

CANADIAN

BULLETIN

MOTORSPORT

Special GP Issue

*Italy, Austria, Germany,
Britain and France*



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Team Canada's Eppie Wietzes

"I think that this year Eppie Wietzes is at the zenith of his racing career" — Paul Cooke.

A Canadian in Formula One. Really, it is nothing new. Canadians Peter Broeker, George Eaton, Bill Brack have all tried F1. For various reasons, none of them made a lasting impression. Certainly, none of them were super-competitive.

In 1967, Eppie Wietzes drove a Lotus 49 F1 car at Mosport. In the rain. In the Canadian Grand Prix. He was lying 10th when forced to retire with ignition trouble; hardly an auspicious debut.

Seven years later, Eppie Wietzes is to drive an F1 car again. Big deal.

"I was asked to drive the (Brabham BT42 F1) car . . . I wasn't too — you know — enthused about it — until I found out about all the people involved. I'm kind of enthused about it now." So says Toronto's Eppie Wietzes, who has accepted to drive the Team Canada entry in the 1974 edition of the Canadian Grand Prix, the Labatt's 50 Grand Prix of Canada.

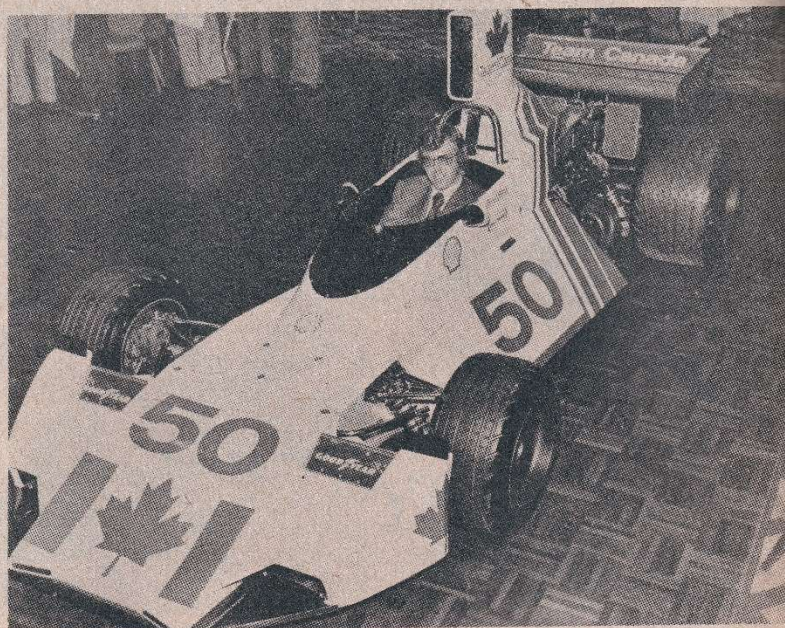
Charles Rathgeb: Millionaire. Anyone who was not involved in Canadian motor racing prior to 1968 can hardly be expected to be familiar with the name Rathgeb. Of course, any offshore powerboat fanatic would remember Rathgeb's entry in the 1972 London-to-Monte Carlo powerboat race. Perhaps any big-game hunters who happen to read these lines would know that Charles Rathgeb is one of only three Canadians to shoot and kill the 'Big Six': lion, elephant and leopard, buffalo, rhino and tiger . . .

Rear-engined racing cars: nothing new, huh? John Cooper — he started the trend in the late fifties — right? Wrong. Nothing is new, and certainly Cooper didn't invent rear-engined cars. Jack Sadler built rear-engined racing cars — like Cooper. Jack Sadler was a Canadian, and his Sadler racing cars were Canadian designed, fabricated and raced. Charles Rathgeb paid the bills.

