

## Fuel For Thought

with "Landspeed Louise" Ann Noeth

# What's An FIA World Land Speed Record Worth?

*"Only one who sees the invisible ever does the impossible"*

For more than a century the FIA has been the world custodian for all things fast. If you want to be known as one of the fastest people on earth, obtain world recognition for something done with motorized transport then to the century-old FIA you must go, read the rules, pay the fees and then do better than what has already been done under its scrutinizing eyes.

The FIA was made great by the courageous endeavors of such speedsters as Britain's Sir Malcolm Campbell who nailed his 300MPH dream at Bonneville in September 1935. The French folks also tallied the exploits of Eyston, Cobb in the 40's, Stirling Moss and Phil Hill in the 50's, the legendary battle between Arfons and Breedlove came in the 60's and Gary Gabelich raised the bar that Richard Noble would pass 13 years later in the 80s before watching Squadron leader Green grab his "world's fastest" crown with jaw dropping 763MPH supersonic runs in 1997.

The FIA's World Motor Sport Council governs all international motor sport, including formula one, world rally, karting, hill climb and more than a dozen other racing championships. The FIA also enjoys strong working relationships with such

diverse bodies as the World Health Organization, the OECD, the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Program. Running these many different series and working with such august global groups would lead you to believe they know what they are doing. However, when it comes to chronicling modern day achievements of land speed racing the FIA are bumbling idiots at least, or arrogant brats at best.

Yes, you read that right. I am most annoyed with the group and fully expect those responsible to explain the unconscionable behavior towards the land speed racer for the past 20 years. I have been told LSR is such a small part of the FIA and that it doesn't bring in much cash so that to keep records updated is more a bother than a responsibility. Sending out hard-earned certificates seems to rank lower than keeping the postage machine filled. Worse, the FIA refuses to supply knowledgeable observing stewards.

The FIA says one thing yet does another when it comes to land speed racing conducted in the USA at the Bonneville Salt Flats. I publicly accuse them of fraudulent conduct that is also prejudicial to the interests of land speed racing and reflects badly on the interests of motor sport generally. I make charges based not only on the FIA's conduct, but on overwhelming practical evidence obtained directly

from the FIA. From its own International Sporting Code that boasts:

*"The FIA will keep a register of international records in each class and a register of world records and will on request issue certificates of those records for which a fee will be payable to the FIA."*

To the best of my knowledge, all fees were paid by land speed racers IN ADVANCE of contesting any record as was ALL paperwork filed with the appropriate offices within the prescribed time periods. Next, in APPENDIX D / Art. 232 Registration of records, it clearly states:

*"The FIA will keep an up-to-date register of all international and world records (art. 106) national, international and world records will be registered by types of recognized records, in conformity with art. 217."*

Finally — and I admit that this is a reach but I am sorely torqued over this FIA fiasco — it states in APPENDIX B / 151. Breach of rules:

*"Any of the following offences in addition to any offences specifically referred to previously, shall be deemed to be a breach of these rules:*

*c) Any fraudulent conduct or any act prejudicial to the interests of any competition or to the interests of motor sport generally."*

Apparently, the FIA couldn't be bothered to live up to its own set standards when comes to respecting the rights of land speed racers. If that is the case, then the FIA ought get out of the world records business and transfer the administration into the capable hands of the SCTA/BNI or USFRA — both eminently qualified to oversee the pinnacle of speed achievements. If it is not the case, then I urge the FIA to get off their uppity collective arses and fulfill their obligations by getting the record books updated.

Now for the back story . . . In the fall of 2002 I contacted long-time USAC timer Dave Petrali pleading with him to intercede on behalf of TEAMVesco to get Don's FIA certificate out of the red tape, overseas

prison. I knew Don was struggling against rotten odds with prostate cancer and dearly wanted to get him that damn piece of paper he had earned with a pair of 458MPH runs before he died.

