

----- Original Message -----

**From:** LisaThomas24@aol.com

**Sent:** Monday, January 10, 2005 1:33 PM

**Subject:** Daytona Diaries

Hi!

We made it home this morning right on time...gotta love Southwest airlines!

We left Abq on Jan 2 and drove until we made Longview Texas. It was late and we were only about 60 miles from reaching our goal of Shreveport, LA. So we called it a night and then drove the next day until we were about 75 miles from Jacksonville, FLA. That only left us about 4 hours until we reached Daytona and the track. With the exception of a little bit of rain, we had great weather and a smooth tow all the way to the track. Once in Daytona, the weather was beautiful...80 degrees and sunny. Add in a little bit of humidity and the sweat factor went up 10 fold and Lisa's hair went really curly! Needless to say, I gave up on the hair!

Once we parked the rig on the 4th, we made contact with the owner of the race shop we had arranged to use for the time period between testing and the race. What a nice bunch of guys! They are less than 10 miles from the track and are pretty serious roundy-round racers. They just welcomed us with open arms and let us have free run of the shop. Good thing too because we really needed it before the race cars could even go to testing this past weekend! As it turns out, they have two big race rigs just like ours! It was funny because it looked like a race trailer dealership had started on their lot! Bruce wondered if we parked all of them real close that maybe we could get baby race trailers when we come back in February!

On Thursday the 5th, things started kicking into high gear as other members of the team began arriving. The race trailer had to be completely unloaded before our German crew arrived, so that was a pretty big job. Once the Germans arrived, one of the cars was on a lift in the shop and was being torn apart to replace (what was assumed to be) a bad fly wheel. This is the "Pro Car" and the one that has the best chance of winning the whole race...but it was not running and they worked until 2 am trying to get the problems fixed.

It was really funny because the race shop owners had never been around a Porsche team much less a German Porsche team. They were so excited that after the Germans arrived, the owners of the shop and their families came over to see these all Germans working on two race Porsches. They took pictures and everything! It really was amazing because all the crew had arrived by the time the shop owners came to see this flurry of activity...Germans and American crew. So we filled the place up and it was truly amazing to see this incredible variety of things all happening at the same time!

So, at 2 am we finally buttoned up the rig and headed to the hotel for a few hours of sleep before we had to get the rig to the staging area at the track. The staging area is a parking lot on the track property where all the big rigs go and are placed in a certain sequence before they actually drive into the facility. Once inside, they have a pretty elaborate parking process which was more complicated than sophisticated. But, these are the kinds of kinks that get discovered at "testing" so that when race time comes everyone has the same plan. It took hours to get parked, unloaded and the crew immediately descended on the cars again. The track is really strict and kicked everyone out at 5pm so they could lock the place down for the night. So, while we were out of the track at a reasonable hour, we had to get ready for the first team meeting at 6:30pm back at the hotel. It was cool to see all our crew and all but one of our drivers sitting down and discussing various issues that evening. The drivers, and some of the crew, were running on total adrenaline because we were going to be on the track, racing cars the next morning bright and early. As tired and Bruce and I were, we didn't get much sleep just thinking about what Friday would be like!

Friday comes. This is the first official day of testing and is the day with the greatest amount of track time for the drivers. The weather is gorgeous and everyone is ready to go. The order for Bruce's car is for Paul Orwicz to drive first, then Bruce and then the rest of the drivers. Paul O. is a very fast Porsche Club racer from the NE...very similar to Bruce in the West. Paul O. wants to

go Pro in late 2005 so this is a good springboard for him. Paul gets in the car for the first time and takes his laps and comes back totally freaked out. Bruce gets in the car and is calm and fast. The other drivers follow Bruce's lead and things are moving very smoothly with the exception of Paul O. There is a tremendous amount of mental stuff that goes into racing and Paul O. lost his mental edge. He stayed 10-15 seconds slower per lap than any of the other drivers. We all began to wonder if he was going to call it quits entirely. As the weekend progressed, he finally "drove through" this mental thing he was experiencing and did a fast lap time. But, he still may not make the race because this was a pretty bad experience for him.

