

Le Mans 1955 - June 11-12

The Battle of the Nation Colours

Talking with elder people of the golden ages of motor racing they often refer to the fifties and early sixties, and one of the main arguments are, that back in these years commercials and sponsor money hadn't ruined the sport yet. The drivers were like fighter pilots from WWII as they battled it out in dog fights on the circuits in cars painted in their nation colours. Or at least in the colours of their teams. Red for Italy, silver for Germany and racing green for Great Britain, all spiced up with blue for France, white and blue for the United States of A, yellow for Belgium etc.

All this is only partly true. Speaking of Formula One back in 1954-55, when the red Lancia D50 and Ferrari F 555 "Super Squalo" were fighting it out against the silver coloured Mercedes W196, there was no competitive car wearing the racing green of Great Britain, and when first Vanwall VW and later BRM P25 started to show potential during the years 1957-58, the silver arrows of Mercedes were long gone. So it was either red vs. silver or red vs. green. Not all three together. With one big exception = sport car racing in 1955!

During this season all colours were represented. And the crown jewel of that season was to be Le Mans. Red was there by Scuderia Ferrari with their 118/121 models and Officine Alfieri Maserati with their 300S. Silver by Daimler Benz AG with their mighty 300 SLRs and Porsche KG with their tiny 550/4 RS Spyders. Green was represented by Jaguar Cars Ltd. with their D-Type and David Brown/Aston Martin Ltd. with their DB3 S as the most important ones. To spice it all up there was the white/blue Cunningham C6-R of Briggs Cunningham, the yellow D-Type of Ecurie Francorchamps, the red Ferrari 750 of Mike Sparken, the green Triumph TR2 of Standard Triumph Ltd. and finally blue by Ecurie Jeudy-Bonnet with their D.B. HBR-Panhard's, just to name a few of the most important contenders.

Sadly, this battle of the nations parade (and colours) was never to be. Due to the disaster and crash after 36 laps, leading to the tragic death of a driver and more than 80 spectators, Daimler Benz AG withdraw their remaining cars two hours after midnight, when their #19 car was two laps ahead of #6 Jaguar D-Type. So Jaguar Cars Ltd. won an empty victory. Much has been written about this accident shifting the guilt between Pierre Levegh (Mercedes 300 SLR #20) and Mike Hawthorn (Jaguar D-Type #6), and with the all unhappy but innocent Lance Macklin and his Austin-Healey 100S #26 in the middle of it all.

I will not comment further on it, just recommend anybody who wants to know more to read the ultimate bible on this subject, namely "Le Mans '55 - The crash that changed the face of motor racing" by Christopher Hilton and eventually spice it up with further reading of Chris Nixon's "Mon Ami Mate" and "Rivals", Eoin Young's "The Amazing Summer of '55" and Heinz Prüller's "Die Story der Deutschen Formel 1". Allow me just one small note. According to Heinz Prüller, the gesture of Pierre Levegh to raise his hand to warn Juan-Manuel Fangio just a fraction of a second before his own crash and death, as mentioned in many books (including the other titles mentioned (above and below)), is just a myth, started by Arthur Käser just after the race. Mr. Käser was press officer of Daimler Benz AG at that time, and by inventing this gesture of Levegh, he wanted to give the whole tragedy a human touch. True or false. Who am I to judge?

The above mentioned books are all relative new and very well researched, but also the elder works such as Mark Kahn's "Death Race - Le Mans 1955", Douglas Rutherford's "The Chequered Flag" and Mike Hawthorn's "Challenge Me the Race" deserves a read. Just as old first hand accounts in several motor sport magazines such as "Motor Racing" and "Road & Track", just to name a few.

Now back to slot car business. The recent release of the Twin Pack set of Jaguar D-Type #6 and Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR #19 by Scalextric have inspired me to make my own Le Mans 1955 collection, where the bright coloured cars can battle it out on my home circuit. Just for pleasure and without any tragedy. Please see for yourself.

My aim is - over the years - to include all sixty cars of the actual starting grid back in 1955.

