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SCCA
Sports Car Club of America

PROPOSED

1985 Improved Touring Rules

The proposed IT rules which follow are quite similar to those in use across the country, but there are a few differences. Some regions allow new cars in the class, for example, while the proposed rules would require they be at least three years old. Gutted interiors are permitted in the Southeast, but not in these regulations. Current or prospective IT competitors should read these recommended rules carefully and make any suggestions in writing to the National Office (attention Club Racing, Dept. IT) before the proposed rules are cast in concrete for 1985.

1985 IMPROVED TOURING RULES

I. Purpose

This class is to provide a category of competition based upon series-produced touring cars which are suitable for both normal road use and speed events. Only cars three years older than the current year back to 1970 will be included in Improved touring. Cars will be prepared to Showroom Stock specifications except for modifications permitted by these rules. *Modifications may not be made unless specifically authorized herein.* There will be no "competition adjustment" for individual cars to either handicap or improve their competition potential. Cars may be deleted from eligibility. **IF IN DOUBT, DON'T.**

II. Updating and backdating of engine, drive train and brakes is permitted within the same make/model/engine size car.

III. Minimum weight shall be no less than the manufacturer's stated base curb weight (as stated in workshop manual) as raced, without driver.

IV. Authorized modifications:

A. Reciprocating Engines

1. Any carburetor jets, needles, and metering rods are allowed in the standard or approved optional carburetor(s). The number of carburetors and venturis must remain as standard.

a. Certain cars have optional carburetor(s) listed. On these cars, adapter(s) may be used to mount the listed optional carburetor(s), and external throttle linkage may be changed or modified.

b. Original (standard) intake manifold must be maintained. No porting or polishing is permitted except as allowed in V1.A.13.

c. All air entering the engine must pass through the carburetor or fuel injection air inlet.

2. Any fuel pump(s) may be used, and the location of the pump(s) is unrestricted except that it (they) shall not be located in the driver/passenger compartments. If the mechanical fuel pump is replaced, a blanking plate may be used to cover the original mounting location. Air cleaners may be removed or replaced; however, ram air or cowl induction is not permitted.

3. Exhaust emission control air pumps, associated lines and nozzles, and E.G.R. devices shall not be modified in any way except that they may be completely removed. When the nozzles/EGR devices are removed from a cylinder head/manifold, the holes must be completely plugged.

4. Any ignition system which uses the original distributor housing is permitted. Any spark plugs and ignition wires may be used. Ignition timing is unrestricted. Any battery may be used, provided it is mounted in the standard location.

5. Timing gears/chains may be replaced with ones of alternate material/hardness provided the original design and dimensions remain as stock.

6. Any exhaust header/exhaust system may be used. Exhaust must exit behind the driver and shall be directed away from the body. Catalytic converters may be removed. A suitable muffler must be installed.

7. Oil pans, pickups, and oil pan baffles are unrestricted. Dry sump systems are not permitted. The use of any engine oil filter(s) and/or accusump (accumulators) may be installed; location is unrestricted, but must be securely mounted within the bodywork. All oil lines that pass through or into the driver/passenger compartment must be of metal braided (e.g. aeroquip) hose.

8. Oil catch tanks: All engine breathers, if disconnected, must vent to a catch tank with a minimum capacity of one quart. Oil catch tanks shall not be mounted in driver/passenger compartment.

9. Engines may be rebored a maximum of .040" over the standard bore size. Factory replacement (or equivalent) pistons may be used, provided the dome/dish configuration remains the same as stock. Any machining performed on engine/drive train components shall be within the manufacturer's specifications.

10. Lightening of parts beyond the minimum amount necessary to balance is prohibited.

11. Manifold/cylinder head port matching is permitted providing that no material is removed farther than 1 inch from the manifold/head mounting face. No other porting/polishing allowed. (Rotaries, See Section B).

12. Any clutch disc and pressure plate of stock diameter may be used as long as it can be bolted to an unmodified stock flywheel. Flywheels must remain stock.

B. Rotary Engines:

1. Porting/polishing is prohibited.

2. Rules V.A. 1-9 and 13 above also apply. Flywheel and clutch assembly may be balanced.

3. An SCCA approved muffler, or a Super Trap with a maximum of 18 baffles, must be used.

C. Cooling Systems:

1. Oil cooler(s) may be substituted or added provided it (they) are mount completely within or under the bodywork, but not within the driver/passenger compartment.

2. Any radiator may be used, provided it attaches to the original mounting points and requires no modifications to install.

