



Issued by the Competitions Press Office of the
British Motor Corporation Ltd., Abingdon, Berkshire

BMC competitions news service

STRONG BMC CHALLENGE FOR THE 'MONTE'

After their sweeping success in this year's Monte Carlo Rally (outright winners, Manufacturers' Team Prize and GT Category winners) BMC Competitions Department have picked an all-Mini team for their attack on the next Monte (16/23 January 1965). Five of the cars will be 1275 c.c. Mini-Cooper 'S' models, and the sixth a 970 c.c. version. It was the now discontinued 1071 c.c. model that won the 1964 Monte outright and carried off the Manufacturers' Team Prize.

The line-up of drivers is perhaps the strongest that one manufacturer has ever entered for an international rally. They are :-

Paddy Hopkirk (31, Belfast, N. Ireland) : Winner of the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally and the 1964 Austrian Alpine Rally; driver of the highest-placed British car at Le Mans 1964. Starting from Stockholm.

Rauno Aaltonen (26, Turku, Finland) : Winner of the 1964 Spa-Sofia-Liege Rally, toughest in the European calendar; member of winning Mini-Cooper team (7th overall) in the 1964 Monte. Starting from Athens.

Timo Makinen (25, Helsinki, Finland) : Winner of the 1964 Tulip Rally; winner of the Grand Touring Category (2nd overall) in the 1964 RAC Rally; member of winning Mini-Cooper team (4th overall) in 1964 Monte. Starting from Stockholm.

Donald Morley (33, Hitcham, Suffolk) : Winner of the Grand Touring Category in the 1964 Monte and the 1964 Tulip Rally; Class and Coupe des Alpes winner (2nd in GT Category) in the 1964 Alpine Rally; twice (1961 and 1962) winner of the Alpine Rally. Starting from Minsk.

Harry 'Sputnik' Källström (24, Sodertalje, Sweden) : Winner of the 1964 Scandinavian Rally Championship and the 1964 Swedish National Rally Championship; 2nd overall in the 1964 Midnight Sun Rally. Starting from Paris.

Raymond Baxter (42, London) : 4th overall in the 1960 Monte (with Peter Harper), the BBC motoring correspondent has three times been a member of the winning

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team, twice a member of the best British crew, and has won his class on three occasions. In the 1964 event he just failed to do so by 10 seconds, but was 5th overall in GT Category. This will be his 14th Monte Carlo Rally. He is starting from Minsk.

The team of co-drivers selected for the event is equally strong.

They are :-

Henry Liddon (33, Bristol) : Co-driver to Hopkirk in winning the 1964 Monte and the 1964 Austrian Alpine Rally.

Tony Ambrose (30, Newbury, Berks.) : Co-driver to Aaltonen in winning the 1964 Spa-Sofia-Liege, and to Makinen in winning the 1964 Tulip Rally; also to Lyndon Sims in winning the 1956 RAC Rally.

Paul Easter (25, Old Stratford, Bucks.) : Better known as a successful private owner (scored a class win in the 1963 Acropolis Rally; was a member of the winning Mini-Cooper team in the 1964 Tulip Rally).

Erle Morley (33, Hitcham, Suffolk) : Twin brother to Donald (though entirely different in appearance and temperament); has been co-driver to his brother throughout their rallying career.

Ragnvald Häkansson (28, Vasteras, Sweden) : Regular co-driver to Källström throughout the 1964 season; also a skilled mechanic (he prepared the Mini-Cooper 'S' with which Börje Osterberg won the 1964 Racing Championship of Sweden).

Jack Scott (40, Dublin) : Nowadays seen comparatively seldom in international rallies, but used to act as regular co-driver to Hopkirk, with whom he finished 3rd in the 1962 Monte and 6th in the 1963 Monte.

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It is expected that the 1965 Monte will be even more difficult than this year's event. From the nine starting-points (Stockholm, Minsk, Warsaw, Frankfurt, London, Lisbon, Athens, Paris and Monte Carlo itself) each competitor will cover about 2000 miles before reaching St. Claude, the start of the common route leading southwards through Chambéry to Monte Carlo (a further 585 miles); this section will include five high-speed stages totalling 75 miles.

But the rally will not be over even then. After reaching Monte Carlo, the survivors must take part in a 400-mile mountain circuit divided into nine timed stages. This final loop will be covered during the night (to minimise inconvenience to other road-users in the area), so darkness will be added to the other hazards of snow and ice in the mountains.