Paul Cooke: Canadian Motorsport Bulletin has written about Paul Cooke before; earlier this year, John Powell described Cooke as "Canada's best racing mechanic" and went on to detail the fascinating history of Cooke's involvement in motorsport. Cooke,

Canada's Best Chance

Team Canada F1 Racing



you may recall, taught George Eaton most of what George Eaton knew about motor racing. George went on to race in Formula One on the BRM team. Maurice and Roger McCaig went racing, too — Roger in the big-time Can-Am and Maurice in the Player's Challenge Series. The McCaig brothers did well, better than most privateers. They did have one hell of a racing team . . . run by Paul Cooke. He organised the most comprehensively equipped and organised race shop in Canada.

Cooke's first motorsport managerial position was with a team called Comstock Racing, which he joined in 1963. The team won more than 30 Canadian events, including the Shell 4000 Rally twice. Cooke worked for Comstock Racing . . . Charles Rathgeb owned it.

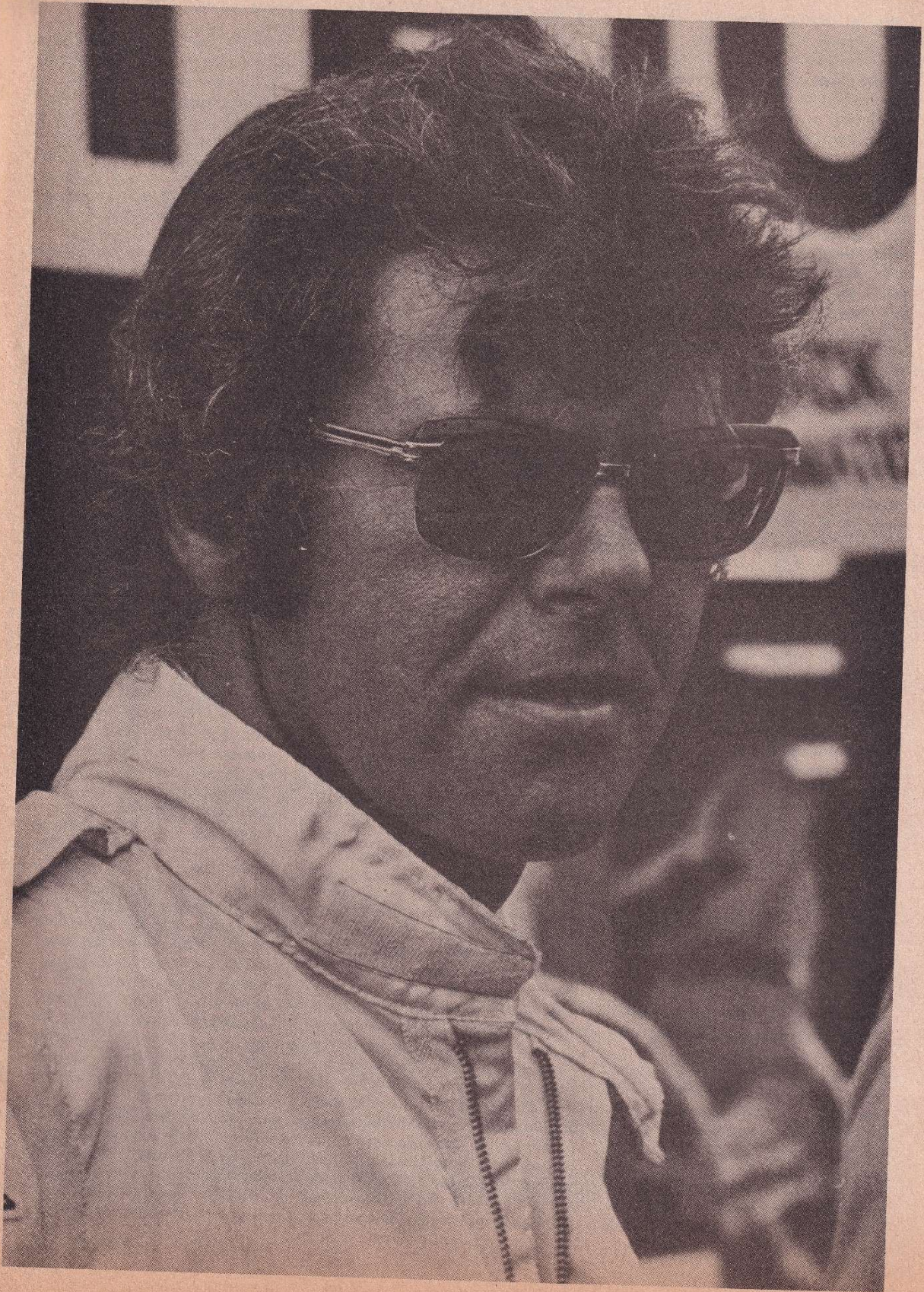
Eppie Wietzes began his motorsport career rallying with Paul Cooke. He raced a Sunbeam Alpine in the early sixties and was engaged by Comstock as team driver. Over five years Eppie raced a Shelby Ford Mustang, a Cooper Ford (the unique 'King Cobra') and a Ford GT40. Since 1970, Eppie Wietzes has matured in international F5000 competition, matured to per-

