was automatically decided. The Alfa's fuel filler is on the right side of the car, the track side in the Laguna pits. SCCA rules prohibit fueling the car on the track side. Major modifications to the Alfa were needed to move the filler pipe, so team manager/owner Wetson had



Vic Provenzano, on his way to a second place finish in his Alfa (97), has his hands full with Lee Midgley's similar car as they negotiate turn nine and head down start/finish straight.

(Edwin Ingalls photo)

made his decision to run the distance without a stop before the cars left for Monterey.

Twenty-six cars answered the call to the grid, but at the green flag Kwech and Morton set out to make it a two-car race.

They blasted up the hill and through the gentle first turn side by side

(Continued on page 25)



Don Pike's BMW leads the Alfa of David Burns. Pike was running well up until carburetion problems dropped him off the pace.

(Autoweek photo)



Loren St. Lawrence's BMW and Charlie Thieroit's Alfa (95) closely trail Don Pike's BMW 2002 through one of Laguna Seca's many turns.

Datsun Takes Series Title

(Continued from page 24)

side, but it was Kwech who dove first into turn two followed by Morton, Downs, Midgley and Pike.

At the end of the first circuit, Kwech still led Morton but Pike had planted his BMW firmly in front of Midgley who had also displaced Downs.

FIELD SPREAD OUT

By the third lap the field was already well spread out with Kwech, Morton and Pike pulling away from the second group that included Midgley, Downs, Miller and Vic Provenzano's Alfa.

On the same lap, Pike, who had been looking like a strong threat to the Datsun-Alfa duel, pitted his BMW with carburetor problems. He was able to rejoin the contest but the loss of time, coupled with another stop at mid-distance, relegated him to a seventh place finish.

Kwech and Morton were then left to their own devices, with Midgley pushing hard to retake the third slot that Downs had reacquired on the twisty back portion of the course.

However, on the ninth lap, the Datsun banner was handed to Morton to soldier on alone with as Downs' engine gave up the struggle.

MORTON PRESSES

On the 10th lap the order was Kwech; Morton; Midgley; Provenzano; Hans Ziereis, BMW, up from ninth on the grid; Miller; Bob Tucknott's BMW; Carl Fredrick's BMW; Harry T.; and the BMW of Loren St. Lawrence.



JOHN MORTON
... winner for Datsun

Up until this point Morton had been content to hang back one to three seconds behind Kwech, making no serious effort to catch or pass the flying Alfa, but on the 13th circuit he started to press.

"It takes the Datsun several laps to warm up to real relaxing speeds," the quiet Southern Californian revealed after the race. "I was going as hard as the car would go, but once it got warm I was able to press Horst."



Early in the race Lee Midgley, Alfa, leads the BRE team Datsun of Mike Downs as Nels Miller's BMW begins to pull up. Midgley went on to finish fifth, but both Downs and Miller were sidelined by mechanical problems.



John Morton's Datsun and Horst Kwech's Alfa staged one of the best races in Laguna Seca history as they fought to the wire for the 2.5 Challenge championship. (Edwin Ingalls photos)

The two leaders then started to pull out an unbelievable lead over the rest of the field which eventually gave them a full lap over all but Provenzano.

On the 19th lap, Kwech and Morton were 47 seconds ahead of Midgley who had Provenzano and Ziereis in tight formation right behind. On the next circuit, (Continued on page 26)

Tank Size Disqualifies Kwech Alfa

MONTEREY, Calif., Oct. 17 — More than 20 hours after the flag fell on the finish of the 2.5 Challenge race here yesterday, the winner was decided.

Horst Kwech, who took the checkered first, was disqualified for too large a gas tank in his Herb Wetson Racing Alfa Romeo and John Morton's BRE Datsun was declared the winner and series champion.

When Kwech's Alfa was inspected in the post-race impound area, SCCA Chief Technical Inspector John Timanus found the metal shell which covers the fuel bladder to be 2.75-inches too deep. Although the fuel cell was the required 15 gallon size, the oversized container allowed it to expand to hold more than the allowable 15 gallons.

