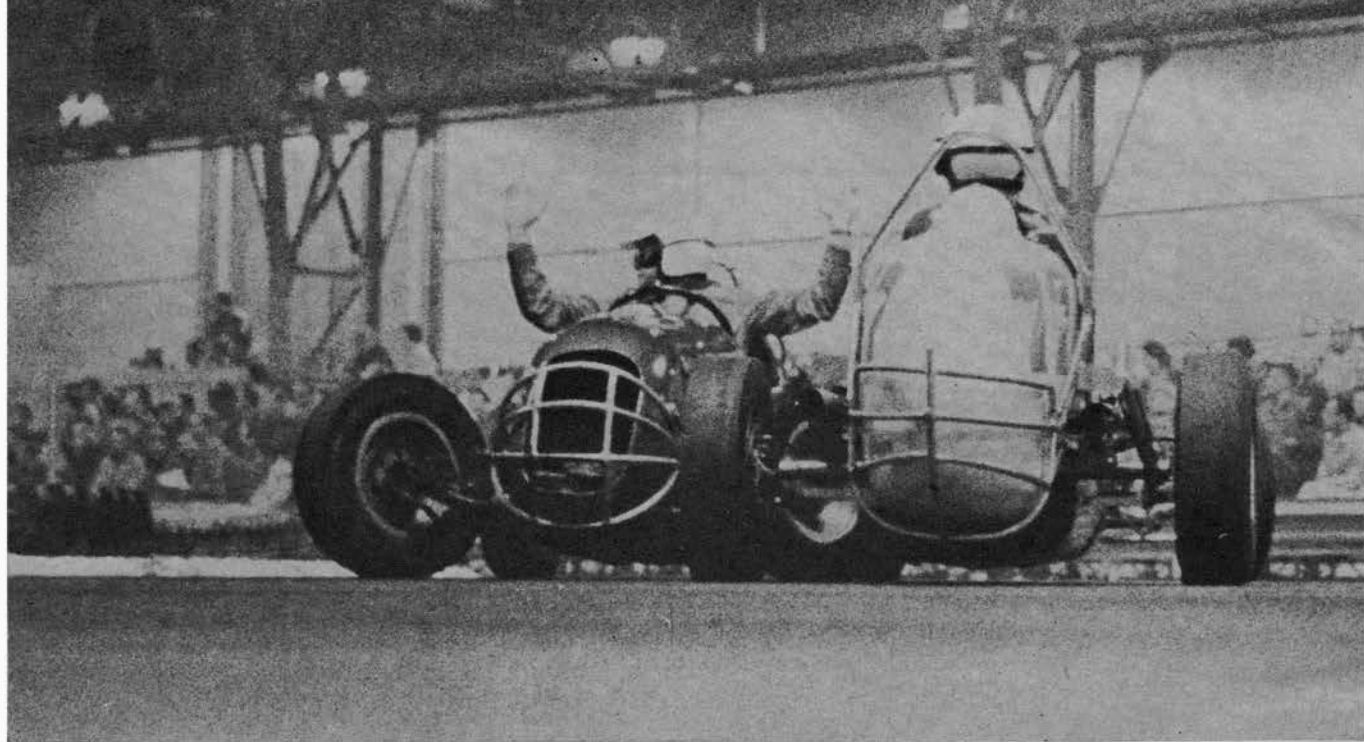


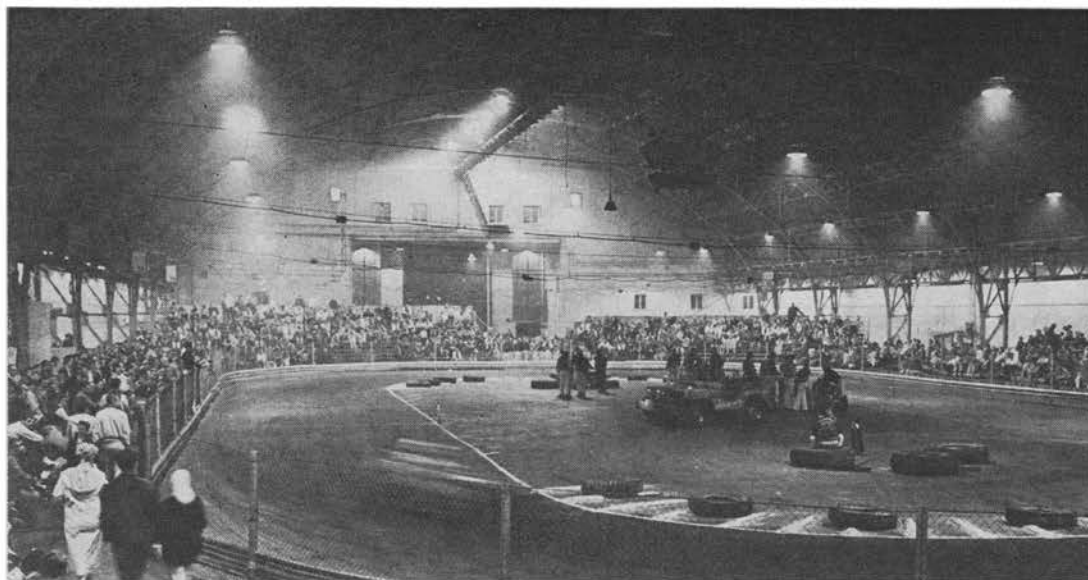
MIDGETS IN A TEACUP



by Bob Russo, Racing Editor

FOR THE PAST 13 YEARS at the Exposition Building in Oakland, Calif., while most race fans are waiting for the spring thaw, the mighty midgets have been putting on one of the most spectacular indoor shows in racing. Each Friday and Saturday night, during a six-week period beginning early in January, the wee cars delight northern Californians with their antics over a tiny 1/10-mile oval, under sanction of the Bay Cities Racing Association. Averaging approximately 35 mph (which is plenty fast for the course), midgets here are quite unlike anything else in racing. Spins are numerous, action is fast and furious, and serious injuries are practically nil. Mostly V-8's, with a few Offys and an occasional Drake sprinkled in, the cars and their drivers put the show practically in the laps of spectators, and they