On that first morning when Bruce suited up for his very first lap on the track, I was in the hot pits to see. I just stood back and watched him get strapped into the car and take off from pit row. I had tears running down my face just thinking that we had made it here...finally! After almost losing Bruce this past summer and all the hard work and stress that has taken place over the last six months, I was watching him get to live out his dream! How truly amazing it was. I was sooooo happy! And when he got out of the car after his first session we hugged and cried together! We were at Daytona...one of the most famous tracks in the world...and he was driving on the track at the same time as Paul Newman and many other race car drivers we only see on TV! Furthermore, he was fast and holding his own out there!

Friday continued well into the night. The drivers all experienced a night practice so they could get used to the track conditions at night. So, it was another really long day. Finally at about midnight, we hit the sack only to lay there and re live parts of the day for an hour or so! We are all still running on adrenaline!

Saturday comes and things start to get into a groove. The driving sessions were delayed for a couple of hours due to some construction taking place on the track surface. So, the team ended up getting another night practice on Saturday. Bruce went out in a session that straddled dusk into dark. His lap times were now improving and so was his confidence! I was in the RV getting dinner ready for the crew when he came in after his evening session and he had the biggest smile I have ever seen! We were all out of the track by 8pm and went out with some other team mates for dinner. That night we got the most sleep we had the whole trip!

Sunday comes and the team has decided to only run one session. This is the last day of testing and we decided to try and finish up at noon and get out of there at a reasonable hour. Some people have flights Sunday while others are leaving Monday. But, we have to load up everything and get the cars and the rig back over to the race shop where they can be worked on before the race. Testing is the way that you find all the things you want to have done to the car before the big day and throughout testing the "To Do" list was growing longer and longer.

The morning session on Sunday starts at 10 and ends at noon. The plan is for all 5 drivers on Bruce's car to get a few laps in and this is intended to serve as a great way to practice pit stops and driver changes. Bruce is third in the line up. Ray Williams from VA starts off and then passes it to Paul Bonham out of PHX. Paul is smokin' and his lap times are almost 2 seconds faster than they had been the previous day. As I am walking from the pits to the rig, I hear an announcement on the loudspeaker that the session has been temporarily halted because of a problem on the track. Then I hear Farnbacher Car number 78 has hit the wall.

At that point, we knew Bruce was not going to get his turn. Something bad enough to halt the session was probably going to result in some pretty serious fixing when the car came back in to the garages. So, we all came back to the rig and waited until the wrecker brought the car back. It was worse than we imagined. It hit the wall on the right front and completely smashed in the front of the car. Paul B is so lucky that he was wearing his Hans device because he hit the wall so hard it busted his seat belts and actually bent a metal bracket that holds his helmet to his Hans device! The car is totaled. Paul Bonham is fine...a little sore, but he is fine. We have pictures of the carnage and while it looks really bad...it is really a testament to how safe these cars really are! In a street car, that kind of damage would have been fatal to the driver. In these race cars, the driver walks away! Amazing!

Needless to say that puts quite a damper on the rest of the day and has pretty serious consequences to even being able to run the race. The other Farnbacher car is the fastest GT car out there as of Sunday and has a really good chance of winning the race.

I thought all of you would be eager to hear how the trip went, so I wanted to get an update out. I would bet you are all asking what this will mean as far as the race is concerned and to be perfectly honest, many of those questions have not been answered yet. There are several options on the table and being discussed and until a few more days pass, we won't know the outcome. Bruce and I are really trying to not move in and solve the problem for everyone...as it our normal MO. But, we are involved in the discussions and as soon as we know something more concrete, you will be the first to know.

We both know that this was a risky thing...this race particularly. There was always the potential out there that someone could wad the car up or we could have mechanical failure that would prevent him from running in or finishing the race. We will be disappointed if it does not happen, but Bruce did get some time living out a long held dream. So, it is not a complete loss. Let's let things shake out over the next few days and see what comes out of it.

