

## **Operation Mexico! Carl Kiekhaefer vs. the 1951-1953 Pan American Road Race**

Karl Pippart III



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Operation Mexico! Carl Kiekhaefer vs. the 1951-1953 Pan American Road Race Karl Pippart III Carl Kiekhaefer vs the 1951-53 Pan American Road Race For five years, Mexico staged a car race that held the sporting world mesmerized for a week of thrills, spills, and chills. Competitors came from all around the world to participate in this brutal race of about 2,035 miles over rugged terrain. Goliaths of the car industry soon discovered the race provided a platform to test new products and rise within the U.S. market. It wasn't long before an intense competition between big players like Chrysler Corporation and Daimler-Benz emerged, and the legendary Carl Kiekhaefer found himself at the heart of not only a dangerous physical race but a fierce battle to be at the top of U.S. motor manufacturing. That position afforded a larger-than-life prestige and power. Carl was a hard-driving, competition-loving Wisconsin industrialist and manufacturer of outboard motors, chainsaws, and military drone engines. He surely would not bow down to political pressure, rigged races, sabotage, or threats. And so the stage was set for the Pan American Road Race-a spectacular spectacle, never to be forgotten. \*\*\*\*\* This book explains, in detail, Carl Kiekhaefer's involvement with the Mexican Road Race during the early 1950s. The post race controversy following the November 1952 race reshaped Carl's approach to race car preparation, which paid huge dividends in the mid 1950s when he fielded stock car racing teams. By the 1953 PARR, Carl was fully engaged in beating the factory-backed Lincolns, but was foiled by suspected sabotage, catastrophic mechanical failures and bad luck. What allowed Carl to be competitive in the Mexican Road Race was Chrysler's FirePower (Hemi) V8 engine. Beginning in 1951, the FirePower V8 was utilized by notable motorsportsmen during the 1950s to achieve racing successes around the world.

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