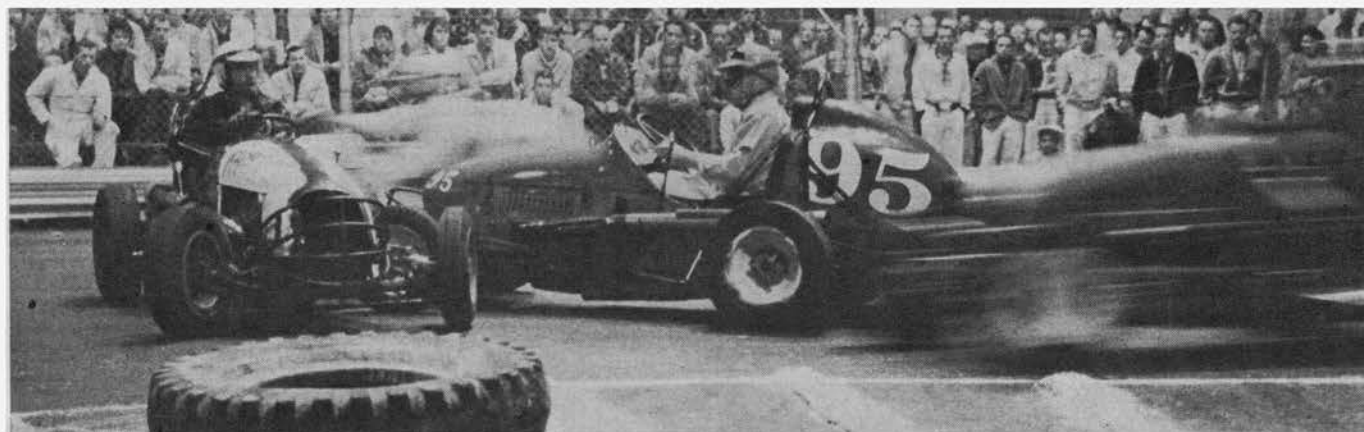
play to a packed house. The show consists of qualifying; four heat races of eight laps each and using six cars; a 15-lap semi-main event using 12 cars; Trophy Dash using the four fastest qualifiers; and a 30-lap feature using 12 cars. Without question, the most thrilling race of the evening is the semi, for it is here that the slowest qualifiers — drivers with slower cars and less experience — usually wind up. Only once in the 13-year history of the annual Oakland meet has a semi been run without a yellow flag. Many of today's top Indianapolis drivers got their start with the midgets indoors, and the newcomers coming up today will tell you that it is an excellent training ground. It requires quick thinking, lightning reflexes and an even temper. Veteran photographer Pete Biro recorded the action.