3. Cooling fans may be removed or replaced.

4. Thermostats may be modified, removed, or replaced with blanking sleeves or restrictors.

5. Air conditioning systems may be removed in whole or in part.

D. Final Drive:

1. Any ring/pinion gears (ratios) are permitted provided they fit the original housing without modification (4.11 maximum).

2. The use of limited slip or locked final drive is permitted.

E. Chassis:

1. Minimum ride height is 6", measured at the bottom of the rocker panel to the immediate rear of the front wheel opening.

2. Springs and shocks:

a. Springs of any origin may be used provided that they fit without any alteration to the original supports and attachments. Spring spacers may be added to adjust ride height.

b. Spacers (lowering blocks) may be used between leaf springs and the points of attachment to the axle housing.

c. Any shock absorbers may be used provided they attach to the original mounting points. The number of shock absorbers must remain the same as stock.

d. On MacPherson strut cars, strut housings may be shortened. Spring seat must remain permanently attached to strut housing, i.e. welded. Shock inserts are unrestricted.

3. Anti-roll bars:

a. Any anti-roll bar/traction bar(s) may be added, deleted or substituted.

4. Suspension mounting points:

a. Cars equipped with MacPherson strut suspension may decamber wheels by relocating control arm pivot points by use of eccentric bushings or plates. This adjustment is to be in the horizontal plane only. Alternately, upper strut mounting points may be relocated within the limits of the existing sheet metal. Adjustable mounting plates may be used. On cars with other types of suspensions, caster/camber adjustment may be achieved with bushings and/or shims.

b. On cars with independent rear suspension, mounting holes may be slotted/reinforced for purpose of camber/toe adjustment.

c. Bushing material is unrestricted.

d. No other relocation of any suspension mounting points is permitted.

F. Brakes:

1. Brake linings, brake pads, and brake fluid are unrestricted.

2. Backing plates or dirt shields may be ventilated or removed. Air ducts may be fitted to the front brakes provided they extend in a forward direction only, and no changes are made in the coachwork for their use. Disc brake rotors and brake drums may not be modified other than for truing within manufacturers' specifications.

3. Brake lines may be replaced with steel or metal braided hose (e.g. aeroquip). They may be relocated and may be given additional protection.

4. Brake proportioning valves may be used provided they are of a limiting type (in line).

G. Wheels/Tires:

1. Any wheel/tire may be used within the following limits:

a. No diameter change except that cars equipped with 12" wheels may use 13".

b. Track may be changed to accommodate larger tires, provided there is tire/fender clearance under all conditions of steer, bump, and rebound.

c. Spare wheel and tire must be removed.

d. Quick change/knock-off type wheels are not allowed.

e. Maximum rim width as follows: Class A 7", Class B and Class C 6".

f. Any D.O.T. approved tire is permitted. Racing, recapped or V-rated tires are not permitted. Size is unrestricted. No protrusion of the tire tread is permitted past a vertical line drawn from the center of the fender lip.

H. Body:

1. Fenders must remain unmodified except that the inner lip may be flattened inward for tire safety.

2. A front spoiler/air dam is permitted. It shall not protrude beyond the overall outline of the car and shall not be mounted more than 4" above the horizontal centerline of the front wheel hubs. The spoiler shall not cover the normal grille opening(s) at the front of the car. Openings are permitted for the purpose of ducting air for brakes, or coolers and radiators.

3. No part of the car including air dam/spoiler shall be lower than the lowest part of the wheel rims.

4. All door windows must be in full down position. Window clips as per GCR are recommended.

I. Interior:

1. The driver's seat may be replaced with any suitable seat. A racing-type bucket seat is allowed.

2. Gauges may be added or replaced.

3. Any steering wheel may be used, except that wood steering wheels are prohibited.

4. Any interior/exterior mirrors may be used.

5. Rear seat back and bottom cushions may be removed. No other interior modifications or gutting permitted. A suitable bulkhead must be provided between the driver/passenger compartment and fuel tank/fuel cell in accordance with Appendix A of the GCR.

J. Safety:

1. All cars must meet minimum SCCA requirements for Showroom Stock vehicles except as stated below.

2. Roll cages are recommended but not required. However, the following must be met:

a. Need not be removeable.

b. The forward part of the cage must attach to the floor of the car (not the firewall or fender well).

c. Roll cages shall only be in the interior of the car. Main hoop braces may be tied to rear shock towers or suspension pick-up points. No braces may pass through front firewall.

d. Joints and attachments may be welded or bolted.

e. Side bars are permitted.

3. Fuel cells may be used but must be located within 12" of the original fuel tank. All rules per G.C.R. are required for fuel cells.

