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BOBBY UNSER

Some call him "auto racing's speed king," others call him "the man who rewrote the record books," and still others call him the "Albuquerque Ace."

But call him what you may, Bobby Unser, the Albuquerque, N. M., native, is ranked by most auto racing experts as the world's premier driver.

Holder of seven USAC track records, the elder of the Unser Brothers racing act has few worlds left to conquer.

But somehow the lean, handsome member of the world's most famous racing family will find new grooves to travel on the 1974 USAC championship circuit.

For one thing, he will be hoping to repeat his USAC national championship of 1968, the year in which he also won the Indianapolis 500. For another, he will be attempting to increase his share of all-time USAC national championship points. He now ranks third, behind only A. J. Foyt and Mario Andretti, in that category.

Easily the most consistent race driver in USAC history, Unser has compiled an unmatched record for both starting and finishing high in the field since he first entered USAC championship racing in 1963.

During those 10 years, not including the 1974 season, he has started 167 races, winning the pole 17 times, starting the race in no worse than 10th position 132 times, and, get this, in no worse than fifth position 97 times.

In the 97 races he started in the top five, he finished in the top five in 68, while in the 132 races he started in the top 10, he was among the top 10 finishers in no less than 97.

Which would lead one to believe that Shakespeare must have had Bobby Unser in mind when he wrote that famous line, "Consistency thou art a jewel."

Despite his successes on the track prior to 1971, he probably achieved his greatest fame in the auto racing world as driver of the Olsonite Eagle, owned by Detroit sportsman Oscar L. (Ozzie) Olson and built by Dan Gurney's All-American Racers, Inc., in Santa Ana, Calif.

Under Gurney's direction as Olsonite team captain, the Albuquerque Ace virtually rewrote the record book during the 1971 season, winning the pole and establishing new track marks in seven of the 10 races on that year's schedule.

In 1972, Unser again was a speed terror in his all-new 1972 Olsonite Eagle. Running from three to five miles per hour faster than any of his competitors, he set new speed records at every track where USAC races were run. Along the way, he broke his own world speed record, established at Michigan International Speedway in 1971, three times, capping it with a 201.965 mph lap while qualifying for the California 500 at Ontario, a mark that stood until he beat it himself in Texas early in 1973, with a lap at 212.776 mph.

He won only one race in 1973 but, just as in 1972, led at one time in every race he started - the only driver to accomplish this - and wound up the season leading more laps (424) than any other USAC championship driver.

Since he began driving modifieds in New Mexico at the age of 15, Unser has competed in virtually every type of auto racing - Indy cars, stock cars, Grand Prix, sports cars, midgets, and, of course, hill climbing at Pike's Peak, where he has

won 10 events and still holds the record.

Bobby comes by his racing instincts naturally. His father, Louis, was a race driver, and all four sons followed in his footsteps. An older brother, Jerry, was killed in a racing accident, and a younger brother, Louis, spends most of his time in race-related activities. Only Al, a two-time winner at Indianapolis, competes with him on the tracks today.

The slim, 6 ft., 170 lb. chauffeur is the father of four children. A private pilot, he owns and flies his own plane, a helpful hobby in his career as well as in the automotive parts business he operates in partnership with his brother, Al, in Albuquerque.

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