Love to all! We will be in touch!

Lisa

## [Part 2]

----- Original Message -----

**From:** LisaThomas24@aol.com

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 09, 2005 2:47 PM

**Subject:** Daytona Diaries-Part 2

Hello again!

The last installment of the Daytona Diaries ended with our hearts in our throats...the Porsche GT3 car that Bruce and his team would be driving in the race was totaled during testing in January. Apologies to all who have been waiting for an update! The car was replaced and Bruce and his group were able to drive in the race.

The weeks between testing and the actual race were hectic and stressful to say the least. Testing (January 7-9) is intended to allow the drivers to get familiar with the track and work out any kinks with the car. However, testing also has a way of showing you every single logistical flaw in the team's plans for the race. It was an overwhelming and humbling experience. Thus the weeks before the race were crammed with hundreds of little things that had to be addressed before we all met again for the race.

One of those "little" details was replacing the wrecked car. Paul Bonham was the driver who had the unfortunate crash at testing and was the person who single-handedly replaced the car with a 2004 GT3 Porsche Cup car. It was amazing how quickly this happened! Paul located the car, purchased it, had it shipped to Atlanta where it was to be prepped for the race and coordinated all the special parts needs with the race shop in Atlanta.

Bruce and I decided that we would leave for Daytona earlier than planned just so we could get all the running around done well in advance of the big day. So, we flew back to Daytona on Saturday, January 29. The first thing we did was make a Costco run for all the liquids needed to keep drivers and crew hydrated for the entire time. We picked up a GMC Trail Blazer, thinking that would provide plenty of cargo space, but we quickly ran out of room in the car after our mad dash to Costco in Orlando! The entire back of the car was jammed with bottled waters, Gatorades, cokes, juices, coffee, extension cords and miscellaneous items! Needless to say, the next stop to a Home Depot would have to wait until we unloaded the car!

Sunday, January 30 was housekeeping day! The race rig was pretty dirty and the motorhome portion needed a major house cleaning. So we hit the RV dump (that's a fun job...NOT!), cleaned and repacked the trailer and motorhome. We had intended to get an early start that day, but ended up smacking the alarm clock so hard in our hotel room it gave up reminding us to wake up! Oh, well...we both really needed the sleep!

Monday was play day! We finished our chores and took off to be tourists for the day. Bruce had never seen the Kennedy Space Center so off we went to Cape Canaveral. We really had a blast and the view from the Observation Gantry's of the launch sites were crystal clear. If you have never been to the KSC...be sure to make the trip at least once in your lifetime!

Tuesday, February 1 was the day when the excitement really began to build in the local Daytona Beach area. The local papers started covering all the pre race activities and the TV and radio stations were ramping up for the big event. In the afternoon my cell phone began ringing with crew members who had missed flights, flights canceled and a variety of travel issues I needed to take care of. But in the end, everyone made it to Daytona! Bruce and I went to the airport to meet up with the European crew because they needed to be directed back to the race shop. Between testing and the race the motor was pulled from one of the cars (The #71 Car) and was shipped to Porsche in California. Thus, the crew ended up having to get off a long flight from Europe and go to the shop to reinstall the motor. It was another late night for them...they finally got done at about 1:30am. However, unlike the last time the crew pulled an "all nighter" Bruce was fast asleep! This trip, Bruce was going to be treated at a race car driver...not a crew member!

The #78 Car (Bruce's) was in Atlanta the morning of Feb 1. The #78 Crew Chief and one of his staff headed out for Atlanta in the late afternoon for Daytona. They had a long drive ahead of them and finally arrived at the race shop at about 4am. They unhooked the trailer, and drove their dually pick up truck to the hotel just in time to drop off their stuff and shower before returning to the race shop. We met them there at about 6:30am where rigs were hooked back up and driven to the track.

So, this brings us to Wednesday, Feb 2. Its raining. Not sprinkling. RAINING.