4. Kill (electrical master) switches are recommended.

K. Car Classifications:

1. Improved Touring A

AMC Gremlin 6 cyl.
Spirit 6 cyl
BMW 2002 tii
Buick Skyhawk V-6
Capri V-6
Chevrolet Citation V-6, X-11
Monza V-6
Ford Mustang II, III, V-6
Mazda RX-2, RX-3, RX-4
Oldsmobile Starfire V-6
Plymouth Fire-Arrow 2.6
Pontiac Sunbird V-6

2. Improved Touring B

Alfa Romeo Alfetta
Alfetta GT
Audi Fox*
BMW 2002*
320i* (May use 2002 factory 2 bbl manifold and DGV Weber)
Chevrolet Citation 4 cyl.*
Monza 4 cyl.*
Vega, GT*
Datsun 610, 710, 200SX*
510 (1978-up)*
Dodge Colt 2.0*
Charger 2.2*
024 2.2*
Omni*
Fiat 131, Brava*
Ford Capri 2000, 2300, I, II, III (4 cyl. non-turbo)*
Mustang II, III (4 cyl. non-turbo)*
Pinto 2000, 2300*
Honda Accord 1751cc*
Prelude*
Mazda 626*
Opel 1900 sedan*
Manta*
Plymouth Arrow 2.0*
Horizon*
TC3*
Saab 99, EMS (non-turbo)
Toyota Celica 4 cyl.*
Volvo 4 cyl.
VW Dasher*
Rabbit*
Scirocco*

*These cars may use a 32/36 DGV, DFV, or Holley Weber 5200.

3. Improved Touring C

Chevrolet Chevette
Datsun 1200, 210, B210, F10*
510, 1600 (1968-73)*
Sentra*
Dodge Colt 1600 RWD, FWD*
Fiat 124 sedan, sport coupe
1400, 1600cc
128
Ford Capri*
Escort*
Fiesta*
Lynx*
Pinto 1600*
Honda Accord 1600*

Mazda GLC*
Plymouth Arrow 1600*

Subaru, all*
Toyota Corolla 1600*
VW Beetle, Super Beetle

*These cars may use a 32/32 DGV, 32/36 DGV, DFV, or Holley Weber.

THIS IS IT

Improved Touring

Richard Crites ITA Mazda RX-4 is faster than the SSGT cars, such as the Z-28 Camaro he leads here at Riverside. Crites was also Cal Club's ITA points leader at mid-season.

BILL SPARKS

Is Improved Touring The Affordable Future For Production-Class Racing?

by Bill Sparks

"It's the fastest growing class in the SCCA and the most fun."
"I think it's the cheapest racing class there is—that's why I chose it."
"There are a lot of guys coming into it who were priced out of the production classes, as well as new people who want to go racing without making a giant investment."

The above quotes all come from true believers—drivers who have had the IT experience. "IT" stands for Improved Touring, a new, fast-growing class that is presently recognized by regions along the West Coast and in the Southeast. Improved Touring originated as a haven for over-the-hill showroom stock cars, but IT machines are now being called the affordable production-class racing of the '80s.

The reason for the "Improved" part of the class name is because limited modifications are allowed to make the cars more reliable—and more fun to race. Thanks to the nature of the modifications permitted, IT in a real sense turns the clock back to the very beginnings of production car racing, when street-legal machines were only slightly modified to make them more suitable for the track.

Let The Genie Out

The origins of IT are interesting, for it did not begin as a wheel-to-wheel racing class. Rather, Improved Touring was conceived as a class for Solo I competition by the California Sports Car Club of the Southern Pacific Division. The genie was let out of the bottle when IT was pressed into service as a racing class by the San Diego Region, who seized upon it as a way to try and fill out thin Showroom Stock fields. This innovation spread north throughout the other West Coast regions, appeared in the Southeast this year and will debut in several other regions across the country in 1985.

The Southeast Division became the newest member of the IT club in 1984, adopting rules basically the same as those on the West Coast. In the Southeast there are presently only two IT classes for sedans and coupes, one for cars with engines over 1900cc and another for those with engines under 1900cc. There is a third class, however, call ITGT, for closed sports cars such as the Z-28 Camaro and Mazda RX-7. Permitted modifications match those in the proposed National rules, except interior gutting is allowed and roll cages are mandatory rather than optional. Although in only its first year in the area, IT has already attracted a good deal of interest from racers in the Southeast Division. Respectable IT fields have appeared this year and there are more cars under construction. Improved Touring is expected to really take off in the Southeast when all the people waiting to see the finalized National rules before building cars get into competition.

