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Through The Esses - Two Things We Wish To See - Soon!

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It is a few days before the Lime Rock Park round of the American Le Mans Series and we are thinking about how good things really are today for fans of sportscar racing. There are a number of professional racing series running full schedules and providing fans both old and new with opportunities to see what skilled drivers can do in cars that were or were not originally designed to be raced. That is, cars from the exotic prototypes in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), to the not too exotic Daytona Prototypes in the Grand American Rolex Sports Car Series. And 'street' cars - appropriately modified for the track - running in the SPEED World Challenge and Grand Am Cup series. And let us not forget the GT class (BMW, Porsche, Maserati, Corvette, etc.) in the Rolex Series, and the GT1 and GT2 classes (Corvette, Saleen, Aston Martin, Ferrari, Porsche, Panoz, etc.) in the ALMS.



Yes, there is a lot of variety at the professional level of sportscar racing today. We are thankful for all the choices. But, did you ever wish for just a bit more? You know, kind of like having an extra dollop of whipped cream on your ice cream sundae? Well, we have a few ideas for that little bit extra that we would like to see become reality. Now, some will probably seem a bit far fetched (alright, nuts) but what's the harm in telling everyone what you would like to see? At best, someone might read this and make some of these ideas come to life. At worst, the message boards on the internet will soon light up with threads that will vilify the merits of each item on our wish list.

Gentlemen, prepare to position your fingers over your keyboards for the wish list starts here:

A weekly 1 hour program on SPEED devoted to sports cars

Isn't it about time SPEED gave the road racing crowd some enduring respect? There are at least a thousand programs devoted to NASCAR racing on SPEED today (and tonight, and tomorrow and all the days after that!). We have learned everything about "them stock car boys" from what kind of material they use to line the bottom of the seat in their cars to what brand of underwear they use to line their own bottoms.

Yes, we admit it. We are sooo jealous. We so desperately want sportscar racing to get some consistent prime time exposure on TV. You have noticed that "our" races only come on once, and - with the exception of the SPEED News program - are never reviewed in any real detail days later, haven't you? The sportscar races come and the sportscar races go. But a NASCAR race, shucks y'all, they just go on and on (or is it round and round?) for weeks. Hours of air time is used every week to cover every race from every conceivable angle. Can't we squeeze just a single hour in there for sportscar racing?

At Lime Rock Park back in May, Grand Am President Roger Edmondson said that he would like to see his series featured in a regular Tuesday night format on SPEED. We agree. Imagine a one hour show,

every Tuesday or Wednesday night at 7:30 or 8:00 PM, that reviews the racing action from Grand Am and the other professional race series we mentioned at the start of this letter to Santa, or to the tooth fairy or the Easter Bunny or Don Panoz or Jim France or anyone who can grant us this wish!

We know Roger meant a Rolex-only show, and that would even be better than what doesn't exist today, but the SPEED producers could easily fill an hour slot with in-depth analysis of Rolex, plus ALMS, plus World Challenge, plus Grand AM Cup, plus Trans Am races. The stories are there and we are convinced the audience is too.

Come on SPEED. Make it happen. Sign up a professional announcer and bring in a few of the many drivers who compete in several of these series to do what the panel on Inside NEXTEL Cup does. People like Terry Borcheller, David Murry, Craig Stanton, Max Angelelli, and Spencer Pumpelly drive in more than one series. They can provide us with insights for several series and make comparisons. Combine this 'live' in-studio activity with race footage, and throw in a few personality features and you would have a winning combination.

You could call it "Sportscar Racing's Inside Line", or simply "Sportscar Racing This Week", or "Through The Esses" (we REALLY like that one!) Whatever the moniker, make it happen. Please?

The new Porsche LMP2 in Sunoco blue and yellow

On the Racing Fanatics website (www.racingfanatics.com) Ken May had talented artist Carlos Cristobal Jr. make up several illustrations of the new Porsche LMP 2 car in current and past color schemes. Cristobal presented the new car in the Lowenbrau colors of the GTP era, the Flying Lizard Motorsports colors found on those cars currently running in the ALMS, the Peterson-White Lightning colors (ALMS Porsche) and the famous MOMO red and yellow colors of Gianpiero Moretti. All of the illustrations demonstrate both Cristobal's incredible talent and the possibility of greatness that can be achieved by this new German prototype in the right hands.

Well, considering those hands belong to Roger Penske, we have to believe greatness for the Porsche LMP2 is right around the corner. We hope those corners, and the straights, will be taken at speed in the Cristobal-created color scheme we like best: the blue and yellow colors that Mark Donohue and Roger Penske ran on the Porsche 917-30 Sunoco-sponsored Can Am car. Cristobal's rendering is awesome!

Wouldn't it be wonderful to see those colors back on the track, run by Roger Penske Motorsports? And since we are making a wish list, wouldn't it be great to see Mark Donohue's son, David, behind the wheel? Imagine, Porsche-Penske-Sunoco-Donohue, the next generation! Who wouldn't want to see that combination chasing a checkered flag?

Roger, have you called David lately? David, you can squeeze in the ALMS between rounds of the Rolex Series, no? Sunoco, you still have a presence in racing, right? So why not build on that with an image that can only invoke wonderful memories - and be the creator of so many new and positive memories - for fans of all ages?

And hey! You could even be the ones to sponsor that new program SPEED is working on. I hear it might be on Tuesday or Wednesday nights. It is going to feature sportscar racing so the new Porsche Panzer Wagon would probably get plenty of on-screen coverage. And I'm sure viewers would even watch the Sunoco commercials! We will even leave the remote control in another room to keep us from surfing away. We promise.

What do you say sportscar racing fans? Why not send an email to the good people at SPEED TV? (Their on-line feedback form is at <http://www.speedtv.com/feedback/>) Let them know you would love to have an hour for us twisted folks. All the NASCAR coverage has "left" us out. It's time to make the "right" move and bring us an hour of news and race analysis about sportscar racing at least once a week. Just one

hour to call our own. One hour. That works out to a measly 1% of your total weekly air time.

How about it, SPEED, Roger, David, Sunoco? Would you care to make these wishes come true? Please?