Foyt Claims Texas Twin 200s Are Dangerous

HOUSTON (AP) — Three-time Indianapolis 500 champion A. J. Foyt said Tuesday that speeds of championship-type race cars have outdistanced safety standards, making Saturday's Texas Twin 200s race at Texas World Speedway one of the most dangerous of his career.

"When you're running at speeds over 200 miles per hour, you're just pointing," Foyt told the Houston Sports Writers and Sportscasters Association. "You're no more than a guinea pig.

"I'm sure you're going to see a lot of people hurt," the all-time USAC championship winner said. "These cars aren't designed to run that fast."

United States Auto Club officials are predicting the championship car portion of the race at College Station will be the fastest auto race ever run. Mario Andretti and Gordon Johncock have been timed at over 200 m.p.h. in test runs.

Andretti was clocked at 211.765 during a tire test at the ten-mile oval at College Station.

"It's time the USAC did something," Foyt said. "It's a shame that it always seems that somebody has to get killed before anybody will do anything.

"When you see some of your friends getting messed up because some people won't act, that takes some of the fun out of racing."

Foyt referring to Merle Bettenhausen, who was sitting at the same table with Foyt. Bettenhausen suffered severe injuries and lost his right arm in a crash last year.

'The old yankee ingenuity of speed has gone past the safety factor," Bettenhausen said. "We used to run at 150 miles per hour and now it's 200 but the cars aren't any safer. If we don't slow them down, we have to make them safer."

Joe Leonard, the 1972 USAC championship division winner, said the air currents at such high speeds was the problem.

"The wing horizontal wing attached to back of Indy cars is just the opposite from an airplane. An airplane wing lifts up and the wing on our cars pushed down. When you're running by yourself, that's fine. But when someone comes by you and disturbs the air currents, suddenly you're left without that pressure."

Foyt suggested either taking power from the engines or removing the wing.

"Either one would affect the other," Foyt said. "Remove the wing and everyone has to slow down."

Foyt said other possi for making cars safer w to remove the supercharg cut the gas tank capacit 75 gallons to 25 gallons a more pit stops.

"It'll be one of the mo gerous races I've ever be said Foyt, a native Texa it weren't for the race h my home state, I probably not run."

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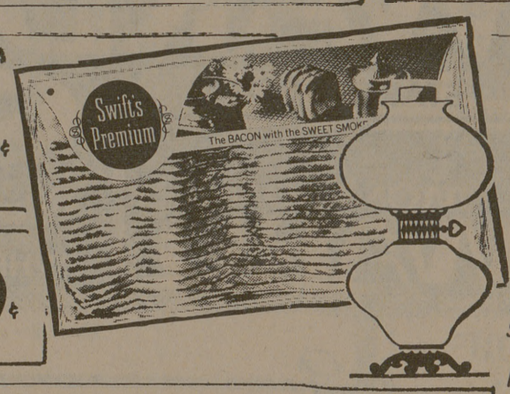

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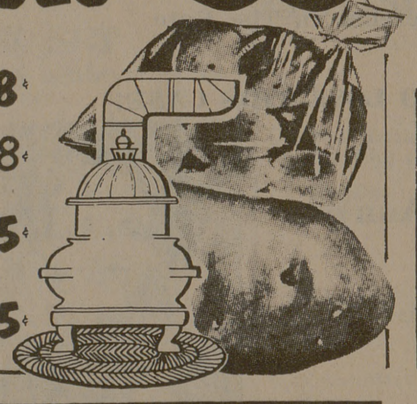

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