Last but not least I have to thank Sean and Tony from www.pendleslotracing.co.uk (UK) for providing me with the rare RTR cars as well as resin bodies and accessories, and Milan Tomasek of www.mtr32.com (SK) helping me fix and build these rare resin kit cars.

And, of course, my friend René for giving me and my collection access to and space on his splendid web site www.slotrace.dk (DK)

#1 Lagonda DP166 (**coming soon**)

Team: Aston Martin Lagonda Ltd., GB
Drivers: Reg Parnell, GB / Dennis Poore, GB
Class.: 39 / DNF
Marque: Tassie Resin



#3 Ferrari 121 LM

Team: Scuderia Ferrari, I
Drivers: Umberto Maglioli, I / Phil Hill, USA
Class.: 42 / DNF
Marque: MMK 13



#4 Ferrari 121 LM

Team: Scuderia Ferrari, I
 Drivers: Eugenio Castellotti, I / Count Paolo Marzotto, I
 Class.: 46 / DNF
 Marque: MMK 13 (modified)



#5 Ferrari 121 LM

Team: Scuderia Ferrari, I
 Drivers: Maurice Trintignant, F / Harry Schell, USA
 Class.: 31 / DNF
 Marque: MMK 13 (modified)



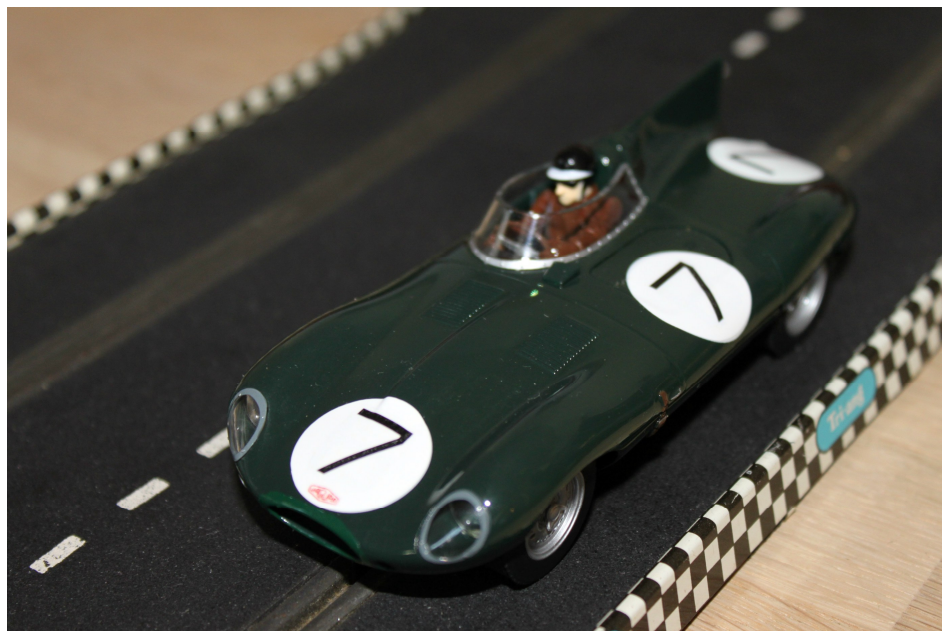
#6 Jaguar D-Type

Team: Jaguar Cars Ltd., GB

Drivers: Mike Hawthorn, GB / Ivor Bueb, GB

Class.: 1

Marque: Scalextric C.3058A



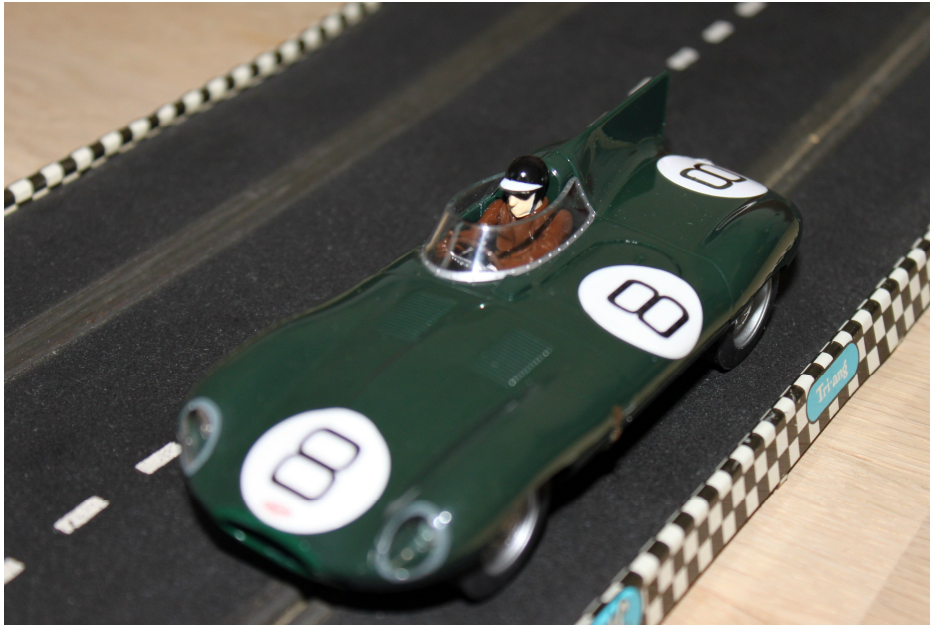
#7 Jaguar D-Type

Team: Jaguar Cars Ltd., GB

Drivers: Tony Rolt, GB / Duncan Hamilton, GB

Class.: 24 / DNF

Marque: Scalextric C.3058A (modified)



#8 Jaguar D-Type

Team: Jaguar Cars Ltd., GB
Drivers: Don Beauman, GB / Norman Dewis, GB
Class.: 32 / DNF
Marque: Scalextric C.3058A (modified)



#9 Jaguar D-Type

Team: Briggs Cunningham, USA
Drivers: William "Bill" Spear, USA / Phil Walters, USA
Class.: 48 / DNF
Marque: Carrera 25461 (modified)



#10 Jaguar D-Type

Team: Ecurie Francorchamps, B