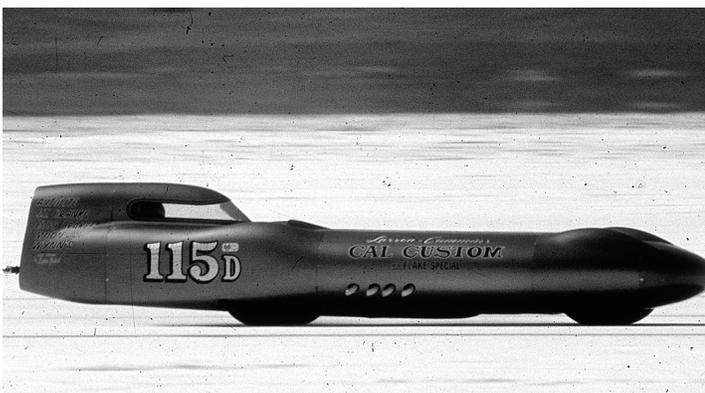
Moreover, earlier that year Nolan White lost control of the Spirit of Autopower right before my eyes while hurtling along at plus 400MPH while trying for the record also stole me to the cause. People die trying for these records. They give their life for little more than a line in a record book, so why the hell can't the FIA show respect for their efforts? For their lives?

Adding to the heartache is the long tradition of previous record setters. It is wrong-headed if we simply reject the FIA because of its lazy and unreliable actions because it cheapens the achievements of those that came before. I digress.

Petrali contacted ACCUS (Automobile Competition Committee for the United States) administrator Burdette Martin, the group that represents FIA in the USA and we volunteered our services to determine what errors and omissions needed to be corrected and updated. Martin enthusiastically welcomed our free labor and urged us to go forward; he has agreed to take our work to the FIA.

Petrali verified the speeds and I focused on checking everything else. Although we were able to fill in several gaps for endurance records this report will only reveal updates for flying start records in the 1-mile distances. Of the 140 flying start records 93 were set at Bonneville. All the missing/erroneous data were Bonneville records set by Americans, save one by John Cobb.

I contacted those drivers, or car owners to confirm data, times and speeds, often having them read from their FIA certificates. Some were kind enough to follow-up by mailing me a copy. In other cases, I was able to extract data from multiple news accounts, books, or other pertinent and reliable sources, but only inserted the data when at least three independent sources agreed. No favorites, only facts. Phil Hill amusedly told me that his record was set using the same engine, but a quick hone job added



Fred Larsen and Don Cummins built and successfully raced one of the most recognizable cars in land speed racing—the blue #115, a.k.a. the "Mooneyes" streamliner. Their mouse motor huffed and puffed and blew away records with Fred at the wheel — this after a devastating crash that earned him 180 stitches to close head wounds — his best: a 307MPH FIA 3liter record set in 1992 that continues to be the carrot in class 8.



Nolan White died trying to set a world land speed record. Don Vesco managed to get the deed done, but went to his grave before the FIA bothered to get the paperwork finished — more than a year after he satisfied ALL requirements and paid ALL fees. White's son Rick, who set a record in 1990, has his certificate, but White's name is absent from all published records listings.

