

# MOTOR WORLD

## Instant successes in auto racing???

### — Don't bet on it

By Gary Witzenburg  
Special to The News

Okay, A.J., so you want to go racing.

That's perfectly understandable; some of the best people do it. Paul Newman, for example. Racing satisfies the competitive urge. It's a fun hobby. You get to travel, stay in lots of nice motels, see nice race tracks and meet nice people with similar interests.

If you're very, very good, you can even make lots of money.

**BUT YOU** don't know how to start, where to go, whom to call.

Going racing is easy if you already have lots of money. You just go to where the racing is and buy a team. Your new employees will be delighted to help you get started. As one team owner once said, "The way to make a small fortune in racing is to start with a large one and work down."

Otherwise, it's not so simple.

You can hang around tracks like Mt. Clemens and Toledo, spin wrenches on someone else's car and maybe, just maybe, get offered a chance to drive one night when the hero breaks his leg falling off a bar stool. From there on, it takes only great skill, determination, hard work and years of poverty to rocket straight to the top.

You can pick an entry-level form of the sport, say go-karts, "hobby" or "mini" stock cars, and build or buy one of your own. Of course, you have to prepare and maintain the thing, and tow it to races, and if you have any ideas about actually winning, even these can run into some money.

**IF YOU** think road racing — the kind hills and dales and both right- and left-hand turns —

might be your thing, you can contact the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) in Denver or the club's Detroit Region (591-9313). You'll find a roomful of friendly car nuts at the meetings and they put on all sorts of events, including time/speed/distance rallies to high-speed Pro Rallies and even top-rung international races such as the Detroit Grand Prix.

They also offer race drivers' schools and an excellent once-a-year Pro Rally School. A local organization called Waterford Hills Road Racing Inc., a branch of the Oakland County Sportsmen's Club (623-0444), also stages races and schools at its own 1.5-mile course in Waterford.

There are entry-level classes in road racing and rallying that offer good opportunities for the novice. The only problem is that you need an eligible car with all the required safety equipment, an approved helmet, fireproof suit, shoes, tools, tires, spare parts and some sort of crew and (highly recommended) a trailer and tow vehicle.

That's where the professional drivers' schools come in. They offer expert instruction in *their* cars, maintained by *their* mechanics and you can use *their* suits and helmets. Their courses range from two to four days and their methods vary; but all provide an excellent opportunity to find out what it's all about without the heavy initial investment. At the very least, you'll have a wonderful time and come out a far better and safer driver on the street no matter how good you thought you were going in.