Drivers: Johnny Claes, B / Jacques Swaters, B
Class.: 3
Marque: Carrera 25708 (modified)

#11 Cooper T38

Team: Cooper Car Co., GB
Drivers: Peter Whitehead, GB / Graham Whitehead, GB
Class.: 50 / DNF
Marque:

#12 Ferrari 750 Monza (**coming soon**)

Team: "Helde", F

Drivers: "Helde" (Pierre Louis-Dreyfus), F / Jean Lucas, F

Class.: 34 / DNF

Marque: MMK 09 (modified)



#14 Ferrari 750 Monza

Team: Mike Sparken, F

Drivers: "Mike Sparken" (Michael Pobejersky), F / Masten Gregory, USA

Class.: 58 / DNF

Marque: MMK 09



#15 Maserati 300 S

Team: Officine Alfieri Maserati, I
 Drivers: Roberto Miéres, RA / Cesare Perdisa, I
 Class.: 57 / DNF
 Marque: AA Bodies 32



#16 Maserati 300 S

Team: Officine Alfieri Maserati, I
 Drivers: Luigi Musso, I / Luigi "Gino" Valenzano, I
 Class.: 22 / DNF
 Marque: AA Bodies 32



#19 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR

Team: Daimler Benz AG, D

Drivers: Juan-Manuel Fangio, RA / Stirling Moss, GB

Class.: 28 / DNF (WD)

Marque: Scalextric C.3058A



#20 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR

Team: Daimler Benz AG, D

Drivers: "Pierre Levegh" (Pierre Bouillin), F / John Fitch, USA

Class.: 51 / DNF

Marque: Scalextric C.3024 (modified)



#21 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR

Team: Daimler Benz AG, D

Drivers: Karl Kling, D / André Simon, F

Class.: 29 / DNF (WD)

Marque: Scalextric C.3024 (modified)



#22 Cunningham C6-R

Team: Briggs Cunningham, USA

Drivers: Briggs Cunningham, USA / Sherwood Johnston, USA

Class.: 23 / DNF

Marque: MMK 16



#23 Aston Martin DB3 S

Team: Aston Martin Ltd., GB
 Drivers: Peter Collins, GB / Paul Frère, B
 Class.: 2
 Marque: OCAR 57



