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BY ANTHONY (ANDY) GRANATELLI

EXCLUSIVE  
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USAC NATIONAL DRIVING CHAMPION

BOBBY UNSER'S MOST EXCITING MOMENT

CHARLIE GLOTZBACH AND COTTON OWENS  
CAPTURE FIRST SUPERSPEEDWAY WIN

# The National 500

Charlie Glotzbach charges to victory  
in the Cotton Owens Dodge

By Bob Glendy

**C**HARGING CHARLIE GLOTZBACH lived up to his name in setting a record pace for the National 500 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. The Georgetown, Indiana native led the first and last laps over the mile and a half oval at a speed of 135.324 miles an hour to bring the Dodge Charger of former NASCAR driver-turned-car-builder Cotton Owens home some 17 seconds in front of Paul Goldsmith in the Valleydale Super Bee Dodge.

The win provided Glotzbach and Owens with firsts. For Glotzbach, a relative newcomer to NASCAR with only two years' experience, it was his first superspeedway win. It was also the first big track win for Owens at Charlotte and his first since he retired from the driving chores in 1962 and took up the wrenches full time.

For Dodge it was something like old home week or that 10th college reunion. The win was the third in a row for a

Charger at Charlotte and the Big Brother of the MoPar family has shut out all competition in the National 500 since 1966. Lee Roy Yarbrough started the parade in Jon Thorne's Charger in 1966. Buddy Baker did the honors in 1967 in a Ray Fox Charger. Last May Baker made it two consecutive wins at Charlotte with the World 600 and now Glotzbach.

Yarbrough, Baker and Glotzbach all got their first superspeedway wins at Charlotte in the National 500. Fred Lorenzen was the last Ford pilot to pen-

etrate Victory Circle in the event and he indicated during the heat of the race that he was itching to get back into racing.

Ford fans cried foul when Baker took the rain-interrupted World 600, claiming the son of Buck Baker backed into Victory Circle, but there were no such cries here after Glotzbach bashfully accepted the winner's share of \$19,380.

The quiet, reserved Dodge pilot won the pole position with a qualifying time of 156 plus and came on much like a herd of elephants tip-toeing through the treetops for the 334 laps of racing.

For Paul Goldsmith it was a very frustrating afternoon. The former motorcycle champ, who has driven the wheels off the Valleydale Dodges all year without cracking Victory Circle, had two haunting pit stops which may have cost him the race.

