

Ralph De Palma, darling of auto speed fans of two continents, gave 20,000 Chicago followers the thrill of the season Sunday at Hawthorne when he drove his Duesenberg flyer into the fence on the west turn while starting the twenty-five mile feature event. The rearing car knocked a dozen spectators from their high seat, uprooted several heavy posts and practically demolished the fence before it came to a stop.

Neither De Palma nor the railbirds were seriously injured. The pilot was cut over the right eye, scratched and severely bruised, but reported himself in good order that night after an unidentified Cleero doctor had given him first aid.

The split came at the end of a gasoline afternoon which proved somewhat of a disappointment to the overflow crowd which packed boxes, grandstand, paddock and every available inch of space about the mile dirt track. The fun began when the thousands started pouring into the stands to search in vain for ushers and their reserved seats. Perspiring ticket sellers advised angry ticket holders to "go ahead and find an usher," adding "try and do it" in an aside. As a result the flood was let loose on the reserved seat sections and tickets became merely slips of paper.

Race officials, lacking sufficient police protection, could not keep the crowd off the track and hundreds were in constant danger from the speeding cars. Several drivers dropped out of the running before the card was launched and old timers, watching from the stands, remarked that the remaining pilots were working hard to make it a contest and revive interest in dirt racing Chicago.

"Howdy" Wilcox, driving a Duesenberg, was the winner of the twenty-five-mile race in which the accident happened. His time was 23 minutes and 44 2-5 seconds.

Leon Duray in a Duray Special was the only other starter in the race. Ralph De Palma and Joe Boyer were eliminated when their cars collided the only other starter in the race. and Louis Chevrolet was forced to withdraw because of motor trouble.

The two pilots made a race of it for the first thirteen laps during which they alternated the lead, but at the beginning of the fourteenth lap Wilcox pushed his mount into a lead of five lengths.

Duray pulled up at the pits at the end of the lap and by the time he had changed sparkplugs and turned up his motor and returned to the track, he was hopelessly out of the race.

De Palma in a Duesenberg, established a new record for the mile when he won the five-mile race which opened the program. He negotiated the fifth mile in :51 2-5, one full second less than the previous track record which was established twelve years ago by himself. His time for the five miles was 4:19 2-5, and average of less than 52 seconds. Duray in his special furnished the competition in this race and pressed De Palma for the lead during the entire distance. He would have won had it not been for the remarkable speed displayed by the Italian in the final lap in which he established the record.