Gerry Mong Waiting For Results

By Dave Arnold
Area Editor

MEDINA, Ohio, April 11 — Formula Ford racing is becoming a Big Deal. Cars for the class are being turned out right and left in quantities rivaling Formula Vees.

"I can't see it," says Gerry Mong, owner of Vanguard Automotive Enterprises, Inc., which in the past five years has turned out approximately 50 B-C-D sports-racing machines and 110 Bobsy Vanguard and Vega Vees.

Mong runs his hands through his hair, gulps down another swallow of coffee, and squirms in his chair. "Some of these builders are going to construct a lot of cars, then have problems crop up which are inherent in every car they have sold. Then their buyers and drivers suffer for mistakes they haven't planned for.

"I guess you'd best call Bobsy 20-20 hindsight. We want the problems ironed out this year by capable, hand-picked drivers. Then if the cars work right, we win a few races, and the class shows signs of growing even more, then we'll build more starting this fall."

Mong's 1969 racing season production of Formula Ford is four cars, one prototype and three private entries. The prototype will be driven by Arlington, Va. tombstone dealer Glen Sullivan and Sandusky, Ohio, VW dealer Chuck Dietrich.

Clevelander Horace Klose, Jim Trueman of Columbus, and Ken Beckman of Ashtabula, Ohio, will have the other three.

But for the car itself. The hair on Gerry's neck bristles when a bystander mentions "wedge-shaped" because he prefers to call it a "nine-iron."

"I didn't want to go to a wedge shape and I won't lie and say this shape has been wind tunnel tested. It was designed by me using common aerodynamic sense and plenty of paper.

"Vees are bloody simple cars to build. Formula Fords aren't," he says. "I want my cars to be tough. It is built for the driver who likes to get in there and pitch. If it becomes necessary to leave the asphalt, I want the car to be tough enough to take it."

Opels have contributed much to Mong's cars. They feature standard Opel Rallye wheels all around, Opel front uprights, calipers, hubs and ball joints. Instrumentation is simply an 8000rpm tachometer, oil and water temperature and oil pressure gauges. The steering wheel is 10 inches in diameter. "The only things to really spoil the wind flow are the rear view mirrors. They look like Mickey Mouse ears," he joked.

"Right now, a builder would be doing something asinine to turn out as many cars as he can. You have to do it right. Nothing can be done halfway. My desire is to make a car that is super-predictable. This racing is going to be closely-fought. The driver has to know what his car can or can't do and be extremely stable under heavy braking which should equal 1-G, but that we don't know for sure." The first road tests will be early in May when the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course is solid enough for practice.

"I wanted to avoid a wedge shape but it became more and more obvious that's what it was coming to. I don't want any lifting or any heavy loading, which is why I stay away from wings or spoilers. Last year one of my privately-owned D S/R cars was losing 600rpm all season. Finally we attacked the problem and found a spoiler was causing the drag.

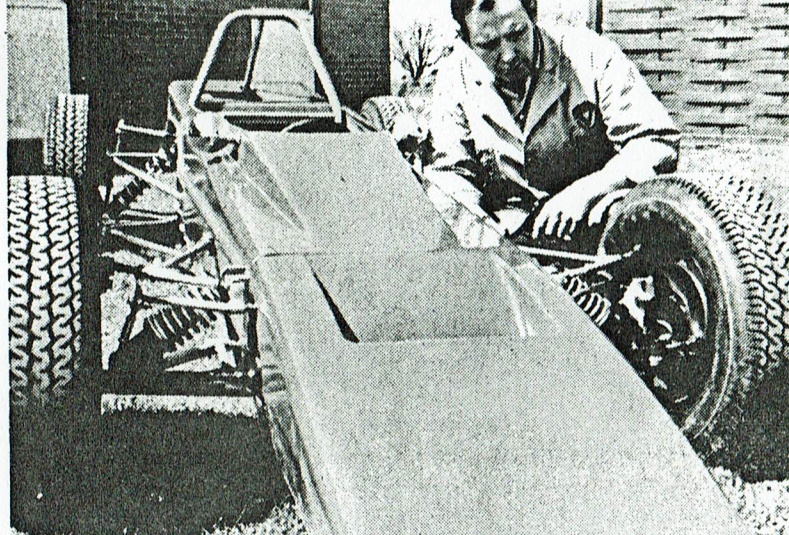
"After you reach a certain point in chassis rigidity, there is no point in going any farther. It just adds weight and complexity."