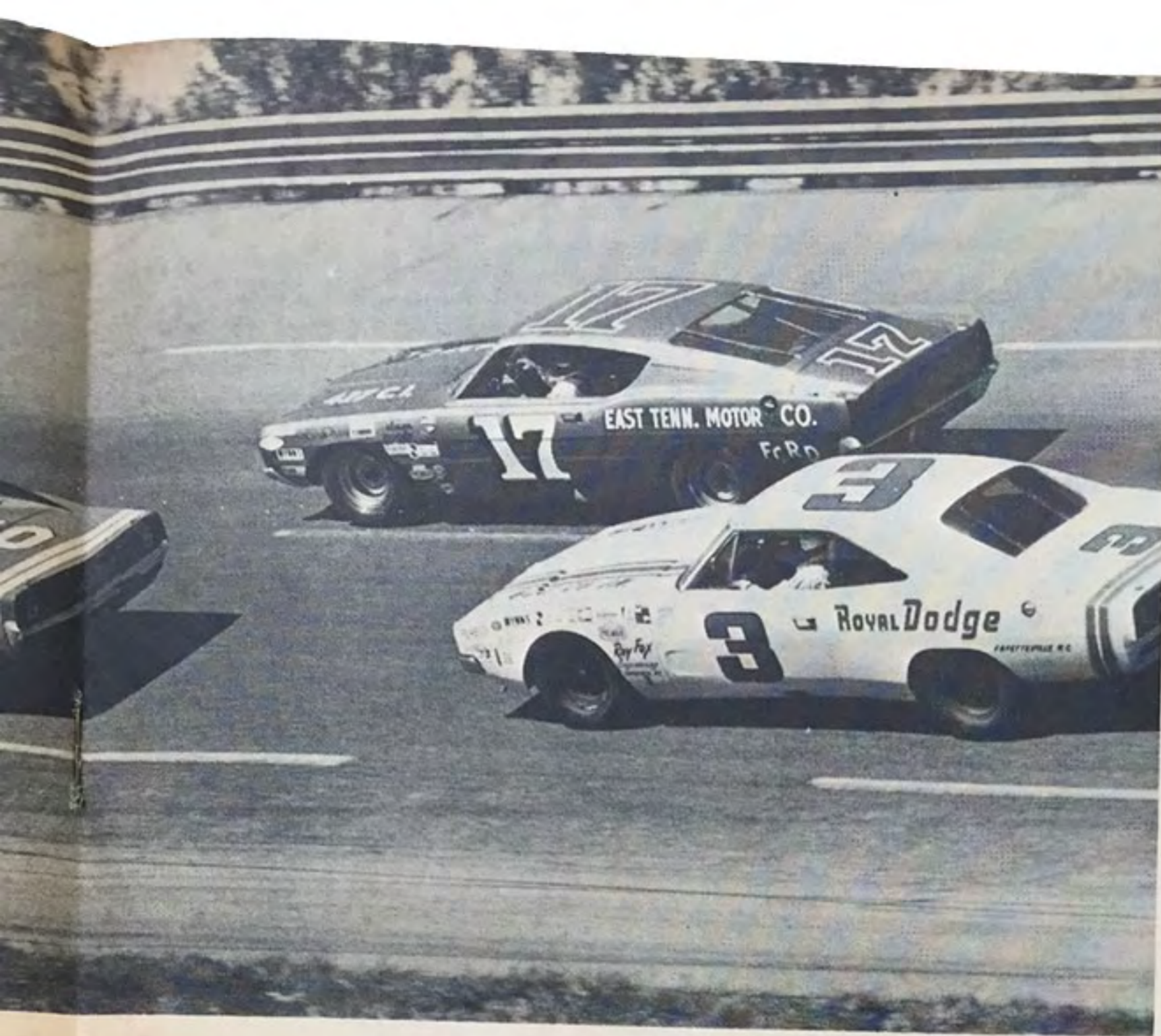
On the first Goldie spun to the infield grass to avoid a member of Donnie Allison's pit crew, costing him valuable time to get back into action. The second was even more costly. Goldsmith was forced to spend more than 40 seconds in the pits after a jack collapsed, dropping the car to the pavement. Members of Goldsmith's pit crew thought he had run one more lap than Glotzbach and finally persuaded him to ask for a check of the scorecards, but the effort was fruitless.

"My car was geared too high and I just couldn't run with Glotzbach in the



Glotzbach watches Cotton Owens as he works on the engine of his car before the race.





A relative newcomer to NASCAR, Charlie shows veterans David Pearson (17) and Buddy Baker the tail end of his car.

corners. That forty-second pit stop really hurt me when the car fell off the jack. I could have won even though my car was geared too high," Goldsmith said.

David Pearson and Cale Yarborough also suffered cruel fates as the afternoon wore on. Pearson had led until a favorable caution flag allowed Yarborough, Glotzbach and Bobby Allison to make up a lap lost earlier when they pitted under the green flag. That was just the beginning.

Pearson's chances for victory evaporated when he pitted, took on new tires and went back out on the track too loose. "The car was loose as a goose and I just had to slow down," Pearson admitted after it was all over.

Yarborough's fate was just as bad. Cale went in on lap 299 for his final pit stop, just after having taken over the lead from the eventual winner, only  
(Continued)



The Goodyear blimp appears to be trying to join the race. Actually, it's landing behind third turn to pick up more passengers.

## NATIONAL 500

(Continued)

to slide right by his pits in a cloud of smoke.

Sighs went up from the stands and the Wood Brothers craned their necks trying to get a good look to see what had happened to their driver. Cale went back out pit road and came around again only to have the same thing happen. A brake line had broken, leaving NASCAR's top money winner without any stopping power.

On his third try, his pit crew met him as he came in and between gearing down and a superhuman effort by the pit crew the car was halted before going past the proper pit. But Cale was now two laps behind and out of contention.

"It felt real good until the brake line went. I was riding second all along and I figured I had a good chance to win the thing," Cale said with a shrug of his shoulders.