The Washington D.C. Region also has a budget-racer class called GTP. No, this is not a class for regional club racers with IMSA, the GTP stands for Grand Touring Pinto. The class is open only to lightly race prepared Pintos, which were chosen because they are cheap and plentiful. This is not exactly IT. A few more modifications are allowed and the cars run on slicks, but the intent is the same—to provide a class in which the low-dollar racer can be competitive. GTP has attracted a following in the D.C. Region, proving once more there is a demand for this kind of racing. Even if it means wheeling around the race track in something as unglamorous as a Pinto.

As IT has spread across the country, minor differences in the rules between some of the regions have started to appear, so the SCCA Competition Board is now proposing a set of regulations to standardize Improved Touring preparation nationwide. The proposed rules are published in this issue of *SportsCar*® so the Comp Board can get membership feedback before the rules are finalized and sent to the board of directors for approval. SCCA Club Technical Administrator Jerry Adams said the National Office is giving its blessing to IT for those regions that want it, but there is no intent to adopt it as a nationwide regional class at this time. However, because of the rate at which IT is growing, the powers that be in Denver want all regions using a common set of rules, because it seems possible there could some day be a big push to make IT a country-wide regional or even national class.

Briefly, the proposed IT rules are very similar to those already in →

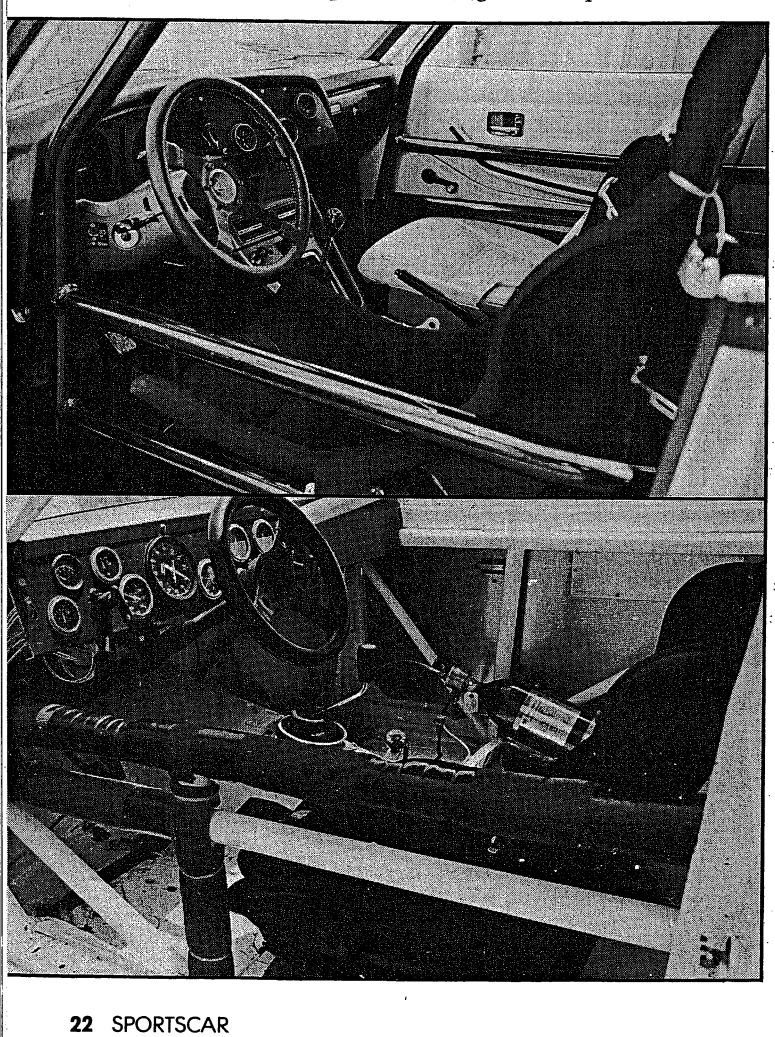
use. The class is open to sedans and coupes three years older than the current year back to 1970. Cars eligible are divided into three classes, ITA, ITB and ITC, based primarily on engine size.

Updating and backdating of the engine, drive train and brakes are permitted within the same make and model of car. Certain cars may use specified non-stock carburetors; however, most are required to retain their standard units, but rejetting is allowed. Engines may be balanced and overbored 0.040 inch; porting and polishing of intake manifolds is permitted and exhaust headers may be used. The maximum final drive ratio allowed is 4.1:1 and limited slip and locked differentials are permitted. Any springs, shocks and anti-sway bars may be used as long as ride height is at least six inches at the rocker panel. Tires must be DOT approved and can be of whatever size will fit the car without stretching the fender wells. The driver's seat and steering wheel may be replaced and Showroom Stock safety standards must be met.