#24 Aston Martin DB3 S

Team: Aston Martin Ltd., GB
 Drivers: Roy Salvadori, GB / Peter Walker, GB
 Class.: 33 / DNF
 Marque: OCAR 57



#25 Aston Martin DB3 S

Team: Aston Martin Ltd., GB

Drivers: Tony Brooks, GB / John Riseley-Pritchard, GB

Class.: 40 / DNF

Marque: OCAR 57



#26 Austin Healey 100S

Team: Lance Macklin, GB

Drivers: Lance Macklin, GB / Les Leston, GB

Class.: 54 / DNF

Marque: Resin Bodies 27

#27 Salmson 2300S Spyder

Team: Jean-Paul Colas, F

Drivers: Jean-Paul Colas, F / "Franc" (Jacques Dewez), F

Class.: 41 / DNF

Marque:



#28 Triumph TR2

Team: Standard Triumph Ltd., GB

Drivers: Robert "Bob" Dickson, GB / Ninian Sanderson, GB

Class.: 14

Marque: OCAR 63



#29 Triumph TR2

Team: Standard Triumph Ltd., GB
 Drivers: Ken Richardson, GB / Bert Hadley, GB
 Class.: 15
 Marque: OCAR 63



#30 Gordini T15 S

Team: Automobiles Gordini, F
 Drivers: Jacquet Pollet, F / Hermano "Nano" Da Silva Ramos, BR
 Class.: 26 / DNF
 Marque: MMK SF03 (modified)



#31 Maserati A6GCS

Team: Officine Alfieri Maserati, I
 Drivers: Carlo Tomasi, I / Francesco Giardini, F
 Class.: 38 / DNF
 Marque: Carrera 25422 (modified)



#32 Bristol 450C

Team: Bristol Aeroplane Co., GB
 Drivers: Tommy Wisdom, GB / Jack Fairman, GB
 Class.: 9
 Marque: AA Bodies 52



#33 Bristol 450C

Team: Bristol Aeroplane Co., GB
 Drivers: Mike Keen, GB / Tommy Line, GB
 Class.: 8
 Marque: AA Bodies 52



#34 Bristol 450C

Team: Bristol Aeroplane Co., GB
 Drivers: Peter S. Wilson, GB / Jim Mayers, GB
 Class.: 7
 Marque: AA Bodies 52

#35 Frazer-Nash Sebring

Team: Automobiles Frazer Nash Ltd., GB

Drivers: Marcel Becquart, F / Richard "Dickie" Stoop, GB

Class.: 10

Marque:

#36 Frazer-Nash Sebring

Team: Automobiles Frazer Nash Ltd., GB

Drivers: Cecil Vard, IRL / Dick Odlum, GB

Class.: 52 / DNF

Marque:



#37 Porsche 550/4 Spyder

Team: Porsche KG, D
 Drivers: Helmut Polensky, D / Richard von Frankenberg, D
 Class.: 4
 Marque: Revell 08362 (modified)



#38 Porsche 550/4 Spyder

Team: Walter Ringgenberg, CH
 Drivers: Walter Ringgenberg, CH / Hans-Jörg Gilomen, CH
 Class.: 43 / DNF
 Marque: Revell 08362 (modified)



#39 Kieft 1500

Team: Kieft Cars Ltd., GB

Drivers: Berwyn Baxter, GB / John Deeley, GB

Class.: 60 / DNF

Marque: FPF

#40 OSCA MT-4 1500

Team: Edgar Fronteras, I

Drivers: Guilio Cabianca, I / Roberto Scorbati, I

Class.: 11

Marque:



#41 MG EX 182

Team: MG Cars Ltd., GB

Drivers: Ken Miles, USA / Johnny Lockett, GB

Class.: 12

Marque: Resin Bodies 21



#42 MG EX 182

Team: MG Cars Ltd., GB

Drivers: Dick Jacobs, GB / Joe Flynn, IRL

Class.: 55 / DNF

Marque: Resin Bodies 21

#43 Connaught AL/SR (**coming soon**)