The "Teacup" is a 1/10-mile oval track inside Oakland's Exposition Building, where a crowd of 3000 spectators can be (and usually is) accommodated. Truck tires keep drivers from going into the infield.

Most popular chauffeur is veteran Mike McGreevy, known fondly as "Dyna-Mike." He won '61 opener.

A spinning car and a ram from the side are frequent. Here driver Don Radbruch comes to a sudden halt after ramming spinning competitor. Cars streaking by on both sides is typical of the drivers' fast reflexes.



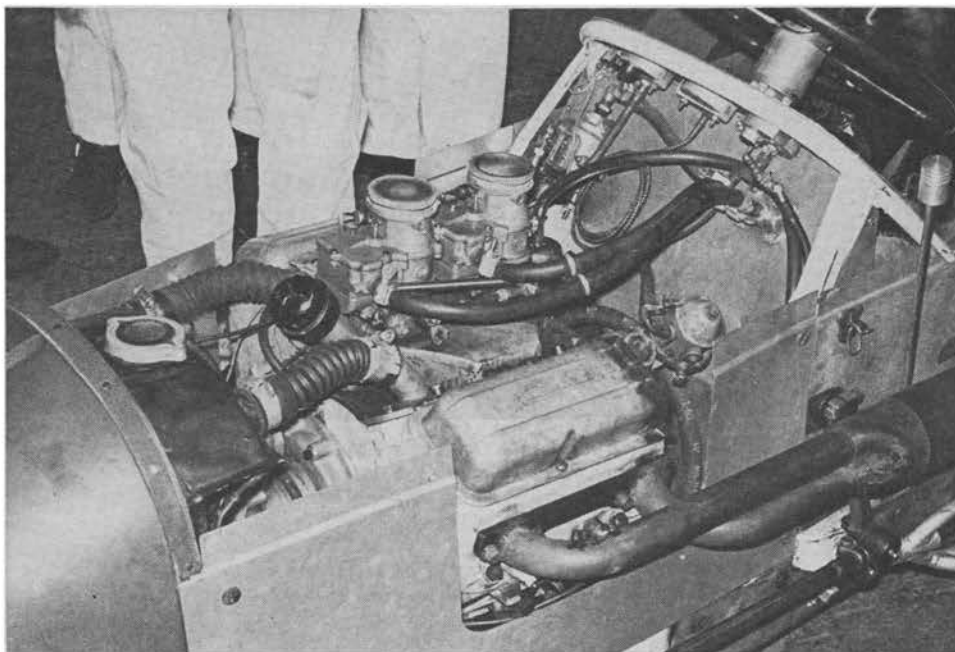
Passing is difficult on the tiny track, and brings reaction from the spectators when it happens. Bob De Jong in car 6 is just

about to capture the lead from Johnnie Dillman to go on to victory in the eight-lap heat race. Six cars are used in the race.

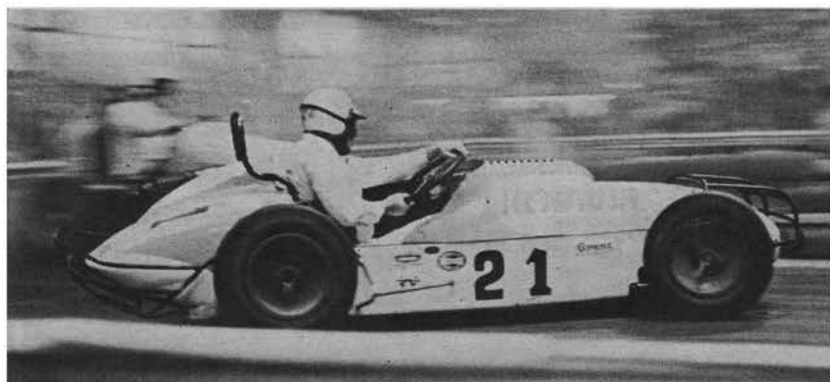
Midgets in a Teacup continued



After several restarts, starter Mel Fernandez brought out this sign as a gag.



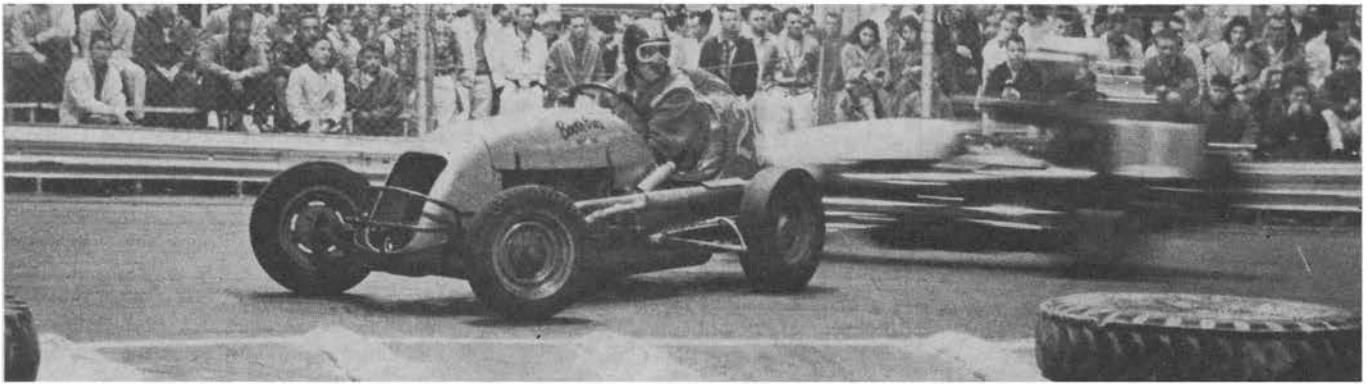
Unique innovation and attention-getter is this V-4 made from front half of a Chevy V-8. Note where rocker covers have been cut and welded.



Roadster-type midget, patterned after an Indy car, is cornered hard by driver Gene Gurney in heat race. Car is sponsored by Renault dealer but is powered by a four-cylinder Offy engine.

Veteran Tommy Copp, 1960 Indoor Champ, likes to hike left front wheel over infield barriers to delight of spectators. White square painted on wheel shows that it seldom touches ground.