Improved Touring has been a big hit everywhere it has been introduced. On the West Coast IT cars already make up at least half of the combined SS/IT field in every regional event. For many drivers interested in racing production-based cars with firm suspensions and raspy exhaust notes, IT has proven to be the only game in town. IT seems to be exactly what a lot of competitors—who simply do not want to commit the time and money necessary to field a top GT or Production contender—want in a racing class. For those unfamiliar with the class, a comparison of some typical IT cars with their GT counterparts is probably the best way to get an understanding of IT-mania.

The $5100 ITA Mazda RX-4

Richard Crites found his Mazda RX-4 parked under a tree on the owner's front lawn, and promptly bought the junkyard refugee for $100. A story commonplace in the early days of production car racing, when cars were routinely saved from the crusher by sharp-eyed drivers who saw them not as hopeless transportation, but cheap race cars. With Improved Touring, those days have returned.



Crites put 200 hours and $5000 into his junkyard special to rebu it into an immaculate ITA machine with all modifications p sently allowed under the Southern Pacific Division rules.

The Mazda's rotary engine was rebuilt with better seals and cross-drilled eccentric shaft (for better oiling), and Allison ele tronic ignition, headers and a Rotary Engineering air cleaner we installed. The chassis was improved with heavier springs, KY shocks and big anti-sway bars front and rear. The required safe equipment was installed, as well as a fuel cell which is allowed IT but not required. Crites, however, definitely recommends t use of a cell. He started the 1984 season in an ITA Mazda RX that split its gas tank in an accident, caught fire and burned . . . f 40 minutes. Crites wasn't injured, but a fuel cell was the first thi in his RX-4.

At midseason Crites led the ITA point standings in the Californ Sports Car Club Region. Some of the points were scored with t RX-2, but the RX-4 had also won the two races in which it ha been entered. Crites' enthusiasm for Improved Touring comes the surface when he talks about the amount of fun per dollar t class provides. He spends about $1000 a year to race his Mazd and that includes entry fees and fines. He believes track time in a IT car costs less per hour than any other class, and who is going argue? Crites has built a regional championship contender fro the ground up, for $5100, so he is a man who should kno something about economical racing.

Comparison: GT3 RX-3

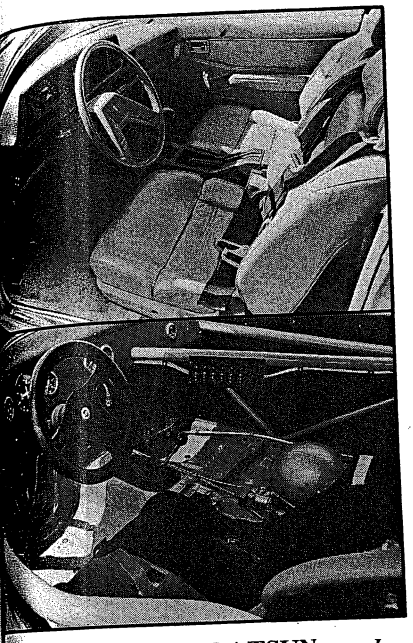
Bruce Short also races a Mazda that is a championshi contender. He drove his RX-3 to a second-place finish in the 198 GT3 National Championship race at Road Atlanta and set a la record along the way. At the halfway point in the 1984 racin season Short led the Southern Pacific Division GT3 poi standings. Short's Mazda was built by Clayton Cunningham, wh currently runs the IMSA GTU Malibu Grand Prix Mazda tean The Mazda RX-3's engine is fully competition prepped and ther are no stock Mazda parts left in the competely fabricated racin suspension. However, the car is not as radical as it could be—th chassis is not constructed of tubing and the rear end still rests o leaf springs, but it is still a serious nationally competitive race ca

