

FOR INDY-TYPE CARS

10/25/67

Bakersfield Driver Snider Enters Hanford 200-Miler

By ART KAY

George Snider, 26-year-old Bakersfield racing-car driver who has competed in two of the Memorial Day 500-Mile Classics in Indianapolis, has entered the "California 200" which takes place at the new Hanford Motor Speedway next Sunday.

The field includes eight of the top 10 in USAC points and reads like a miniature Indy. Early entries include A. J. Foyt of Houston, Texas; Mario Andretti of Nazareth, Pa.; Al and Bobby Unser, both of Albuquerque, N.M.; Gordon Johncock of Hastings, Mich.; Jim McElreath of Arlington, Texas; Roger McCluskey of Tucson, Ariz.; and Lloyd Ruby of Wichita Falls, Texas.

Parneli Jones won't be competing in the race for the guaranteed purse of \$20,000 but he'll be driving Andy Granatelli's STP Turbocar in an exhibition run at the Hanford track. It will be the first track appearance of the four-wheel drive vehicle since the "500" when it led the pack most of the way, erasing record after record with Jones at the wheel.

Among the 35 entries expected to try for the 26 starting spots in the longest Indy-type car race in California in more than 30 years will be Billy Vukovich of Fresno, 23-year-old son of the late two-time Indianapolis winner. He'll drive for J. C. Agajanian, sponsor of Sunday's race, and have his choice between a super-charged Offenhauser special and a new rear-engined Ford V8 powered Brabham chassis.

Snider, a native of this city who attended East Bakersfield High School, said the biggest thrill he's ever had in racing was Memorial Day, 1966, when he was behind the wheel of a rear-engine Lotus, powered by Ford.

"There I was, sitting on the front row at Indy after beating my boss, Foyt, in the qualifying runs," George recalls.

That was the year he averaged 162.5 miles an hour in qualifying, setting a track rec-

ord that was later broken by Andretti. Snider crashed that year after hitting oil slick on the 37th lap but his front row position earned him \$10,000.

Snider was 15 when he started racing dragsters for Ernie Hashim, competing locally as well as in San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles. His gas eliminator win



GEORGE SNIDER

at San Luis won him a trophy plus a wrist watch but it wasn't until he was 21 that he won his first cash prize.

It was a \$75 victory at Fresno's Kearney Bowl.

By 1965, Snider had placed second to Foyt in the Springfield 100, winning \$3,700. That year he finished third in the Sacramento 100, running on a dirt track.

In the 1966 Indy 500, the Bakersfield speedster was in the lead when 16 cars behind him piled up with sheels hurtling in all directions. Because Andretti had been leading at the start of the previous lap, Snider was given third position on the restart — a bad break that could have cost him many thousands in lap money and possible race victory.

Sandlot Gridder Dies

HOUSTON (UPI) — Ruben Davila, an 11-year-old boy injured during a sandlot football game last month, died in Ben Taub Hospital of a blood clot on his brain.

Last Memorial Day he was to drive a rear-engine Brabham copy, powered by Ford, after qualifying 10th. Ruby was substituted the second day with newspapers carrying the story of Snider's illness. George refuses to comment further.

Specifications for an Indianapolis car include that it must be under 255 cubic inches in displacement and weigh at least 1,350 pounds. Fuel capacity must be 75 gallons or less.

A Brabham, such as Snider drove last Memorial Day, costs about \$50,000 to build, with the engine taking about half that amount. That explains why Indy drivers don't usually own the cars they drive.

Snider will be driving for Foyt at Hanford and may be behind the wheel of the Coyote, a rear-engine Ford that Joe Leonard drove to third place at Indianapolis this year.

The new Hanford track should be fast, judging from the 154 miles an hour Art Pollard got on a recent tire test. There are seats for 25,000 spectators, according to Agajanian, with prices ranging to \$10. As a matter of fact all the \$10 seats have been sold and the next best vantage points will run \$8 each.

Snider is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George Snider, his father being employed by Transmatic Auto Parts. His grandfather was a bike racer in his young days, later owning a motorcycle shop in East Bakersfield. His uncle Loyd is the operator of Snider's Sporting Goods on Baker Street.

The young man who quit East High in his senior year to concentrate on auto racing isn't sorry he was a dropout. Not when he can say he earned \$30,000 last year.

Snider, who recently moved back to Bakersfield from Fresno, is married and has two children, George and Kelly, both attending Longfellow School.

Tickets for the California 200 at Hanford may be purchased from either Midas Muffler Shop, 2919 Chester Avenue, or from Acme Jewelers, 1218 19th Street.