



1970 24 Hours of Daytona

Unlike many of her sister cars, 1966 Shelby Notchback Number 6 did not see competition again until John Gimbel traded Ray Cuomo, now President of Ray Cuomo Racing Enterprises, his street GT-350 for Number 6, a car trailer and a 1963 Blue Oldsmobile Station Wagon affectionately called "The Blue Whale". John used #6 to obtain his Regional, National and FIA licenses.

In January of 1970, Ray Cuomo Racing Enterprises entered the car for John in the 1970 24 Hours of Daytona. George (Corky) Lisberg would be John's co-driver. Ray would co-drive a GT40 (GT/103) in the race with car owner William Wonder.

John and Ray asked Jan and myself to be part of John's pit crew. This was to be our first involvement with 1966 Shelby Notchback Number 6.



On the way down to Florida with Jan, "Uncle" Ray and "Uncle" Gene, Ray's brother, we lost the fan belt on the tow car. Parked on the side of the road waiting for the engine to cool down, Fire Engines arrived. Someone had seen the "smoke" (steam) and called the Fire Department.

New rule changes greeted us when we got to the track. George, who had left NY before us with the race car, was busy installing a now mandatory FULL roll cage. Weight also had to be added. We picked up 2 huge elevator weights, along with a 1" thick piece of steel about 14" square, to bring the car up to the new weight requirements.

After succeeding in our mission to pick-up some weights, we decided to stop for lunch before returning to the track. Upon hearing a door bell ring, we noticed the bartender open a sliding window behind the bar. On the other side was a customer, sitting in his car, he ordered a drink and proceeded to drive away. Guess this was the beginning of today's Drive-Thru's!

Once back at the track, one elevator weight was bolted up on the shelf forward of the gas tank in the trunk. The other elevator weight was bolted to the floor next to the driver in the passenger seat area. The slab was bolted to the floor behind the driver.



Practice began with George loosing the left rear axle and wheel just before the start/finish line, right in front of the Grandstand and pits! Tack welds securing the bearing retainer to the axle had broken. Fortunately, the errant wheel and axle did not hit any of the other cars, although, one of the Matras just missed it. It ended up on the grass in front of the pits. I went out to retrieve the wheel and axle, foolishly picking it up by the splined end of the axle. I wound up with 28 splines branded into the palm of my hand.



The Mark Donohue, Peter Revson Sunoco Trans-Am Javelin.

The 1970 24 Hour was the final test for the new Roger Penske AMC Sunoco Trans-Am Javelin. The car qualified 19th with a 2:08.4. Lasting around 7 hours, completing 205 laps, Roger Penske was asked if he was disappointed, he made the point that "7 hours was equal to 3 Trans-Am races!"

A 2:27.2, for a lap speed of 100.614 mph, put us 46th on the grid. In 1967, Ray Cuomo and Paul Richards qualified the car 39th with a 2:24.7 for a lap speed of 101.734 mph.



Number 6 Takes the Green Flag



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George in the first turn heading towards the signal pits.

In 1970 there were “Signal Pits” just after the first turn heading towards the kinks. This is where you used your “pit board” to signal your driver. It was a cold night. Everyone was wearing winter jackets and most teams had heaters.



View of Notchback Number 6 from the signal pits at dusk.

We all took turns in the signal pits. It was a great view of the cars coming out of the first turn going into the infield portion of the course. It was a cold and windy night and in the early morning hours the signal pits, just a wood frame shelter with plastic sheeting for a back wall, blew down!



The William Wonder / Ray Cuomo GT40 (GT/106)

Our pit was just in front of Bill Wonders GT40 stall so Ray was able to keep an eye on his entry.

Daytona 1970 was the first time the car wore Number 14, not to be confused with its Shelby Notchback Production Number 6 as referred to elsewhere. Jan Nelson and I bought the car from John after this race. Due to the cars success at Daytona, Jan and I requested and was assigned Number 14, by the SCCA, for the Trans-Am series.



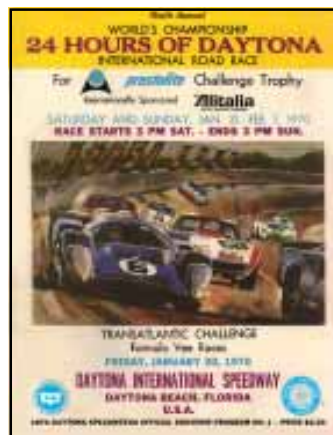
Number 14 (#6) takes the Checkered Flag after 24 hours.

The only unscheduled stop during the 24 hours took place around 9:00 in the morning for points and plugs.



John pulls into the pits after the cool-off lap. Ray Cuomo in the blue Goodyear jacket and the right front fender of the GT40 can be seen on the right side of the photo.

When the checkered flag fell, John and George completed 520 laps, finishing 2nd in Class and 16th Overall. Ray Cuomo and Bill Wonder finished 5th in class and 8th Overall in the GT40, completing 579 laps.



l to r: George (Corky) Lisberg, John Gimbel and Ray Cuomo.