Although Kwech apparently ran out of fuel as he took the flag, approximately three gallons of gas were removed from the bladder in the impound area. It was then refilled and held 16 gallons.

Although Timanus and TransAm Chief Steward Burdette Martin recommended to the stewards of the meet last night that Kwech be disqualified, the decision was put off until today.

"When it looked like Kwech was going to go the distance at the fast pace set by him and Morton, I decided to check the tank size immediately after the race," Timanus explained this evening.

"We knew the Wetson Alfa's wouldn't be able to take on any fuel. The filler pipes are on the right side of the cars, which would mean adding fuel on the track side of the car when it's in the pits,



As car owner Herb Wetson looks on (left) Horst Kwech makes a point with SCCA's John Timanus (hand on trunk lid) and Burdette Martin during post race inspection of the fuel capacity of the winning Alfa.

which is against SCCA rules," Timanus revealed.

He went on to say that this season the Alfas have never run longer than one hour, nine minutes under hard competition without refueling. Yesterday's race lasted 1:17.05, and the pace was blistering.

Fuel was added to Morton's Datsun late in the race. The remainder of the field was at least one lap down, so there was no question about those that didn't make a stop, although the tanks of the top five finishers were checked

in the impound area. All except Kwech's Alfa were legal size.

This morning, with the decision still pending, the gas pump at the track-side Union 76 station was checked and found to be accurate. The fuel cell, which had been locked up overnight, was put back in Kwech's car and held 17 gallons.

"The stewards wanted to be sure to give Alfa every benefit of the doubt," Timanus said, explaining the long delay in reaching a decision.

Based on their findings, the stewards disqualified Kwech.

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More on:

Morton's Datsun Survives Laguna Thriller

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Provenzano nipped past Midgley to take command of third.

At the same time third place was changing hands, Morton made the move the record Saturday crowd of 11,700 had been waiting for.

Charging out of the chicane before the Castrol bridge, Morton pulled alongside Kwech's Alfa. Kwech slammed the gate on the red, white and blue Datsun in no uncertain terms, however, and it was apparent the action was going to get hot.

Two laps later Morton managed to pull off his second attempt at passing. However, on the back side of the course and out of sight of the crowd on the front straight, the pair came together. Morton did a neat little 360 in the middle of the track. Kwech went motoring by into first place, the Alfa's crunched nose mute testimony to the heat of the battle.

ORDER NOT CHANGED

Morton's spin, however, dropped him only five seconds behind, so the complexion of the race was not changed, with Provenzano, Midgley and Zieris running that order through the next 10 laps. Zieris, however, pitted a few laps later with broken rear suspension, handing his fifth place to Fredricks.

On the 35th tour, Morton

outraked the heavier Alfa going into the super-tight left-hander before start/finish. The pair exchanged paint in the close-quarters duel, but Kwech's Alfa exerted its low-end superiority as they dragged up the front straight and maintained the lead.

From then until Morton was called in for gas he and Kwech staged a fender-bending battle wild enough to warm the heart of the most avid dirt track fan, exchanging the lead, as well as paint, on each lap.

On lap 47-11 from the end-BRE boss Pete Brock called Morton in for a slosh of fuel. "I pulled John in to split him away from Kwech as much as for the fuel," Brock explained later. "As hard as they were racing there was a good chance they would take each other out, and with no other Datsun around, that would have meant the title for Alfa. Besides, I felt sure Kwech couldn't go the distance.

Morton returned to the track 14 seconds behind Kwech. Now the question was whether Wetson's pre-planned gamble on Kwech going the distance without a stop would pay off.

Five laps from the end you could cut the tension with a knife as everyone waited for the sound of the Alfa's engine to end up with a gasless sputter. Morton had no



John Morton's BRE Datsun in pursuit of Horst Kwech's Herb Wetson Alfa. The Datsun's left-rear bumper shows evidence of an earlier encounter with the nose of Kwech's Alfa. (Autoweek photo)

chance of overtaking Kwech if the Alfa kept running.

