

**SAAB**  
Soundings

**SAAB WINS  
U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP**



# SAAB Soundings

VOLUME 19

## Become Convinced . . .

*Some experts questioned the claim that the Saab 900 is an even better handling Saab than the 99. Some time behind the wheel and they were convinced. Saab has "produced a car that's totally right, right from the start," reported Jan Norbye of Automotive News. Make sure that you too become convinced . . . Visit your local Saab dealer as soon as you can and test drive the totally right Saab – the brand new Saab 900 . . .*

*The introduction of Saab 900 is only one of many items covered in this annual issue of Saab Soundings. There's lots more, from racing – and Saab's win at the SCCA Championships at RoadAtlanta – to police cars, air filters, touring Europe, and Tech Tips. If there's something else you would like to see, feel free to write to us.*

*Address your letters to: Editor, Saab Soundings, Saab-Scania of America Inc. Saab Drive, PO Box 697, Orange, Connecticut 06477.*

The Saabs were out front right from the start in the national championship race for Showroom Stock B at RoadAtlanta in October.

Don Knowles of Springfield, Virginia, had the pole position and next to him was Jon McKnight from Colonia, N.J., while the best non-Saab entry, an Alfa Romeo Alfetta GT, had third spot, right in among the rest of the Saabs.

When the green flag dropped Knowles took off and no one could catch him for the 18 laps of the race. They caught the Alfa however, dropping him to sixth or seventh place even before the first corner, and from then on the main battle of the race was for second and third and fourth and fifth place – and it was all between the Saabs.

At the finish, it was Saab in just that order: First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Seventh, with an Alfa in sixth place and Volkswagen Sciroccos, Opels and Datsuns holding up the rear.

Finishing second in the National Championship race was Royce Wray of St. Charles, Ill.; while Tom Walker of Seattle, Wash., was third; David Grunwaldt of Green Bay, Wis., fourth; and Bill Fishburne of Chicago, Ill., fifth.

The tight showroom stock action, although much quieter than most of the racing during the week long Champion Spark Plug Road Racing Classic, really caught the attention of the

RoadAtlanta spectators. This was only the second year the Showroom Stock classes were represented at the national run-offs, but already they are among the most popular among both racers and spectators.

The new National Showroom Stock B

champion, Don Knowles, is a 30-year old budget analyst in the office of the Secretary of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. A veteran of Showroom Stock Racing, Knowles has won over 50 SS races since he started racing in 1972. This year he qualified for the national run-offs by winning the Southeast Division Championship and in 1977 he drove the highest finishing Saab in the RoadAtlanta finals.



Don Knowles – SSB Champion

Knowles reached an average speed of 76.20 mph during the 18 laps around the 2.25 mile long circuit, with the top speed on the straight close to 110 mph.

Second finishing Saab driver, Royce Wray is a 47 year-old airline pilot who has raced the same red Saab 99 for two years. The Wray family is doubly represented at most SCCA Showroom Stock races when both Royce and his daughter Beth race Saabs.

For 1979 Saab expects to be back again, in even bigger force at the RoadAtlanta run-offs, with Saab 99 GL cars racing again in the SSB Class, and the Saab 99 Turbo in the Showroom Stock A Class...



# Racing for a Big Win



Showroom Stock racing – the newest class in Sports Car Club of America action – has become one of the most exciting events at most race tracks. Exciting for the spectators and exciting for the drivers.

The cars are basically stock cars, just as they come out of the dealer showrooms, with the only modifications allowed primarily for the sake of safety. Both cars and drivers are quite evenly matched and it is usually wheel-to-wheel action for the entire event.

In 1978 Saabs have been racing in the Showroom Stock B Class in over 50 national and SuperNational SCCA events – and in most areas they have finished right on top. In the new U.S. Road Racing Championship SuperNational events, Saab drivers have been able to cop the class trophy in all but three.

The records accumulated by the Saab drivers brought 11 of them invitations to the U.S. finals – the Champion Spark Plug Road Racing Classic at RoadAtlanta in late October. There, in a field of some 28 cars, the Saab drivers

battled for the National Showroom Stock B Championship . . .

On their way to RoadAtlanta, no less than five Saab drivers were able to become SCCA Divisional champions . . . out of a total of seven divisions. The Saab-driving division champions are:

In the Northeast Division, Jon McKnight of Colonia, N.J., an associate dean at Rutgers University; in Southeast, Don Knowles of Springfield, Va., a budget analyst with the Department of Agriculture in Washington; in Central, Bill Fishburne of Mt. Prospect, Ill., a Chicago public relations account executive; in Midwest, Dr. David C. Foerster of Oklahoma City, a plastic surgeon; and in the Northwest Division, Tom Walker of Seattle, Wash., an executive with the Weyerhaeuser Company.

They all admit that driving the quite heavy front-wheel drive Saab 99 GL to its maximum performance on tight and twisty road courses is not the easiest weekend exercise they can think of. But once you get used to the car – and the front-



wheel-drive – the Saab is a winner, a fact the Saab drivers have proven consistently.

#### **Endurance racing**

In addition to the regular SCCA sprint races, an old racing format has been revived for the Showroom Stockers – and again the Saabs have stood up to the test.

Endurance racing is usually thought of as the 24 hour grind at LeMans in France or Daytona Speedway in Florida. Back in the late 50's, however, the sport came into force for a few years, especially at Connecticut's Lime Rock Park, with the "Little LeMans" endurance races. In those days the Saab 93 two-strokes were the consistent winners of the Index of Performance trophies.

In both 1977 and 1978 the Little LeMans concept was revived at Lime Rock – and again the Saabs were there. In 1977 a regular Showroom Stock B 99 GL, driven by Don Knowles and Car and Driver Editor Pat Bedard, was the fastest sedan in the three-hour event.

And on Labor Day of 1978, Saabs finished first and second overall. Piloting the winning car was a real Saab racing veteran, Saab dealer Gaston Andrey of Framingham, Mass., who was one of the drivers in the Saab team in the original Little LeMans race back in the 50's. This time he

was teamed up with regular Showroom Stock racer Jon McKnight, and together they were able to practically dominate the race from beginning to end. Their only challenge really came from the second place Saab, for the second year in a row driven by Knowles and Bedard. The two Saabs finished a total of 144 laps around the Lime Rock layout in the three-hour race. The rest of the field was quite a ways behind.

In 1979 things may be even more active for the racing Saabs in Showroom Stock. According to SCCA rules, Showroom Stock cars have to be at least one model year old, so the Saab 99 models will again be there racing, but with one important addition.

The Saab 99 GL will continue to race in the B Class, where it has done so well during 1978. And in the A Class will be the Saab Turbo, which should be able to show all of the competitors how quick the combination of Saab front-wheel-drive and Saab Turbo power can be.

Look for the Saabs again in 1979, in both SSA and SSB class – and don't forget that SCCA national and regional races are run on almost every available road racing circuit in the United States. When there's a race nearby, make a point of seeing it and cheer those winning Saabs along to another Championship.



*Father-Daughter team – Royce Wray, who finished second at the RoadAtlanta finals expects stiff competition next year from daughter Beth, who started racing her own Saab in 1978.*