

# The Grand Prix de la Baule.

*Victory for Williams (Bugatti) in Race on the Sands.*

ANY race which is organised by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, famous in pre-war days for its Grands Prix de la France and latterly for the le Mans 24-hour Race, can be counted on to be successful, and the Grand Prix de la Baule, which was run on Sunday, 13th September, proved to be no exception to the rule. The race was run on the sands of la Baule, near St. Nazaire in Brittany, and the course comprised two parallel straights of about 3 kilometres each joined together at each end by two fairly sharp bends. The sand is very fine and extremely hard, but it is intersected at frequent intervals by channels made by the water of the retreating tide and heaped in other places into sharp ridges. As a result the cars are subjected to a series of terrific shocks, sufficient quite often to hurl all four wheels into the air at once while the engines have to work very frequently in an atmosphere impregnated with water and sand.

The total distance of the race over this difficult course was 150 kilometres, and eighteen competitors came to the starting line. In the absence of Etancelin, whose 2,300 c.c. Alfa-Romeo was unable to start owing to his accident at Monza, the fastest cars in the race seemed likely to be de Maleplane's 2,500 c.c. Maserati and the 2,300 c.c. Bugattis driven by Williams, Lehoux and

Gaupillat. In addition there were half a dozen 2-litre Bugattis driven by Mademoiselle Hellé-Nice, Eminente, Tédaldi, Sim Deul, Minaugoy and Lehrsfeld, four 1,500 c.c. cars of the same make driven by Nebout, Franck, Ansselin and de Béjarry, a 1,750 c.c. Alfa-Romeo driven by de Chanaz, a 1,500 c.c. Maserati driven by Antonio, a Derby of the same size handled by Rongeyron and an 1,100 c.c. Amilcar with Scaron at the wheel.

Although the weather had been threatening on the Saturday the morning of Sunday was beautifully fine and the sun was shining as the competitors were despatched by M. de Lapeyrouse, the mayor of la Baule. Williams on the Bugatti immediately shot to the front and at the end of the first round he was leading by a considerable distance from Gaupillat, who was followed by Eminente (Bugatti), Lehoux (Bugatti), de Maleplane (Maserati) and Tédaldi (Bugatti). Williams gradually increased his lead as the race wore on, but Lehoux, who had started as joint favourite with him, did not seem to be able to get the same speed out of his car and appeared to be particularly troubled by the spray which was thrown up by the racers. The only challenge to the Bugattis however, seemed likely to come from de Maleplane's Maserati, but this car was put out of the running fairly early on with a

broken piston, while the smaller car of the same make driven by Antonio also had to retire as a result of a defect in the petrol pressure feed system.

The 2,300 c.c. Bugattis thus had matters all their own way and there seemed to be nothing to choose in the matter of speed between Williams' and Gaupillat's cars. The former however, was definitely the faster on the corners, and before the end of the race he had lapped all the other competitors with the exception of Gaupillat. On the last lap Mademoiselle Hellé Nice, who was running sixth at the time, stopped to change a sparking plug and lost two places by this manoeuvre, whereas it seemed that seven cylinders should have been plenty to finish on. The final order of those who finished within the time limit was as follows:—

1. Williams (Bugatti), 1h. 2m. 49s. (Average 89.5 m.p.h.)
2. Gaupillat (Bugatti), 1h. 4m. 30s.
3. Lehoux (Bugatti), 1h. 6m. 8s.
4. Scaron (Amilcar), 1h. 12m. 7s.
5. Lehrsfeld (Bugatti), 1h. 16m. 51s.
6. Minaugoy (Bugatti), 1h. 17m. 45s.
7. Nebout (Bugatti), 1h. 21m. 32s.
8. Mlle. Hellé Nice (Bugatti), 1h. 23m. 36s.

## LETTERS FROM READERS.

### A Brooklands Suggestion.

I UNDERSTAND there is a probability of a 1,000 mile race being substituted for the Junior Car Club's "Double Twelve Hour Race" next year. Having been duly bored, in company with countless others, with this year's race, I hope something better can be arranged for next year.

As a probable entrant of a team of Alfa's in next year's event, I should like to offer a few suggestions to make the race interesting from the public's, the drivers' and the manufacturers' point of view.

A race of the type in question should, in my opinion, closely approximate to a genuine road circuit (which our politicians seem set on us not having). It should not be too long and therefore slow and inclined to pall on both the public and the competitors. The points of excitement should be of various types and spread out over as great a part of the track as possible to prevent bunching of spectators and to maintain interest amongst the public by varying the point of vantage.

The type of race I would suggest would be one starting at 1 o'clock to enable the public to see the start in large numbers, and finishing at say 6 o'clock, and could be run on two days if required.

The course should be similar to the old 200 mile races, i.e., start from the Vickers sheds, round the home banking and down the railway straight; the cars would then come up the left hand side of the finishing straight as far as the bridge, turn a right hairpin round a sandbank, back down the finishing straight and fin-

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