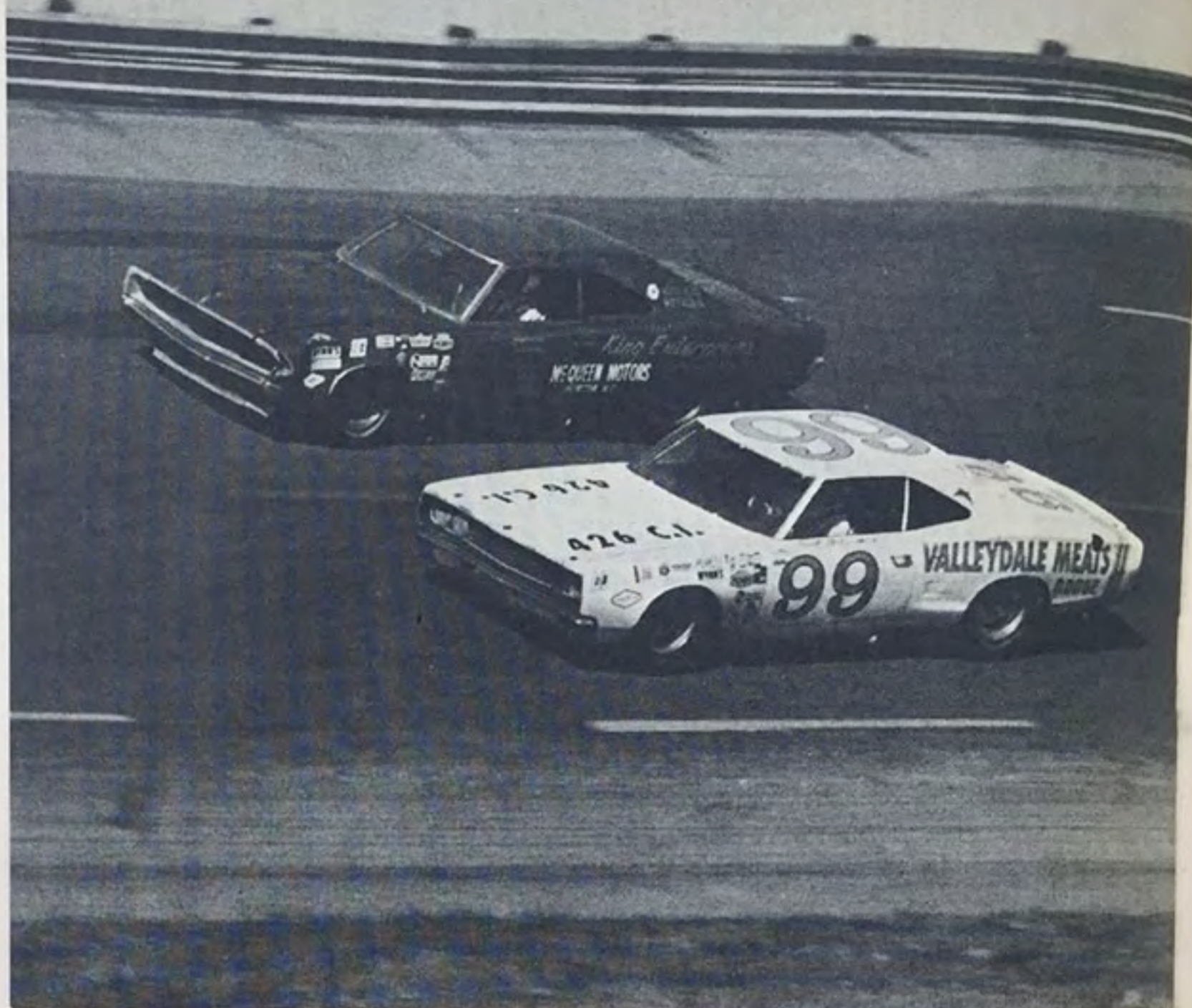
Buddy Baker was another strong contender and had something going for him. Buddy and his car builder Ray Fox were bidding to make it three in a row. There had been countless reminders of the threes for months. Buddy's car was number three and it seemed that everywhere Buddy and Ray went there were some combinations of three which gave them high hopes that it might be three straight wins.

However, the hopes didn't last long. On lap 19 Buddy ran over a piece of metal on the track just as he came out of the fourth turn, slamming his Charger into the homestretch wall. The impact moved the engine and drive train over four inches to the left, although the car hit the wall flush and didn't seem to be badly damaged.

"That was some jolt," Baker admitted after the race. Most observers agreed that Baker, who was leading at the time of the accident, did a great job of keeping his car out of the way. "I think it was a beer can, but I sure am thankful that the car hit the wall flush or I might have been all over the race track," he said.

Buddy's accident was the most serious of six caution flags during the afternoon. The yellow was out for a total of 49 laps for spins and blown engines. Dick Johnson took a spectacular ride through the third and fourth turns when he lost control of his 1967 Ford Fairlane, but only one other car was close and he managed to avoid Johnson's spinning car.

