

HOLD A CORVETTE DRIVEAWAY



Corvette caravan with police escort heads for downtown Indianapolis.



78-car Corvette pit stop at the famed Indianapolis Speedway.



Everyone was extra careful on the deadly northeast turn.

The roar of 78 Corvette engines reverberated through empty framework structures of the Indiana State Fairgrounds one day last March. This was no team of stunt drivers practicing to a vacant audience. What was taking place was the start of one of the most ambitious sports car caravans ever to hit the broad avenues of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Behind the project were an energetic group of Corvette salesmen, who, in the Fall of 1959, formed a new and different type of Corvette Club. The members call themselves the "Hustling Hoosiers." And "hustle" they do. The group is dedicated to making the midwest the sports car equal of the east and west coasts. Coastal Corvetters take note! The problem was twofold: first, get a large group of owners into their new Corvettes; and second, stage an event for the group. Both were solved simultaneously by staging the driveaway. (Technically, a driveaway is a parade of a large group of new cars. It sounds relatively simple, but it wasn't.)

The steel strike, then winter weather caused postponement of the event, but the undaunted Hoosiers tried once again. On Tuesday, March 29, they met with success. After a sumptuous kickoff luncheon at the Indianapolis Athletic Club, participating members of the driveaway were transported by chartered bus to the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Each of the 78 gleaming

Corvettes had come to the Fairgrounds directly from the St. Louis Corvette Plant. Drivers quickly claimed their respective cars. For those owners who couldn't make it to Indianapolis for the parade, happy dealers were all too ready to drive the new Corvettes themselves.

One after another the drivers filed out into the city streets and wound their way towards downtown Indianapolis. An escort of twelve motorcycle policemen cleared the way. Press, radio and television announcements had given the natives fair warning of the coming caravan. Crowds lined the streets to watch the gala event. After arriving at the impressive landmark, Monument Circle, in the center of downtown Indianapolis, the Corvettes proceeded to the world's most famous racetrack, the Indianapolis Speedway. There, drivers experienced the thrill of giving their cars a shakedown spin around the 2½-mile oval. This marked the first time that any cars, other than for testing or actual racing, had been allowed on the fast track.

Harry Heathman, Chevrolet's Indianapolis Zone manager, who had a great deal to do with the success of the driveaway, certainly made good his promise that the 78-car Corvette parade would be one of the sportiest sights Indianapolis ever laid eyes upon. (For those who are wondering, Mr. Heathman managed to drive one of those sporty new Corvettes in the parade himself.)

The men responsible for the Hustling Hoosier sports car driveaway: Mr. Clarence Cagle, Supt. of Track; Mr. H. E. Heathman, Jr., Chevrolet Indianapolis Zone Manager; Mr. A. W. Bloemker, Director of Publicity; Mr. J. D. Thompson, Chevrolet Midwest Regional Manager.