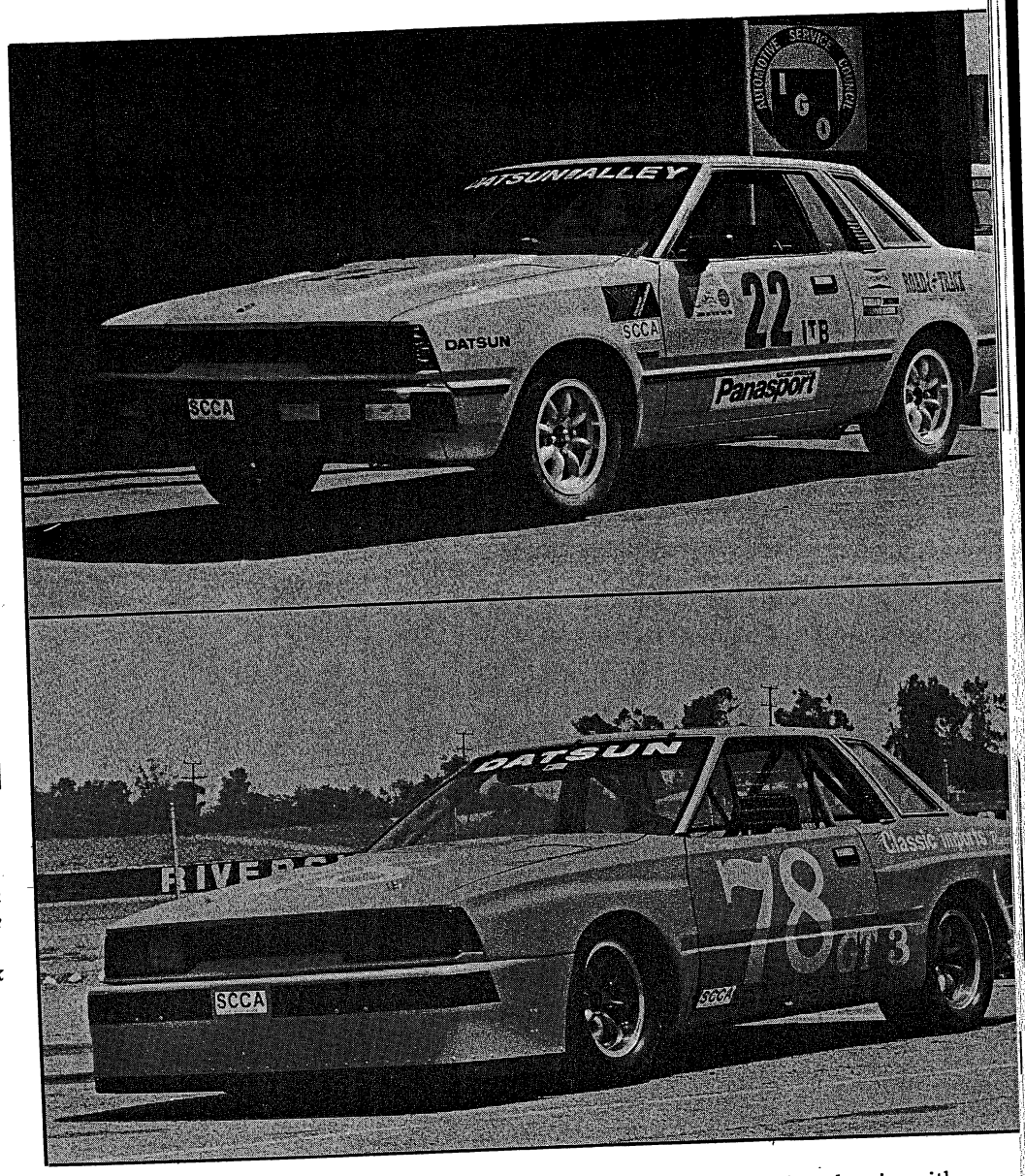
Short's GT3 car has proven to be around 13 seconds a lap faste than Richard Crites' ITA RX-4 at Riverside. But what do those 1 seconds cost? Clayton Cunningham estimates it would tak approximately $40,000, just about evenly divided between part and labor, to produce a similar car today. Proving once again tha speed costs money.

From SSC To ITB

The Datsun Alley-built ITB Datsun 200SX of Joe Rusz is a example of how quick and easy it is to make big improvements i a Showroom Stock car's performance with just a few of th modifications allowed in Improved Touring. Following the 198 season, this car was no longer eligible for national SS competitio because of its age, so Rusz turned it over to Max Jones and hi crew at Datsun Alley to be converted from SSC to ITB. Datsu Alley is a Datsun service shop that does everything from street ca tune-ups to the construction of race cars. The work on the 200S was done in just three evenings, so Rusz could make the first rac of the San Diego Region's winter championship series.

