

24 HOUR RACE HIGHLIGHTS

DAYTONA 1967

Car Number 6 made its debut at the 1967 24 Hour Daytona Continental. The car was purchased from Shelby American by Gofaster, Inc. of Long Island City, NY. Gofaster, owned by John Norwood, was at that time East Coast Distributor for Goodyear Racing Tires. The car was shipped directly to Daytona for the race. It was one of 3 cars entered by the Ring Free Oil Racing Team for the event. Ray Cuomo, of Gofaster, and Paul Richards were the drivers. The car started 39th on the grid with a 2:24.7 qualifying time for an average speed of 101.734 mph. 24 hours and 526 laps later Ray and Paul crossed the finish line 1st in Class and 11th Overall.



Number 6 the Ray Cuomo/Paul Richards Mustang (72) leads the Mustang of Yeager/Hane/Feistman (66). (Daytona Photo)

“Ring Free Girls” Janet Guthrie, Donna Mae Mims and Suzy Dietrich were also listed as drivers of the car however driver assignments were rearranged and they never drove the car. Donna Mae Mims and Suzy Dietrich were assigned an ASA 411 (21004) for the event. A “street” Mustang was prepared for the race and Janet Guthrie, Anita-Taylor Matthews and Smokey Drolet finished that car 5th in Class and 20th O/A for the Ring Free Racing Team.



l. to r.: Car Number 6 and Ray Cuomo. (Daytona Photo)

Ray Cuomo, representing the Ring Free Special Mustang (#6) which completed the race without a repair pit stop, was presented the International Chief's of Police “Most Durable Most Reliable Vehicle Award.

DAYTONA 1970

Unlike many of her sister cars, Number 6 did not see competition again until John Gimbel traded Ray Cuomo, now head 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 Johns co-driver. Ray himself would co-drive a GT40 in the race with William Wonder finishing 8th O/A.



Number 6 in the 1st turn heading towards the signal pits.

John and Ray asked Jan and myself to be part of Johns pit crew. This was to be our first involvement with Number 6. On the way down to Florida with Jan, “Uncle” Ray and “Uncle” Gene, Rays 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 FULL roll cage. Weight also had to be added, we picked up 2 hugh elevator weights along with a 1” thick piece of steel about 14” square to bring the car up to the new weight requirements. 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 just before the start/finish line, right in front of the pits! Tack welds securing the bearing retainer to the axle broke. Fortunately the errant wheel and axle did not hit any of the other cars and ended up on the grass in front of the pits. A 2:27.2, for an average speed of 100.614 mph, put us 46th on the grid.



View of 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 (a wood frame shelter) blew down!

The only unscheduled stop was around 9:00 in the morning for points and plugs. When the checkered flag fell John and George brought Number 6 home 2nd in Class and 16th Overall, 520 laps.