FIA LSR LISTINGS FOR CATEGORY A VEHICLES

GROUP	CLASS	DISTANCE	START	MPH	Km/h	VEHICLE	CONSTRUCTOR	DRIVER	DATE	VENUE	COUNTRY	CURRENT
I	1	1 km	FS	144.200	232.067	Cobra	Cobra	L.P. Cavanna	30.05.1959	Autostrade del Sol		10
I	2	1 km	FS	158.210	254.614	NSU Compressor	NSU	Wilhelm Herz	28.08.1966	Bundes Autobahn	D	10
I	3	1 km	FS	164.500	264.737	NSU	NSU	Wilhelm Herz	26.09.1965	Bonneville	USA	8
I	3	1 km	FS	222.620	358.272	The Lingua Streamliner	Mark Lingua	Mark Lingua	28.09.1991	Bonneville	USA	10
I	4	1 km	FS	177.800	286.141	Kharkov L. 750	Kharkov	Eduard Lorent	02.09.1963	Bassuncchak		10
I	5	1 km	FS	203.500	327.502	M.G.	M.G.	Major Gardner	31.05.1939	Dessau		9
I	5	1 km	FS	241.747	389.054	Nafzger/Savage Streamliner	Nafzger/Savage	Howard Nafzger	21.08.1989	Bonneville	USA	10
I	6	1 km	FS	245.640	395.319	M.G.	M.G.	Stirling Moss	23.08.1957	Lac Salé		10
I	7	1 km	FS	254.900	410.222	M.G.	M.G.	Phil Hill	03.10.1959	Bonneville	USA	10
I	8	1 km	FS	275.990	444.163	Larsen-Cummins 115 D Streamliner	Larsen-Cummins	Fred Larsen	30.10.1967	Bonneville	USA	9
I	8	1 km	FS	310.266	499.325	Larsen-Cummins 115 D Streamliner	Larsen-Cummins	Fred Larsen	25.09.1992	Bonneville	USA	10
I	9	1 km	FS	297.860	479.359	Herda-Knapp-Milodon Streamliner	Herda-Knapp-Milodon Streamliner	Bob Herda	08.11.1965	Bonneville	USA	9
I	9	1 km	FS	357.937	576.044	HSE Streamliner	Hoffman-Markley	Harry Hoffman, Jr.	00.00.1992	Bonneville	USA	10
I	10	1 km	FS	346.460	557.573	Autolite 999	Autolite	Bob Herda	02.11.1967	Bonneville	USA	8
I	10	1 km	FS	383.824	617.705	White's Autopower Streamliner	Autopower	Rick White	01.10.1990	Bonneville	USA	9
I	10	1 km	FS	406.321	653.911	Teague-Welch-Banks Streamliner	Al Teague	Al Teague	18.10.2002	Bonneville	USA	10
I	11	1 km	FS	393.826	633.801	Railton-Mobil Special	Reid Railton	John Cobb	16.09.1947	Bonneville	USA	9
I	11	1 km	FS	425.050	684.052	Torque Speed-o-Motive Streamliner	Torque Speed-o-Motive Streamliner	Elwin Teague	21.08.1991	Bonneville	USA	10
I	1	1 M	FS	144.200	232.067	Cobra	Cobra	L.P. Cavanna	30.05.1959	Autostrade del Sol		10
I	2	1 M	FS	158.310	254.775	NSU Compressor	NSU	Wilhelm Herz	28.08.1966	Bundes Autobahn	D	10
I	3	1 M	FS	164.690	265.043	NSU	NSU	Wilhelm Herz	26.09.1965	Bonneville	USA	8
I	3	1 M	FS	179.426	288.758	Montana Magic Streamliner	Burkland / Mays	Nick Mays	03.10.1987	Bonneville	USA	9
I	3	1 M	FS	223.058	358.977	The Lingua Streamliner	E.J. & Mark Lingua	Mark Lingua	28.09.1991	Bonneville	USA	10
I	4	1 M	FS	159.200	256.208	M.G.	M.G.	Goldie Gardner	30.10.1946	Ostende		9
I	4	1 M	FS	179.560	288.974	Burkdoll Special	Keith & James Burkdoll	James Burkdoll	03.10.1987	Bonneville	USA	10
I	5	1 M	FS	203.200	327.019	M.G.	M.G.	Major Gardner	31.05.1939	Dessau		9
I	5	1 M	FS	241.767	389.086	Nafzger/Savage Streamliner	Nafzger/Savage	Howard Nafzger	21.08.1989	Bonneville	USA	10
I	6	1 M	FS	245.110	394.466	M.G.	M.G.	Stirling Moss	23.08.1957	Lac Salé	FR	10
I	7	1 M	FS	254.600	409.739	M.G.	M.G.	Phil Hill	03.10.1959	Bonneville	USA	9
I	7	1 M	FS	267.399	430.337	Fauling/Olds Aerotech	General Motors	A. J. Foyt	00.08.1987	Fort Stockton, Texas	USA	10
I	8	1 M	FS	275.100	442.731	Larsen-Cummins 115 D Streamliner	Larsen-Cummins	Fred Larsen	30.10.1967	Bonneville	USA	9
I	8	1 M	FS	307.977	495.588	Larsen-Cummins 115 D Streamliner	Larsen-Cummins	Fred Larsen	25.09.1992	Bonneville	USA	10
I	9	1 M	FS	298.359	480.182	Herda-Knapp-Milodon Streamliner	Herda-Knapp-Milodon Streamliner	Bob Herda	08.11.1965	Bonneville	USA	9
I	9	1 M	FS	357.472	575.295	HSE Streamliner	Hoffman-Markley	Harry Hoffman, Jr.	00.00.1992	Bonneville	USA	10
I	10	1 M	FS	345.760	556.447	Autolite 999	Autolite	Bob Herda	02.11.1967	Bonneville	USA	8
I	10	1 M	FS	384.738	619.176	White's Autopower Streamliner	Autopower	Rick White	01.10.1990	Bonneville	USA	9
I	10	1 M	FS	405.862	653.172	Teague-Welch-Banks Streamliner	Al Teague	Al Teague	18.10.2002	Bonneville	USA	10
I	11	1 M	FS	394.196	634.397	Railton-Mobil Special	Reid Railton	John Cobb	16.09.1947	Bonneville	USA	9
I	11	1 M	FS	409.978	659.796	Torque Speed-o-Motive Streamliner	Torque Speed-o-Motive Streamliner	Elwin Teague	21.08.1991	Bonneville	USA	10
II	1	1 km	FS	122.000	196.340	MPI Phoenix Armstrong Rotax	MPI Phoenix Armstrong Rotax	Stuart James Bond	03.10.1987	Ralf Elvington	GB	10
II	3	1 km	FS	99.529	160.177	Dreamliner III	Dreamliner	Thomas Leijon	05.09.1996	Falkenberg ost	SU	9
II	5	1 km	FS	76.700	123.437							9
II	5	1 km	FS	253.959	408.708	Costella/Team True Streamliner	Costella/Team True	Jim True	18.10.2001	Bonneville	USA	10
II	6	1 km	FS	137.041	220.546	Lincoln-Mercury LN7	Lincoln-Mercury	Lany Wilcox	31.07.1981	Bonneville	USA	10