**EASILY THE** largest such school is the Jim Russell/British



Drivers at the Jim Russell/British

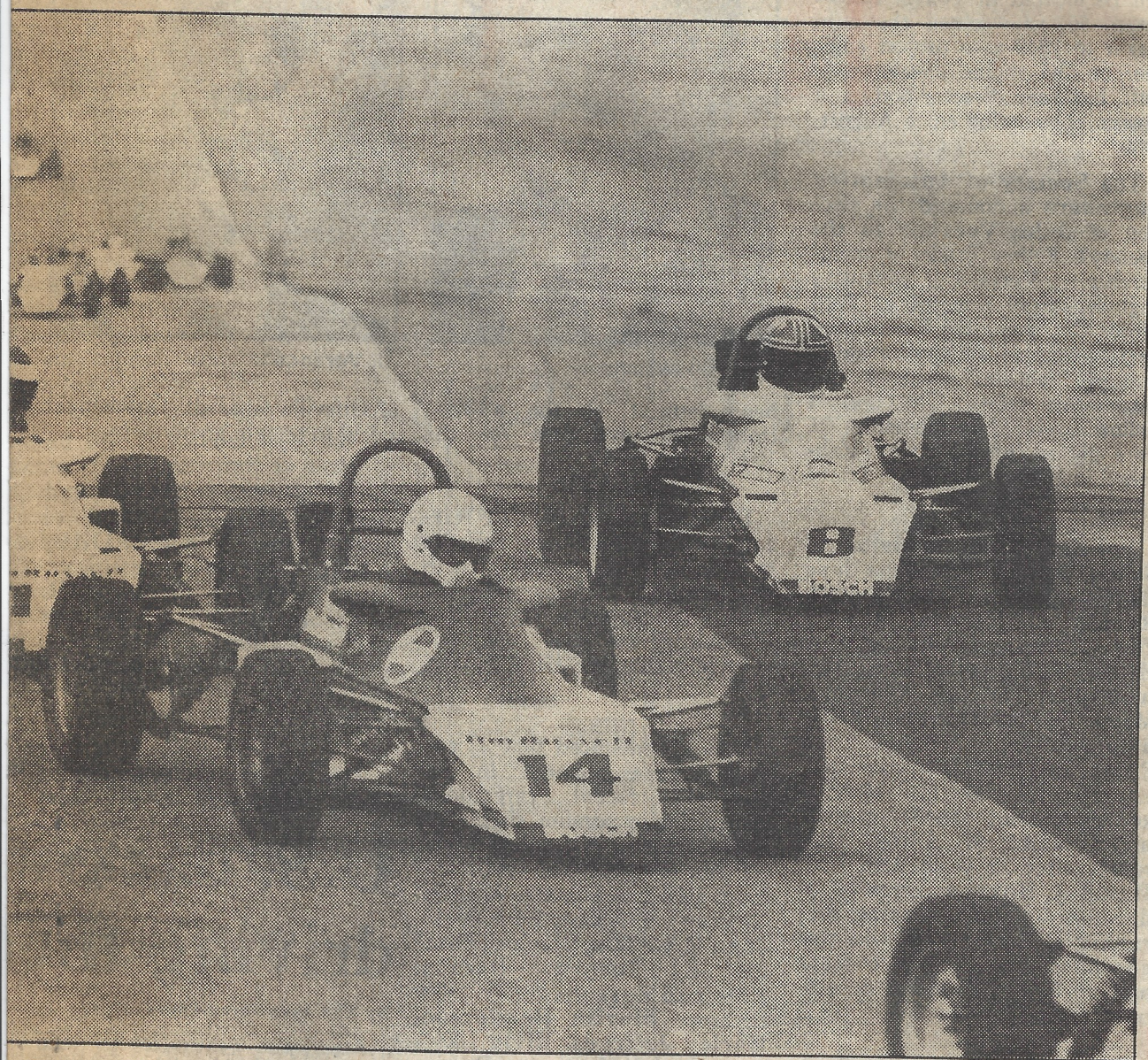
School of Motor Racing (714-656-3576), which operates out of four locations in North America — Mount Tremblant, Quebec; Charlotte Motor Speedway, N.C.; Laguna Seca Raceway, near Monterey, Calif.; and Riverside International Raceway, Riverside, Calif.

The Mount Tremblant school runs every week from May-October, the new Charlotte location operates from February-December, and each California school runs all year long.

Like most serious racing schools, JR/BSMR uses Formula Fords, which are open-wheel sin-

automotive  
assembly operation scheduled to





h School of Motor Racing put their formula cars through paces at Riverside.

gle seaters powered by 100-horsepower, 1.6-liter Ford engines. These are sort of scaled-down Grand Prix machines with terrific handling and brakes and top speeds in the 130-mph range. They're very challenging to drive really well, and for that reason are considered first-rate trainers.

All four locations offer Monday-through-Wednesday courses for \$950 (the Canadian school is a bargain at \$950 Canadian). If you find that you love it and can't get enough, you can buy more supervised practice time (Thursdays and Fridays) at \$425 (\$360 in Canadian) per day, all

day.

If you *really* can't get enough, you can compete against other graduates in fully-maintained JR/BSMR cars in an eight-race summer series at each location. Entry fees are \$700 (\$825 Canadian) for two practice sessions and two races each weekend, and you can enter as many as your time and budget allow. With quantity discounts, a four-race package costs \$2,600, an eight-race deal \$4,800. This may sound expensive, but the cost of buying, maintaining and towing a competitive Formula Ford to SCCA events can be astronomical by comparison.

**BEST OF** all, the JR/BSMR organization offers a year-end championship event open to competitors from all four locations. Last year, this Formula Ford Festival was held at Riverside, a formidable nine-turn circuit about an hour west of Los Angeles.

Nine hundred students took the JR/BSMR course at three locations in 1982, 280 completed the three-race series and more than 100 participated in the four-day festival.

The entry fee was \$850; the total purse was \$15,000, and first prize was a cool \$10,000.