ITA MAZDA vs GT3 MAZDA — *Interiors seem similar at glance, but Crites' ITA RX-4 (top left) retains the stock passenger sea while Bruce Short's GT3 RX-3 has been gutted and re-instrumented. IT body (above left) is stock, while GT3 has flared fenders and air dam* (Sparks)





ITB DATSUN vs GT3 DATSUN — *Joe Rusz's SSC Datsun was converted to minimal improved Touring specs in three evenings. All that's left after converting Norman Balzer's 200SX to maximum GT3 specs are the body shell, doors and front cross member — and a $45,000 hole in the Balzer bank account.* (Sparks)

Because of the short time available, the car was not built to full IT specifications. Its 2-liter engine was pulled and a newer 200SX 2.2-liter unit was installed, but it was left totally stock. Competition springs, shocks and anti-sway bars were added, and a 4.1:1 limited-slip final drive was installed. Better brake pads and wider wheels and tires completed the Datsun's race preparation. Max Jones said just these few modifications made the car three to four seconds a lap faster than it was stock, and provided much more race car-like handling. He estimates Datsun Alley could do the engine prep work for around $1800, and convert a street car in decent condition to IT specs for a total of about $5000.

Comparison: GT3 Datsun

At the opposite end of the race preparation scale from the mildly modified Rusz car is the GT3 Datsun 200SX of Norman Balzer. Balzer's 200SX is an example of how heavily a production car can be modified and still retain any original parts at all. The body shell, the doors and the front cross member are the only stock components left in the car. It has a semi-tube chassis with suspension components built by both Electramotive and Balzer's own Classic Imports shop where the car was constructed. Even though based on an assembly line car, Balzer's 200SX is a fast, one-off, custom-fabricated machine built at a cost of $45,000. Forty thousand to $45,000 sounds like a lot of money to let go for a club racer, but evidently if you want to buy into the GT game in 1984 you have to be willing to pay the price.

A 110,000 Mile ITC Datsun

For most people, though, a car like Mike Anson's ITC Datsun 510 is closer to an affordable budget. Anson did almost all the work himself, and estimates he has about 70 hours and $3000 invested to make the IT modifications. The 510 was in good shape to begin with, and did not require a ground-up rebuild. At midyear Anson and his budget racer topped the California Sports Car Club's ITC point standings.

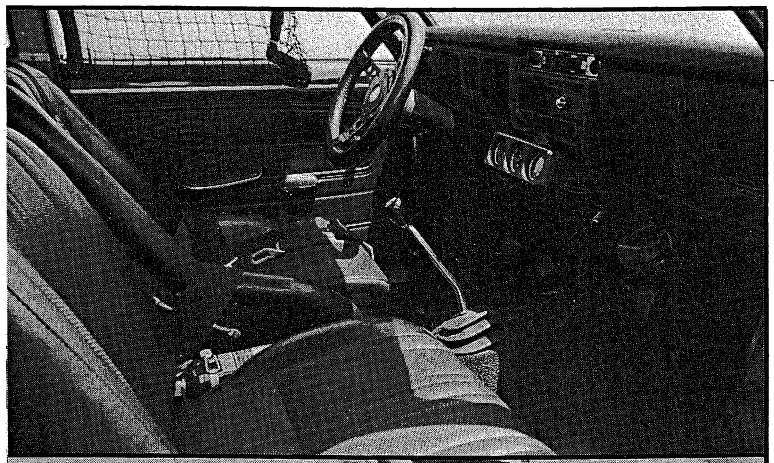
When Anson first raced his 510, it still had a stock engine with →

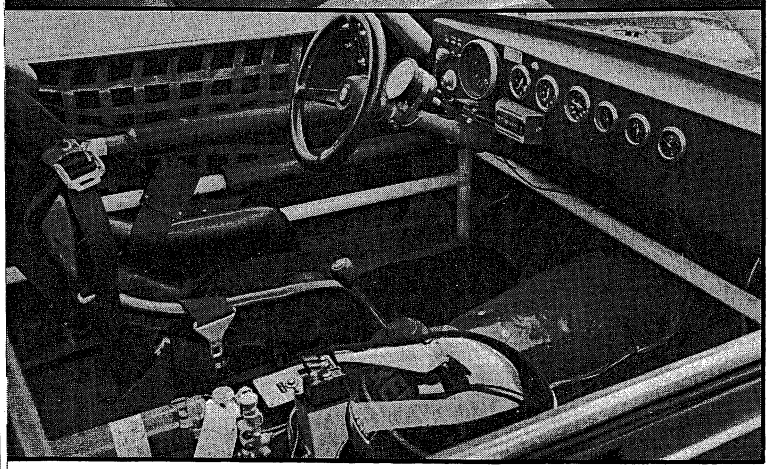
110,000 miles on it, but the engine has since been rebuilt to IT specifications. The carburetor was rejetted and headers, a welded 4.1:1 rear end and a bigger radiator were added. The 510 is equipped with Kontrolle shocks and Quickor and Interpart anti-sway bars; however, most of the parts on the car came straight from the Datsun competition parts book. Anson says his goal now is to keep the car as simple as possible, because the only problems he has had with his Datsun have been caused by "trick" ideas that just ended up tricking him. Anson has shown that in ITC keeping a car simple and cheap, and keeping a car competitive are not mutually exclusive ideals.