It did keep running, but just barely.

Kwech took the checkered flag, slowed as he went up the hill into turn one and coasted to a stop after rolling through turn two.

Morton followed in second with Provenzano, Fredricks, Theodoracopulos and Midgley following in that order.

Midgley had smacked the guardrail in turn four a few laps earlier, letting Fredricks and Harry T. past.

GLIMMER OF HOPE

The gloom in the Datsun camp was soon replaced by a glimmer of hope when SCCA Chief Technical Inspector John Timanus found the Alfa's fuel tank too large when the top five cars were taken to the post-race impound area.

Although Timanus and TransAm Chief Steward Burdette Martin informed the stewards of the meeting that in their opinion, the car was illegal and should be disqualified, it wasn't until after noon today the official decision was rendered and Datsun was handed a slightly used championship crown.

SCCA 2.5 CHALLENGE TRANS-AM RACE, LAGUNA SECA RACEWAY, MONTEREY, CALIF., OCT. 16

FINISHERS: 1 - John Morton, BRE Datsun 510, 58 laps or 110.2 miles in

Final 1971 SCCA 2.5 Challenge

1-Datsun	1	9	9	2	9	9	4	9	9	61	60*
2-Alfa Romeo	9	6	6	6	9	6	6	9	6	6	72
3-BMW	6	2	6	2	2	1	3	4	4	25	25
4-Ford	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5-Austin Cooper	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	2

(Championship based on the best finish in three-quarters of events run, eight out of 10 races in 1971. *Datsun awarded championship for having the greater number of wits.)

1:15-65.68 for an average speed of 86.89mph, \$1500; 2 - Vic Provenzano, Castrol Alfa Romeo GTA, 57 laps, \$1000; 3 - Carl Fredricks, BMW 2002T1, 56, \$750; 4 - Harry Theodoracopulos, Wetson Alfa Romeo GTV, 55, \$500; 5 - Lee Midgley, Alfa Romeo GTA, 55, \$400; 6 - Bob Tucknott, BMW 2002, 55, \$300; 7 - Don Pike, BMW 2002, 55, \$250; 8 - Ole Anderson, Volvo 142, 55, \$200; 9 - Loren St. Lawrence, BMW 2002, 54, \$200; 10 - David Burns, Alfa Romeo GTA, 54, \$150; 11 - Gary Blodgett, Datsun, 510, 51, \$150; 12 - Pete Mills, Opel 1900, 48, \$100; 13 - Phil Boersig, Datsun 510, 44, \$100; DNF: 14 - Charlie Thierot, Alfa Romeo GTA, 40, engine failure, \$75; 15 - Hans Zieris, BMW 2002, 35, rear

suspension, \$75; 16 - Heinz Eckhardt, Toyota Corolla, 31, broken carburetor linkage, \$50; 17 - Bill Fox, Austin Cooper S, 28, jammed gearbox, \$50; 18 - Bob Christiansen, Saab 96, 19, blown engine, \$50; 19 - Neils Miller, BMW 2002, 17, running at finish, \$50; 20 - Gerry Gregory, BMW 2002, 10, lost exhaust system, \$50; 21 - P.J. Daily, Datsun, 9, blown engine; 22 - Mike Downs, BRE Datsun 510, 8, engine failure; 23 - Bert Everett, Wetson Alfa Romeo GTV, 4, broken suspension; 24 - Richard Gordon, Volvo 122S, 3, ignition failure; 25 - Terry Enk, BMW 2002T1, 1, carburetion. DISQ: Horst Kwech, Wetson Alfa Romeo GTV, oversized fuel tank. FASTEST LAP: Horst Kwech, 1:17.05, 88.773mph.



Race queen Karna Small helps Horst Kwech celebrate in the winner's circle. The next day Kwech was disqualified and John Morton declared the winner. (Edwin Ingalls photo)



Horst Kwech's Alfa shows evidence of the tangle with John Morton's Datsun in the corkscrew at Laguna. Morton's spin here cost him a short-lived lead over the Alfa. (Del Perro photo)

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