fection.

Now they are back together again: Rathgeb, Cooke and Wietzes. The famous trio that made such a big impression in Canadian motor racing in the 1960's has joined forces in a Formula One project.

History has a habit of repeating itself. Can Team Canada win the Canadian Grand Prix? Just as easily as Lotus, Tyrrell or Ferrari! Skeptical? See you at Mosport September 22nd . . .

Inside a carpeted banquet hall sits a racing car. The car gleams. A red and white blunt-nosed projectile. A Brabham BT42/44. Ex-Carlos Reutemann. Painted on its clean white nose a red maple leaf flanked by red bars — the Canadian flag. The car number is 50 — Labatt's are supporting the team. On the red Banana section rear aerofoil is the inscription 'Team Canada.' Along the sides of the slanting, wedge-shaped racing car are lateral red stripes. The airbox, a white canopy, flares over a 460 b.h.p. 3-litre Cosworth D.F.V. It bears the same inscription, 'Team Canada.' Down by the rear-view mirrors, on the sides of the cockpit canopy, two little decals. One is a



yellow sea shell which indicates petroleum support — Shell Canada. The other is a decal lettered 'Rentway.' Rentway lease trucks and heavy equipment — part of the Trimac empire — the McCaig outfit.

It is September. The Duncan Room of Toronto's swank Prince Hotel. The room is packed with people.

Rathgeb enters the hall, whips off his suit coat, and slips on a red jacket, too. He walks over to the car and stands beside Paul and Eppie. Light bulbs flash and pop, photographers squint through camera view-finders, film cameramen set up light standards, and film cameras whir quietly. The room is a hubbub of conversation. Charles, Paul and Eppie look at each other and smile self-consciously. Rathgeb fields press questions with cheerful equanimity.

Details of the racing car and the project are revealed. "I think that if we get the right tire and engine combination and stuff, I think that we will be in the middle of the field. The car is a BT42 with BT44 body combination, there is a slight difference in suspension details (from Carlos Reutemann's current team car). Whether that is going to make a difference at Mosport we'll just have to find out. This is the car that John Watson drove at the beginning of the year and Lella Lombardi drove at the British Grand Prix. We have two engines, one in the car and a spare. We have hub carriers, brake pads, gears, wheels, spares like that. If we need more spares, we will be able to get them. Dennis Swan, my F5000 mechanic, is coming to work on the car."

Wietzes explains why his Formula One effort by a Canadian is going to be the most comprehensive. "Dennis will be helping us on the car. Basically, there will be the three of us (Paul, Eppie and Dennis — Rathgeb is team manager). Dennis has a lot of experience with the Formula One Cosworth engine. When he worked for Gregg Young they had a Formula One Surtees car with a Cosworth engine.

