



Racing Legends like Stirling Moss, Giles Villeneuve, Bruce McLaren and Richard Petty have all taken on this challenging track.

The History of Canadian Tire Motorsport Park

Heather Ridge (Curator)
Dennis Jeffery
(Education Coordinator)

CLARINGTON MUSEUM

Celebrate Racing at the Clarington Motorsport Expo, June 10-12, in the Garnet Rickard Centre as part of the Rotary Ribs & Brews Festival. This feature display will showcase race cars, drivers and memorabilia focusing on the history of Canadian Tire Motorsport Park and will celebrate anniversaries of the Can-Am Challenge Series, the Players/GM Challenge Series and the Rothmans-Porsche Challenge Cup. The exhibit

is part of the Clarington Competes sports history exhibit featured at the Sarah Jane Williams Heritage Centre, where the AVRO ARROW: A Dream Denied and Clarington Remembers: Local Heroes from WWI and WWII exhibits are on display.

The history of motorsport in Clarington is closely tied with the development and successes of Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, formerly known as Mosport International Raceway. Many important racing events have been held at the legendary facility over the years and visitors continue to visit Clarington from all parts of the continent to take part



in a weekend full of racing entertainment. Racing legends like Stirling Moss, Gilles Villeneuve, Bruce McLaren and Richard Petty have all raced on the challenging track. This year is extra special as it marks anniversaries in the history of racing at the CTMP:

the 50th anniversary of the Can-Am Challenge Series, the 30th anniversary of the Players/GM Challenge Series, and the 30th anniversary of the Rothmans-Porsche Challenge Cup. To properly tell the history of Canadian

The History of Canadian Tire Motorsport Park

Continued from Page 1

Tire Motorsport Park, we have to start at the very beginning.

Start your Engines (The Early Years)

Early in 1958, the British Empire Motor Club (BEMC) formed a committee to investigate the possibility of selecting and purchasing a piece of property for a road racing course. Prior to the development of Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (CTMP), the area was farmland, just like the area surrounding it. The name Mosport Ltd. was created using a short form for Motorsport and was intended to be pronounced as two words, "Mo-Sport",

although it is often mispronounced as "Moss-Port".

By 1960, plans were well underway on developing the track when Mr. Stirling Moss took a look at the track layout. Stirling Moss was a famous British racing driver, who raced from 1948 to 1962, winning 212 of the 529 races he entered, including 16 Formula One Grand Prix's. Moss recommended that the planned single turn radius carousel hairpin at the south end be changed to a 90 degree right turn followed by another 90 degree right turn. This part of the track has since been known as Moss Corner (turn 5a, 5b and 5c).

The track was ready by May of 1961 with a price tag of \$500,000, double the original estimate. The track was 2.459 miles (3.957 km) long and 28 feet wide, and unlike many historic motorsport venues, the layout of CTMP remains virtually unchanged from its original form. That same year in June, the Clubman's race was organized by the Oakville Light Car Club as the inaugural event. Later in June the first major racing event was the Player's 200, appropriately won by Stirling Moss in his Coventry Lotus 19.

In 1964, Mosport was enjoying huge success as the Player's 200 race saw a record 52,000 people in attendance. That record was shattered the following year when the same race brought in 58,000 people. By 1966, the elevated construction costs caught up with Mosport Ltd. and it was liquidated and sold by the receiver to Cantrak Motor Racing Ltd. whose accountant was Harvey M. Hudes. Mr. Hudes remained the driving force at the track for the next 30 years until his death in 1996. The Can-

Am Challenge Series also made its debut in 1966. The first race was held on September 11, 1966 at Circuit Mt. Tremblant, and won by John Surtees (GB). The overall series champion was Surtees (GB), second overall was Mark Donahue (USA) and third overall was Bruce McLaren (NZ). The top Canadian was John Cannon, who came in 10th.

Halfway Point (The Middle Years)

The late 1960's and early 1970's saw many international races held at the track featuring well-known drivers such as Bruce McLaren, John Surtees and Denny Hulme. In 1970, major music event Strawberry Fields was held at the track, featuring many international artists that had performed the previous year at Woodstock including: Sly & the Family Stone, Melanie, Ten Years After and Mountain. Other artists that performed during the three day festival included Jethro Tull and Alice Cooper.

Mosport Park became a publicly traded company on the Vancouver Stock Exchange in 1974. In 1977, racing legend Gilles Villeneuve raced in the Canadian Grand Prix, in what would turn out to be his last race at the track. Many accidents occurred during this race, raising concerns over the safety of the bumpy track at Mosport. The following year, a new circuit was constructed in Montreal, Circuit Île Notre-Dame, where the race was first held in 1978 and has been ever since.

In 1986, two important series got their start at the track: the Players/GM Challenge series and the Rothmans-Porsche Challenge Cup. The first Players/GM Challenge Series featured 1986 Chevrolet Camaro's and Firebirds. The engines



were factory sealed, with no modifications allowed. Each car had to be licensed for the road and driven to the track. There were a total of eight races in the series, with 74 cars ordered prior to the first race. The first race was held at CTMP on Sunday, May 18th, 1986 and the winner was also Spenard; the overall series champion was also Spenard. The first Rothmans-Porsche Challenge Cup featured 1986 Model 944 Porsche cars with power train, 4 cylinder, naturally aspirated, front mounted, 2.5 liter, 143 HP engines with rear trans axle. The first race was held at CTMP on Sunday, June 6th, 1986 with Spenard winning again. The overall series champion was Kees Nierop. A new half-mile oval track was opened at the park in 1989 and was named the Mosport International Speedway. The track included an 800-foot long straightaway, 6 degree banked corners and two grandstands with seating for 8,500 people.

Checkered Flag (The Recent Years)

The 1990s saw many changes at the park following the death of Facility President and General Manager Harvey M. Hudes in 1996. The following year, the International Motorsports Group (IMSG) took over the facility lease and the Park's name

was changed to Mosport International Raceway. By 1998, Panoz Motorsports had taken over the lease from IMSG and later that year, Panoz Motorsports purchased the entire facility. Many improvements were made to the facility in 1999, including the extension of the pit lane and an addition of a Driver Development Centre.

Renovations and improvements continued into the 2000's with a widening and repaving of the Grand Prix Track, and the creation of the Motorsport International Karting Complex in 2005. By 2006, new debris fencing was beginning to be installed around the circuit just in time for the 50th anniversary of the track in 2010. Canadian Motorsport Ventures Ltd. purchased the facility in 2011 and a year later Mosport International Raceway was re-branded Canadian Tire Motorsport Park after entering a long-term partnership with Canadian Tire. Construction began later that year on a new Events Centre located on the outside of Corner 10. Many more improvements continue to be made to the track as it welcomes more top series and drivers from around the world. Celebrate racing with us on June 10-12 at the Rotary Ribs and Brews in Clarington!