The disappointing crowd of about 40,000 was blamed on the rainout of the original race date. Heavy rains on the previous Saturday and Sunday forced postponement, and then it rained again on the Saturday before the race. A 250-mile race for Grand Touring cars was postponed twice and finally canceled,



The Dodges of Paul Goldsmith (99) and Pete Hamilton (1) came in second and seventh.

but the sun broke through late Saturday afternoon and it was clear and cool on race day.

The race cars were impounded after the race was called and kept under guard in the garage area. Only one car seemed to suffer from the week's inactivity. Bud Moore's Bondy Long Torino went out after only six laps due to rusted brake drums. The official cause listed was steering problems, but Moore confided after the race that at least two brake drums were badly rusted.

Lee Roy Yarbrough also fell victim to mechanical problems. Driving Junior Johnson's Ford Torino, Lee Roy lost valuable time when a lug nut was crossed on one wheel and then a tire went flat, putting the Columbia, South Carolina driver out of action with steering problems after only 52 laps.

James Hylton of Inman, South Carolina and Richard Petty also fell victim to mechanical ills. Hylton had ignition problems after 83 laps and Petty succumbed to a sick engine on lap 135.

Glotzbach admitted that he was worried about Petty and Yarbrough, but said he felt he could run with anyone else on the track. Pearson led more laps (155) than Charlie (92) and was out front nine times to Charlie's six, but Charlie led when it counted.

Charlie, the thirty-year-old father of four, came to NASCAR in 1966 and made enough of an impression on veteran Cotton Owens to earn a ride with

the Dodge operation in April of 1968. The virtual newcomer had made quite a showing in the second K & K Insurance Dodge last year and was a prime candidate for Rookie of the Year in 1967 when Donnie Allison won the honor.

Charging Charlie followed such drivers as David Pearson, Bobby Allison and Darel Dieringer in the Owens car. None of the combinations after Pearson seemed to work till now.

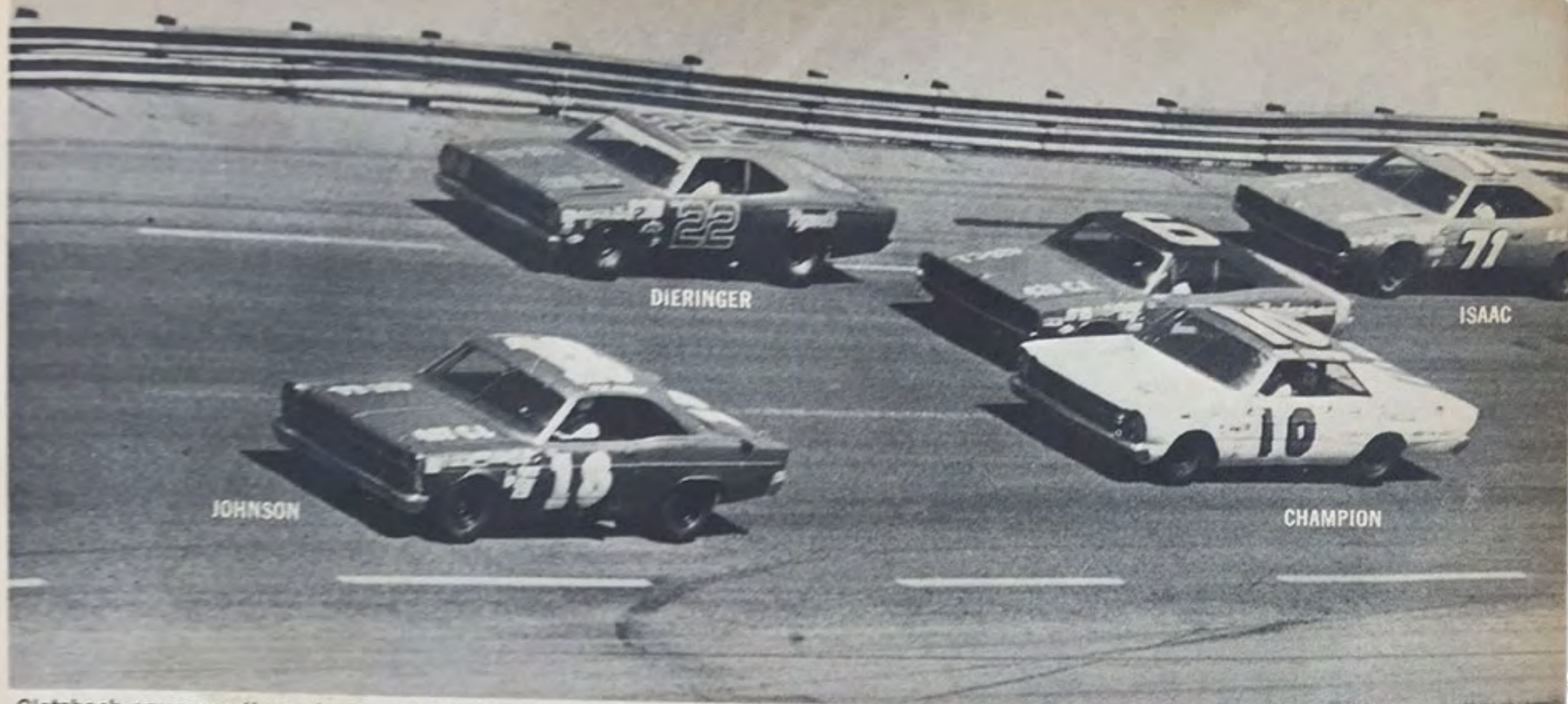
Glotzbach knows only one style of driving and that is with his foot in the carburetor. He had shown his ability to make the Owens machinery hum in earlier races by leading every one he had driven and walking away from the field at Atlanta before a blown tire sidelined him.