two more cubic inches than Stirling Moss had. Those crafty MG engineers had planned it that way!

The work we performed was mainly for Category A / Special Construction Vehicles. Review the accompanying chart to see changes/corrections/additions noting that gray shaded areas represent our efforts. Petralski took it upon himself to check the math of EVERY blessed kilo and mile time, buy him a cocktail the next time you see him to say thanks . .

Most importantly, note that there are also still a few blanks lines. Dave and I just couldn't figure out who earned those lines, so if you know, please contact me through this publication, or refer to my website: [www.landspeedproductions.biz](http://www.landspeedproductions.biz) and help us finish the job the FIA ought to be doing.

Until the FIA owns up to its responsibility, I am making it my business to keep the records listing up to date. This is NOT a project we should have ever had to do, but based on the FIA's utter lack of record keeping competency, we were compelled to do so that the efforts of all land speed racers who attempt World Records may be honored. Also, it is a small way for me to honor friends Nolan White, Fred Larsen and Don Vesco, whose passings still tugs at my heart.

Further, when the FIA observers (SCCA stewards) showed up at Bonneville in 2001, neither had a clue about how to decipher the listings. They were frustrated that their many overseas phone calls to the FIA went unanswered as they tried to diligently serve the racers paying out considerable sums for the right to contest a record. The land speed racers and the SCCA stewards were both short shifted by the FIA in '01.

Because so many people have blown a gasket trying to navigate through the FIA website, I thought I'd

save folks time by sharing how you find the world record listings. Here is what you do:

Log onto the FIA website: [www.fia.com](http://www.fia.com)

Click on the "FIA Sport" drop down bar and choose "Regulations".

Look in the far right hand column subject listings, and click on the last subject "Records" which will bring you to a page of downloadable files.