"To qualify in this year's Grand Prix I think you can run 16's or 17's you know. I think that I can do that. My best time in an F5000 car at Mosport is 1:15.6. I shouldn't have much trouble. These F1 cars go round corners a bit faster, they are 250 pounds lighter than an F5000 car. Since I last drove in F1 in 1967, on the Lotus 49,

things have changed a lot, so I have no real reference. They didn't have wings at that time, and the Cosworth engine has developed considerably since then.

Seven years have passed since Eppie drove the Lotus 49 in F1 competition. Has Eppie changed much? "Well, I'm driving a lot harder, especially this year, partially due to having the right connections with the tire technicians, getting to know them, finding out a lot of things about tires, and having my own mechanic — for set-up, and things like that.

"I don't get to gain anything out of this ride in the F1 car, so it's a whole Team Canada effort. That's what it amounts to. With Paul Cooke involved, and Chuck Rathgeb, it brings back memories — it should be good. I'm not interested in joining the F1 circus, but we're making a hard attempt to do very well."

Such an unusual re-grouping of motorsport enthusiasts in F1, the most expensive undertaking in motor racing, bears examination. How is it that Shell Canada, Labatt's Breweries and Rentway Corporation got together to finance the project? It is not sufficient to say that three old friends engineered the package. Looking deeper into the entire programme, one finds, of all people, Harvey Hudes. Hudes, manager of Mosport Park and the man credited with the success of the Mosport facility after years of deficit, is not known for his altruism. What, then, is the connection?

"Well, I have a slight involvement in trying to bring the people in together on this project and trying to get them enthusiastically supporting it," says Hudes, "which wasn't all that hard to do once the ingredients were explained. These people are pretty sophisticated marketers in their own right, and they saw the merits of it, and Grand Prix racing needs very little explanation to anyone, about its high visibility in the marketplace. So I think that they decided to support a programme that would appeal to the nationalistic instincts of our country.

"I spend 100 per cent of my time in the marketplace of motor racing. I know all the teams, all the advertisers. I found it easy, once the programme was explained, to gain the enthusiastic support of the conscious companies in Canada. I'm pleased about it — and that's an understatement; it's a dream!"

Paul Cooke shares the enthusiasm the whole group has for the Team

Canada Formula One car — and its driver.

"I think that this year Eppie is very physically fit, and he has just a tremendous attitude towards racing this year, and it's showing up in F5000 where he has been super-competitive with the likes of Andretti and Redman and Hobbs. I just feel that he is really prime, and this was one of the considerations we had when we discussed this project together, before we took it on.

"This time we have a basically good car, with all the bits and pieces that we need to do the job. A driver in an F5000 car can get away with some things that an F1 driver cannot. The F5000 weighs more, but puts out more horsepower. The F1 car is lighter, and goes round the corners quicker, so the driver has to concentrate more to do the job right. The car is more twitchy, and requires a lot more to put together a quick lap time. We do have a lot of time to do a proper test programme, and we are looking for good results. We have a whole week of testing, private testing. The first day will be a familiarisation session, to get Eppie fitted to the car, and then we will spend some days setting up the car, sorting out the springs and sway bars and tires and wing angles and so on. Hopefully, by the end of the week we will be able to make a fairly serious attempt to go quickly.

"I think that we have to bear in mind that as the drivers of 11 or 12 different countries come together for the Canadian Grand Prix, we have to remember a couple of things. One, the championship for this year is more competitive than it has been for at least a decade. On the grid on September 22nd there will be any one of 10 or 11 men able to win the race. That means that race will be the most competitive race run in a decade, and we have to fit into that bearing in mind that those people have been leading up to this and have the experience of 10 or 12 Grands Prix already under their belt, and this one will be our first. So, all things taken into consideration, we have to play 'catch-up' in the next couple of weeks."

Eppie Wietzes. Paul Cooke. Dennis Swan. Team Canada Formula One Racing. Manager: Chuck Rathgeb. In the hard, exciting and dangerous world of Grand Prix racing, Canada is playing the game. Playing to win.