It was hard to tell whether the driver or the car builder was more excited about the win.

"I don't think there is any difference in the elation I feel at the moment than what I felt when I won a race when I was driving. I guess there just isn't any way to describe how happy I feel," Cotton said.

Glotzbach was more like the after dinner speaker who gets up and says, "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," only it seemed a little embarrassing for the Georgetown driver.

Charlie, whose wife couldn't make it to the race, kissed the beauty queen on the cheek and took a terrible ribbing from well-wishers around Victory Circle.



Glotzbach squeezes through the middle of the pack with the fast cars taking the high groove and the slower cars the lower groove.

One wag hollered, "The Ford drivers kiss them on the mouth, Charlie," and the smiling Charlie, hardly bashful on the race track, could be seen to blush.

"I'm real happy to win but I would rather have been racing someone when it got down to the end," Charlie confessed. "With about five laps to go I got this unusual feeling. My mouth got real dry and I was scared. It was the worst kind of feeling I ever had. I prayed and on that last lap I think I even cried a little."

Charlie wasn't the only one crying as a few observed Cotton wiping a little moisture from his eyes as he stood with his driver on the hood of his car. They weren't sad tears.

During the latter stages of the race, Charlie was all by his lonesome, but there were 27 lead changes between nine drivers during the race. They included Bobby Allison, Pete Hamilton, Paul Goldsmith, Pearson, Glotzbach, Baker, Butch Hartman, Donnie Allison and Cale Yarborough.

"I didn't have anybody to race with and I had a lot of time to think. I thought about the fact that I was about to win my first big race and then I thought something would happen.

"I could feel a tire going flat and then it seemed as if the engine were skipping. I looked in the rear view mirror and I could see smoke coming from the car.

"The track in front of me looked like a mass of oil slicks and it looked as though every slow car on the race track was going to pull right into the groove I was running.

"During the last five laps I knew I was scared. I wanted to be anyplace in the world besides that race car. I wanted help but I knew there just wasn't anyone to help," Charlie admitted with a sheepish grin.

"I don't know how I got around those last two laps. The car just seemed to carry me. If I had been racing with someone I would have been too busy to worry about it, but as it turned out those last five laps were the most horrible experience I've ever had in my life," Charlie said in a bit of rare candor.

There were 43 other race drivers who were wishing they had experienced the same \$19,380 nightmare. Charlie's feelings were not unique, because most winning drivers have experienced the same feelings, but chose not to express them quite so candidly.

The win came at an opportune time for the team, which was winless to that point.

Charlie admitted he had sold his trucks and bulldozer at home so he could concentrate on racing.

To close observers it has just been a matter of time before Charlie showed the world the potential that others have seen, and the big win could mean that Owens will field a car for the point championship in 1969 with Charging Charlie Glotzbach behind the wheel. ●

Pos.	No.	Driver	Car
1	6	Charlie Glotzbach	68 Dodge
2	99	Paul Goldsmith	68 Dodge
3	17	David Pearson	68 Ford
4	14	Bobby Allison	68 Plym
5	21	Cale Yarborough	68 Merc
6	27	Donnie Allison	68 Ford
7	1	Pete Hamilton	68 Dodge
8	22	Darel Dieringer	68 Plym
9	71	Bobby Isaac	68 Dodge
10	11	A. J. Foyt	68 Ford

Before start of the race Glen Wood talks with USAC Stock Car Champion A. J. Foyt.