Download Category A (Special Construction Vehicles) or Category B (Production Vehicles) or Category C (Jets and Rockets) for the current (ha, ha, ha) record standings list.

Download Appendix B which will explain what the classifications mean and how the FIA sorts the engine sizes. Don't get your knickers in a knot when you open the document and see the French wording, the English version is repeated after the French.

Download Appendix D if you want to learn about the regulations of Record Attempts.

To understand the chart also requires having Appendix B that will tell you the sorting logic for the groups (powerplant types) and classes (powerplant sizes) when you try to figure out any of the category listings.

A few other handy chart notes:

START can mean from a standing or flying. The listing shown here only reflects the flying starts at Bonneville that tried to earn a mile or kilometer record. The last column, CURRENT, simply shows a snapshot history of record holders, where "10" denotes the current record holder and each smaller number represents the prior record holder. This also explains why there are more than one vehicle/person listed in a particular class.

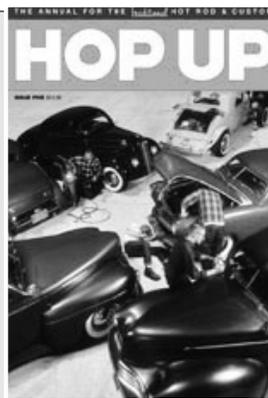
If I am completely off-base here and the FIA gets the World Records

listings up to date without further delay, posts it on its website in a conspicuous manner so one does not have to be possessed of Sherlock Holmes talents to find the data, then I'll be the first to applaud the FIA's fine work and demurely beg forgiveness for all the prior finger shaking.

Then again, all this effort might

be for nothing. The FIA might continue to ignore land speed racing in the United States and sniff its nose at our efforts. If that is the case, then I have only three words to say: dump those chumps. 🐷

*Louise*



SPEED READING

**HOP UP**

The annual for the traditional hot rod & custom enthusiast.

By Mark Morton  
146 pages / 30 pages color  
soft cover \$12.95  
HOP UP Products  
[www.motorbooks.com](http://www.motorbooks.com)  
ISBN: 0-9675570-4-6

There is no shortage of white boys on the cover of issue # 5, but when you turn to page 84 where the cover story opens, wonder of wonders. . .there is the exact same set-up EXCEPT two gals chatting away by the yellow coupe and a fit, fine looking black couple leans against the '41 Ford. A much more representative image of those enthusiasts who contribute to the car culture, but obviously not cover material to the publishers.

The similarity made me wonder two things: 1. Are girls only allowed on the

cover of car mags if they are half naked and beckon with thinly veiled sexual vulgarity? 2. Are we still so small-minded to think putting people of color on the cover is death to sales?

Getting folks to buy copies shouldn't be a problem with such top-notch contributing writers like Ken Gross talking up Eddie & Bud Meyer, Tony Thacker having fine crowd about the exploits of his LSR roadster and Steve Hendrickson's look at Harry Miller's genius and all the other great vintage photographs, but that cover shot struck me as unintentional prejudice. This was the same reaction I had when Autoweek's Rich Ceppos thought it perfectly OK to lump all car enthusiasts as "car guys." Cars are color blind and we would do well to imitate their lead.

Whew, that's a lot of chatter inspired by only two pictures. What about the rest of Issue # 5? Eric Loe's piece on the Rise and Fall of the Muroc Timing Association is fascinating look back to the pioneering days of speed although claims of 8,000 spectators out on the lakebed in the '30s it raised my eyebrows. Loe recalled the night Earl Mansell and his pal Norm Thompson tried to avoid the wild goings by getting some shut-eye after driving out to the middle of the lakebed, setting the hand throttle to 'way slow' and belting the steering so they ran in a perpetual circle all night with the headlights on!

Lakester fans will appreciate seeing dry lakes pioneer Fred Lobello's blue "Lady Bug" lakester profiled. The tank is the 2004 Historical Vehicle inductee for the Dry Lakes Hall of Fame. Overall, Mark Morton and crew are to be congratulated for shining a light on so many old rods, rodders and runs. There's a little something for everyone in Issue #5, even us gals.