Mong worked up a dry sump system for his engines, which will be mated to the Mk6 Hewland gearbox. It is quite elementary in operation and will prevent oil from sloshing around under braking or turns. Fuel tanks and oil tanks are five gallons and five quarts respectively.

Another innovation is a movable platform for the three pedals which make it possible for the car to hold a 6' 4" driver and still have room under the roll bar.

He wrung his hands some more. "I dearly hope this class will stay specific in its rule and legal in its running. We have 175 man-hours of labor on the chassis alone. I don't want to see that wasted."

The chassis, of course, is steel. Mong's shop facilities enabled him to mold and make his own bodies which are color-impregnated fiberglass, light enough that anyone could lift it with one hand.



Vanguard Automotive Enterprises head, Gerry Mong, looks over his latest creation, a new chassis for Formula Ford racing. He has only built four of the models to date, but plans further production after racing experience proves the design. (Dave Arnold photo)

FRA To Stage 'Goodwill' Grand Prix

LOS ANGELES, April 8 — The "Grand Prix de Goodwill", a two-day Formula racing event for the benefit of the handicapped of Goodwill Industries, is set for May 17 and 18 at Willow Springs International Raceway, 60 miles north of here, according to Ivan Viets, president of the Formula Racing Assn., Los Angeles chapter.

The racing program will feature Formula Vee, B, C and Ford cars. Four races will be run each day of the weekend for a total of $2000 in cash plus many special prizes donated by race sponsors. Filled Goodwill bags may be used by spectators for a $1.00 discount on tickets for each bag.

In addition to the racing, appearance of cinema, television, radio and civic celebrities, kiddie rides in a special play area, Sunday morning church services, a barbecue both days and a Saturday evening bonfire with guest musicians and sing-alongs are scheduled to aid in attracting family groups. Viets said other attractions are also being planned.

The idea behind the "Grand Prix de Goodwill" is that racing drivers and spectators can help the handicapped help themselves, and, at the same time, have a good time. Currently, Goodwill Industries of southern California, a non-profit agency, assists an average of 1700 handicapped persons each year through rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and wage earning employment.

Have you checked out our Formula Car section in the classifieds?

Bennett-Built Chevron For Formula

BOLTON, England, April 21 — One of the newest single-seater formula cars to be seen on the American road racing circuits is the Derek Bennett Engineering-built Chevron.

America-destined Chevrons are labeled B15b, the engine bay left open for a Ford twincam engine for SCCA Formula B racing. The B15 model is the Formula 3 version used in European competition.

The Chevron features a multi-tubular chassis with a sheet-stressed center section for added rigidity. The suspension is by leading and trailing arm. Front and rear uprights are of cast magnesium with sealed wheel bearings, both front and rear.

Bennett Engineering in Bolton, England, began constructing t formula car in 1967 and in th first season won the Lomba Formula 3 championship England. The first B15b seen in t United States was campaigned l year by TV personality Di Smothers.

All Chevrons supplied for t U.S. are made race-ready installing a Vegantune engine a Hewland gearbox and distribut through Fred Opert Racing.

CHEVRON B15b SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: 1600cc Ford-based customer specification.
CHASSIS: Triangulated spac frame and monocoque constructio in cockpit area.
BODY: Color impregnated fibe glass.
SUSPENSION: Front, indepe dent by wide based lower wishbon Rear, independent by triangulate lower wishbone. Front and re magnesium uprights, adjustab Armstrong shocks and anti-roll ba
TRANSMISSION: Hewland Mk or FT200.
STEERING: Rack and pinion

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