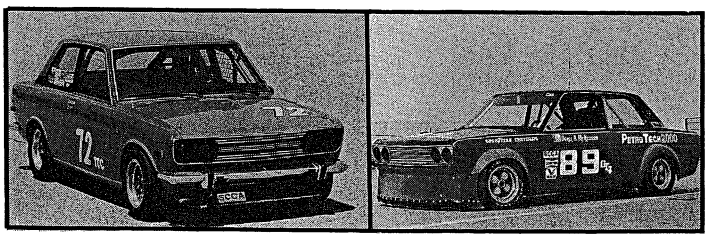
Comparison: GT4 Datsun 510

Derek McKesson feels his racing effort is a rather modest one compared to some of his national GT competition, but he appears to be using his available resources very effectively. At the halfway point in the 1984 season, McKesson and his Datsun 510 were on top of a close battle for the Southern Pacific GT4 championship. McKesson's GT4 Datsun 510 was his wife's street car until he converted it into a racer in 1978. Most of the labor in the car's construction came from McKesson. He says he can't even guess how many hundreds of hours he has spend building and developing his Datsun over the years because he just doesn't like to think about it. McKesson did estimate it would cost about $10,000 today just to buy the parts he has in the car. He says his 510 is 90 percent original, the only tubes used in the construction are in the roll cage, but the Datsun has still changed considerably since its street days. Besides the car's GT spec engine, McKesson has added a fabricated racing suspension, a rear subframe and a four-wheel disc brake system that he developed.

Of course, buying or building a race car is just the first step toward the victory circle. The car must also be properly maintained throughout the season. For the serious GT competitor this means following a strict maintenance schedule. Derek McKesson calls his Datsun a very reliable car, but he still tears down the engine after every 10 hours of use to check for potential problems. The weekend before each race an extensive check list is gone through to make sure nothing is missed in a stem-to-stern inspection of the car. Mostly just standard maintenance items are included in the list, such as checking the carburetor, timing, valve adjustment and fluid levels. The drive train and chassis are checked for loose nuts, bolts, hoses, clamps, wires and anything else that might possibly come adrift. Alignment is set before each race and brake fluid is changed after every on-track session. On race weekends the entire check list is gone through again Saturday evening just to make sure everything will be right for raceday. McKesson's biggest budgeted maintenance expense, though, is the $400 worth of new tires he puts on his car for each race.







ITC DATSUN vs GT4 DATSUN — *Mike Anson's budget ITC racer cost him $3000 and 70 hours. Derek McKesson figures he's got $10,000 in parts alone, and fabricated a racing suspension, rear subframe and four-wheel disk brake system for his GT4 — not to mention the front curtain.* (Sparks)

Biggest Anson Expense: Oil

Mike Anson, on the other hand, competed throughout most of 1983 with his ITC Datsun on one set of shaved Goodyear Eagles. He says his biggest regular expense is the five quarts of 20-50 Castrol and the filter he uses to change his car's oil after every race. Anson's pre-race maintenance work includes torquing down the Datsun's cylinder head and wheel nuts, adjusting the valves and bleeding the brakes. This minimal maintenance requirement is one of the things Anson likes most about IT competition. He says he works on the car enough to enjoy it but not enough to get tired of it. Anson made it clear that there is nothing enjoyable about a last-minute flog to get a car ready to race. He would rather relax in the shade and wait for his next track session than lay in the dirt and sweat over a high maintenance special. IT drivers don't let it bother them when people make fun of them for sitting around all weekend.

One comment heard over and over from the people involved in IT was, "It's just like the old days when you drove your car to the track, taped up the headlights and went racing." IT racing is close and competitive, the cars are evenly matched and reliable enough to run the entire race, but it is a low-key competitiveness; not the semi-pro, total war type found in some of the national classes. IT is a class you can approach as a hobby and still be a winner. Most of the present IT competitors would like to see it stay that way.

There are already concerns the low-key attitude of the class may become a casualty of increasing popularity. Everyone interviewed for this article had stories of new people interested in the class or already building cars. Naturally, as more racers come into IT, the competition will heat up and the pressure will increase. There are already complaints that some people are winning races with cars that don't meet the spirit or even the letter of the rules.

Nonetheless, the future of Improved Touring looks bright. Even if the competition gets more intense, the limitations imposed by the rules should keep the class attractive to the budget-conscious racer. IT appears to be the affordable future of production class racing, and just has too much going for it to be spoiled by success.

□