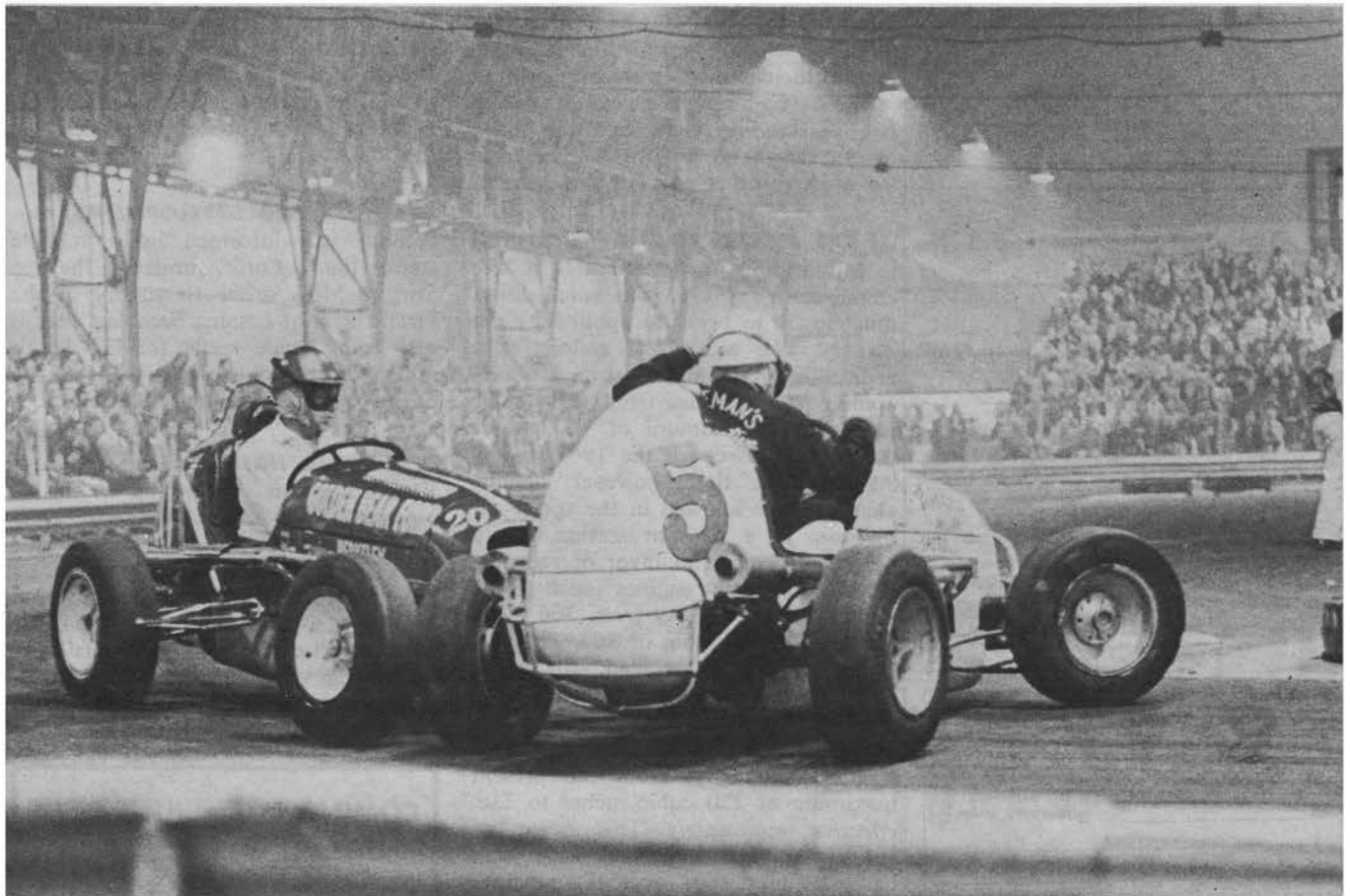




AMA MOTORCYCLE CHAMP JOE LEONARD DOES WELL IN MIDGETS, TOO. HE CAPTURED BOTH FEATURES DURING THE JANUARY 19-20 MEET.



Flips are sometimes chilling but seldom serious. Johnnie Dillman (right) shows where contact with track surface left black marks on uniform when he slid nearly 50 feet upside down after flipping.



"DYNA-MIKE" MCGREEVY GOT BLOCKED FROM POSSIBLE HEAT RACE WIN WHEN DEE HILEMAN SPUN. FEATURE RACE IS 30 LAPS — 12 CARS.