For those of you that don't follow the Rolex 24...last years race was run almost entirely in the rain. At one point, the rain got so bad they actually halted the race until it lightened up a little!

So, here we are. Race cars and race rigs ready for the biggest sports car race in North America. The crew has all arrived and everyone is feeling excited and panicked at the same time. Could all this rain be an omen that the 2005 race would be run in the rain?

After many hours of waiting, we finally get the rigs pulled in to the paddock (garage area). As soon as all the rigs were parked they allowed for all the teams to begin unloading. Bruce opened the tail gate on the trailer and the crew descended like Ants on a jelly bean! Bruce and I tried to get out of there as soon as possible and let the crew do what they needed to do. We grabbed a bite of lunch and went back at about 3pm. It was still raining but the cars were now safely in their covered garages and the crew was busily preparing every detail on the cars. The garages closed at 6pm and the team had to be at a team meeting at 7pm back at the hotel.

The team meeting was cool because it was the biggest gathering of crew and drivers to date! Even the rain did not dampen the excitement of the group. After a brief group meeting, the drivers of Car #78 met privately with their Crew Chief, Bob Sanderson, and other essential crew to discuss strategy. The drivers decided they needed to elect a Team Captain and they elected Bruce! He assumed his duties right away and led his group through a strategic discussion of how to FINISH the race.

You see, all of the drivers on Bruce's team are just like Bruce. They are really good at running "sprint" races. These are races of 30 to 40 minutes in length so the mindset of the drivers and the strategies used to win "sprint" races are entirely different from running an endurance race. Bruce wanted to make sure that all the drivers got out of focusing on lap times and speed and got into focusing on survival and making the equipment last the full 24 hours. After a while the crew was asked to take off and the five drivers had a "heart to heart" discussion about their

goals/fears/concerns. It was an essential bonding for all of them and was the first time the five of them really became ONE TEAM of drivers. The whole thing changed once that happened...meaning that the singular focus enabled the drivers to calm down and get their heads into the right place to finish this race.

Thursday, Feb 3 was the first day of practice for the race. The drivers all met at the track for an 8:30am Drivers meeting for drivers who had never driven this event before. At 9am, the veteran drivers came in for the main drivers meeting. I didn't attend, but Bruce said that he felt like he shouldn't have been there. Imagine sitting in a room and suddenly the pro drivers you only see on TV start sitting in the same room with you. Famous NASCAR drivers like Tony Stewart, Scott Pruett and Kurt Bush came in. Famous sports car drivers from around the world start coming in like Paul Tracy, Emmanuel Collard, Randy Pobst, Andy Wallace, Kevin Buckler, Max Papis and Max Angelli came in. And, then it gets topped off with Paul Newman coming in. Pretty amazing!

Bruce was first to get in the car for practice. It had rained most of the night and was blustery in the morning. The car was new to all the drivers and a tremendous amount of work had been put into prepping the car. The Crew Chief needed Bruce to get in and shake down the car and give good technical feedback to the crew. So, after the maiden voyage of the new #78 car, the news was GOOD! The car was doing great and all indications were that the car was race ready!

Feb 3 was also qualifying day. This means that the driver who will be chosen to drive first in the race must drive the car to get a qualifying time. The qualifying time will determine where the car will be on the starting grid, or "pole." Paul Bonham was chosen to be the qualifying driver for the #78 car. Qualifying was to start at 4:15pm and is only 15 minutes long. This is the only time where lap times and speed have any impact on the race. Because those lap times are what place the car on the starting grid. By mid day the clouds broke and the sun began shining. It was a beautiful afternoon and perfect for qualifying! Paul put in a good time and qualified the car about mid pack of all the GT cars...but that meant the car was 50th overall when you add in all the other DP cars that were running the same race.

The other car on our team, Car #71 was incredibly fast and took the fastest time of all the GT cars. As soon as Wolf HENZLER (the very fast German driver) completed qualifying, he was whisked away for a press conference and the media frenzy began!

A big sigh of relief came right after qualifying. One of the big obstacles to starting the race was overcome! The car was qualified, in one piece and the weather was improving! Could things be going our way?

Friday, Feb 4 was another practice day. All the drivers in both cars determined that they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by driving their cars on Friday. So, the drivers met at the track after a leisurely morning and practiced their driver changes. The Crew Chief did an in-service with all the drivers on all the switches and gauges in the car and they played out various scenarios so the drivers would know what to do if something went wrong. Then Bruce and his group took the golf cart and did a recon mission around the track. They identified every corner station, where the cars could be pulled off to the side of the track safely if something needed to be fixed and where certain lights were placed...lights that would only be seen at night. This was another confidence builder for the car #78 drivers.

Friday night was a fun group dinner at the local bar & grille. What began as an intimate group of 12 ballooned to a group of 20 before we knew it. After many toasts and much laughter, we called it a night and got some decent sleep before race day.

Saturday Feb 5 is race day. By this time everyone's heart is beating a bit faster than normal! The weather is clear but cold for Florida. The wind is about 10-15 mph. But the sun is shining! There is a 9am drivers meeting and again, the level of celebrity in the drivers meeting was humbling. The Race Steward for the meeting started off by saying that this group of drivers was the best of the best...the best sports car drivers IN THE WORLD! Whoa! Bruce is sitting in a room about to race at the same time on the same track with the best sports car drivers in the world! What a heady experience!

The Car #78 drivers got together for one last strategy session and then they got dressed in their drivers suits. Paul Bonham would be the first driver to go out. This meant that he would take the green flag and start the race. Bruce would be second to get in, followed by Paul Orwicz, Ray Williams and Paul Fairchild. The cars were pushed to the starting grid by the crew and fans, family and friends all walked amongst the cars on the grid. Drivers were walking their wives and girlfriends down the grid in full-on race grid "strut"...the media was everywhere...pro and amateur photographers snapping pictures...fans asking for autographs...you name it and it was happening!

The start was very exciting and Paul Bonham was careful to navigate the car through a busy and crowded field of cars that all wanted to win the race in the first corner of the first lap! While he fell back a few spots, we were all pleased that he and the car survived the first session. Bruce was next to go in. With friends and family smuggled into the pits to see, Bruce got in the car to drive in the race...a race that he only dreamed about driving. Last time I saw Bruce off was at testing and it was emotional for me. This time I was all smiles and the family was crying tears of joy! But none of that would compare to seeing Bruce get out of the car after his first stint in the car. Again, friends and family are all camera ready when Bruce comes leaping over the pit wall after getting out of the car. I met up with him to help get his helmet off...which is no small undertaking because of all the wiring to radios and Hans device stuff. I have helped him many times before, but this time he is in a big rush...like his head was on fire or something! Once the helmet was off I saw what the rush was about...Bruce was whooping and hollering with satisfaction and excitement and he needed to get IT OUT! He had driven his first stint in the race of his dreams and his feet were not even on the ground!

It is that reaction...that very one...that motivated me to make this experience happen for him. It was 8 long months of planning and there was the prize...right there in front of my eyes. Bruce's smile and excitement, witnessed first hand by his daughters and family that made it all worth it!

After things settled down, it is time to settle in for a long 24 hours in clear but cold temps at the track. The drivers go through their rotations...pit stops for fuel and driver changes every hour and a half or so. Bruce's next time out is at 7:50pm and he is back in at 9:15pm. It is night time and has gotten brutally cold. After this stint, Bruce comes in saying that it was like combat out there. Fighting for position...navigating the track with the DP cars who are running at blazing speeds and just punting GT cars off the track when they get in the way...both DP and GT cars crashing, catching on fire and breaking...the attrition rate was increasing as the night wore on.

Between driver stints, the drivers rest in our motorhome and watch the race on SPEED Channel. I came into the motorhome once and was overwhelmed with the smell every mother of boys recognizes right away! You know what I am talking about...stinky socks and sweat! Of course it never bothered the guys who are totally oblivious!

We are now half way through the 24 hour race. At about 12:15am panic strikes the Car #78 team! Bruce is resting in the motorhome when Paul Bonham comes in saying, "Bruce, we need to find the trouble lights...the car has a blown clutch and it is coming into the garage to be fixed!" Paul Fairchild was in the car when he missed a shift and over revved the motor. These cars are essentially built to protect the motor in these kinds of situations causing the clutch to blow out and break rather than tag a valve in the motor. Clutches can be replaced. A broken motor cannot.

So, into the garage comes the 78 car. Paul Fairchild stays strapped in the car the whole time while it is up in the air being worked on. I guess that was part of his penance! He was so mad at himself for letting this happen! Three crew members descended on the car and I have to tell you what an amazing sight this was to watch! In record time the transmission was separated from the engine and gently laid down on the garage floor, the clutch was removed and replaced, placed back into the car and the transmission reattached in 90 minutes. With Paul still in the car the motor was fired up and he was sent right back out there.

The delay to replace the clutch caused the drivers schedules be to shifted. Bruce was going next out at 4:30am. The car comes in for fuel, tires and a driver change and he is out there on the track once again. Just before dawn, he comes in. He has logged his fastest lap times of the whole race...largely because the traffic on the track has really slowed. With all the carnage of cars wrecking and breaking during the night, over 1/3 of the total field of cars is out of the race.

Sunrise comes and we have a cool but sunny morning. The car is holding together beautifully and the other drivers are doing a super job. Car #78 is not only going to finish the race, but will finish very respectably! During the middle of the night, Car #71 remains in first place of all GT cars and Car #78 is in 14th spot. Car #71 is turning in such fast times it is beating many of the DP cars and eventually gets into 10th position overall. Car #78 is running anywhere between 27th and 29th overall.

The final driver rotation is laid out and Bruce will be the last to go...thus he will be taking the car across the finish line of the most famous sports car races in North America...ahead of quite a few of those famous drivers he saw at the drivers meeting! He is suited up and ready to go at 10:30am. I am filming his last entry into the car for his last stint. As I am watching the driver change happen through the view finder of the camcorder, it hits me! He is not just driving in this race, he is going to FINISH the race...with the team that is going to win the race for the GT Class...OH MY GOD! This is really happening! Photographers are snapping pictures in the pits, TV crews are everywhere, our pit area is packed with family and friends of all the drivers for both cars...my hand begins to shake as I am filming and my lip begins to quiver as my eyes well up with tears. OH MY GOD...THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING!

Just before the checkered flag is thrown I get the family to an area where they can get the best pictures of Bruce crossing the finish line. I discovered later that Bruce asked the Crew Chief to put me on the radio after he took the crossed the finish line...but I was already getting lined up to film the event father down pit row.

After the cool down lap Bruce takes the car into the garage. I make a full on sprint through the paddock, with family in tow so I can catch up with him. He pulls the car into the garage, I get him unbelted and out of the car...we are on our way to Victory Lane to join our teammates from the #71 cars and the rest of the crew! But before we get there, he stops and pulls me in for the biggest hug and we are both crying tears of absolute joy! This has been the most amazing experience!

Now down in Victory Lane, I smuggle as many family members in as possible so they can see the whole thing come to a close. After the awards are handed out and the winners receive their special edition Rolex Watches, the Champagne bottles are opened and sprayed all over the enthusiastic crew. Photos are being snapped every three seconds it seems and confetti is flying in the air. What an amazing thing to be part of!

After taking a deep breath, the tear down and loading process begins. Spectators, friends and family start to take off, the trailer is finally loaded and taken over to the race shop for the night. We get a small group together for a quiet dinner and then head back to the hotel for a good sleep. The next day we are off to the trailer for the long drive home.

Thank you to all of you who encouraged us, supported us, prayed for us and cheered us on during the race. Your positive energy was felt by us in Daytona!

Now, we go back to the real world!

Lisa and Bruce