Team: Connaught Engineering, GB
Drivers: Kenneth McAlpine, GB / Eric Thompson, GB
Class.: 44 / DNF
Marque: AA Bodies 54



#46 Kieft 1100

Team: Kieft Cars Ltd., GB
Drivers: Alan Rippon, GB / Bill Merrick, GB
Class.: 47 / DNF
Marque: FPF



#47 Cooper T39

Team: Cooper Car Co., GB

Drivers: Edgar Wadsworth, GB / John Brown, GB

Class.: 21

Marque: AA Bodies 17



#48 Lotus Mk 9

Team: Lotus Engineering, GB

Drivers: Colin Chapman, GB / Ron Flockhart, GB

Class.: 36 / DNF

Marque: AA Bodies 37



#49 Porsche 550/4 Spyder

Team: Porsche KG, D

Drivers: Auguste Veillet, F / Zora Arcus-Duntov, USA

Class.: 13

Marque: Revell 08362 (modified)

#50 Panhard VM5

Team: Automobiles Panhard et Levassor, F

Drivers: Pierre Chancel, F / Robert Chancel, F

Class.: 37 / DNF

Marque:

#51 Panhard VM5

Team: Automobiles Panhard et Levassor, F

Drivers: René Cotton, F / André Beaulieux, F

Class.: 30 / DNF

Marque:

#52 Monopole X88

Team: Société Monopole, F

Drivers: Jean Hémard, F / Pierre Flahault, F

Class.: 25 / DNF

Marque:

#53 Monopole X88

Team: Société Monopole, F

Drivers: Francis Navarro, F / Jean de Montrémy, F

Class.: 53 / DNF

Marque:

#56 V.P. 166R

Team: Automobiles VP, F

Drivers: Yves Giraud-Cabantous, F / Yves Lesur, F

Class.: 56 / DNF

Marque:

#57 D.B. HBR

Team: Ecurie Jeudy-Bonnet, F
Drivers: René Bonnet, F / Claude Storez, F
Class.: 49 / DNF
Marque:

#58 D.B. HBR

Team: Ecurie Jeudy-Bonnet, F
Drivers: Paul Armagnac, F / Gérard Laureau, F
Class.: 35 / DNF
Marque:

#59 D.B. HBR

Team: Ecurie Jeudy-Bonnet, F
Drivers: Georges Trouis, F / Louis Héry, F
Class.: 20
Marque:

#60 Stanguellini 750 (coming soon)

Team: Automobili Stanguellini, I
Drivers: René Phillippe Faure, F / Pierre Duval, F
Class.: 27 / DNF
Marque: AA Bodies 53

#61 Nardi 750 LM

Team: Nardi Automobili, I

Drivers: Dr. Mario Damonte, I / Roger Crovetto, F

Class.: 59 / DNF

Marque:



#62 Porsche 550/4 Spyder

Team: Porsche KG, D

Drivers: Helm Glöckler, D / Jaroslav Juhan, GUAT

Class.: 6

Marque: Revell 08362 (modified)

#63 D.B. HBR

Team: Ecurie Jeudy-Bonnet, F

Drivers: Louis Cornet, F / Robert Mouigin, F

Class.: 16

Marque:



#64 MG EX 182

Team: MG Cars Ltd., GB

Drivers: Ted Lund, GB / Hans Waeffler, CH

Class.: 17

Marque: Resin Bodies 21



#65 Porsche 550/4 RS Spyder

Team: Gustave Olivier, F

Drivers: Gustave Olivier, F / Josef Jeser, D

Class.: 18

Marque: Revell 08362 (modified)



#66 Porsche 550/4 RS Spyder

Team: Equipe Nationale Belge / Gustave Olivier, B/F

Drivers: Wolfgang Seidel, D / Olivier Gendebien, B

Class.: 5

Marque: Revell 08362 (modified)



#68 Triumph TR2

Team: Standard Triumph Ltd., GB
Drivers: Leslie Brooke, GB / Mortimer Morris-Goodall, GB
Class.: 19
Marque: OCAR 63

#69 Constantin C Barquette

Team: Alexandre Constantin, F
Drivers: Jacques Savoye, F / Jacques Poch, F
Class.: 45 / DNF
Marque: