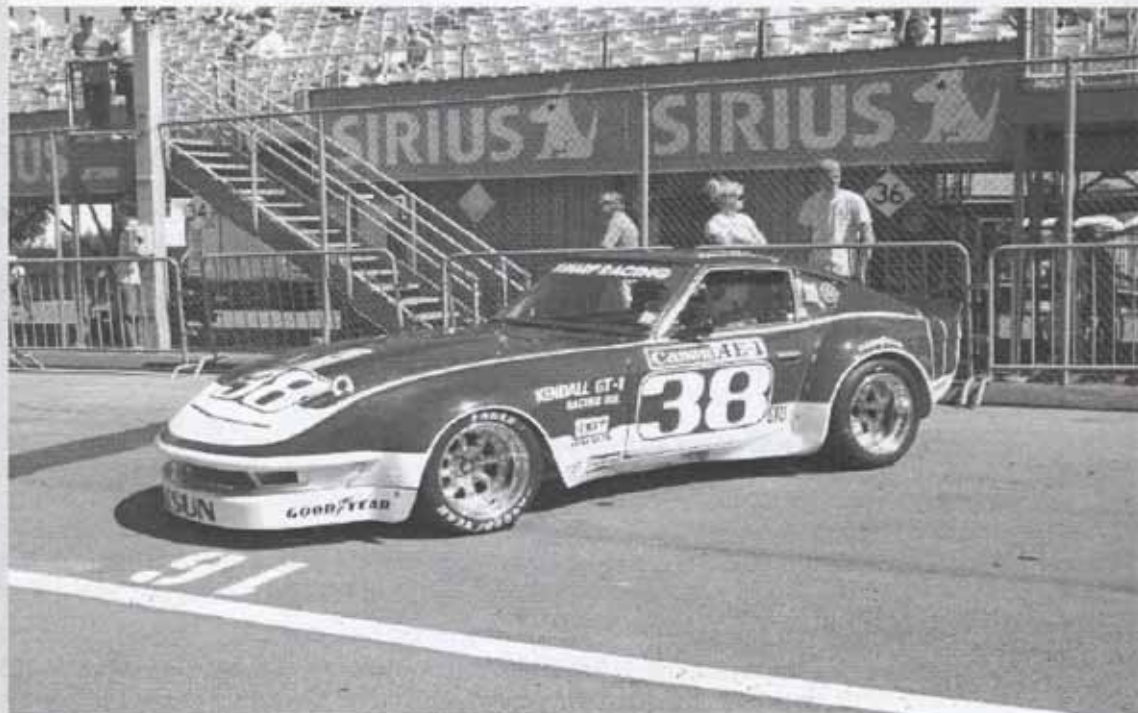


by Diane Dale

Whatever Happened to the First North American Z Car?

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The Bob Sharp 240Z at Watkins Glen owned by Dr. Alan Robbins

Maybe you know this story... but it certainly is a good one to be told over and over again. A legend to pass on to our children. For generations and generations of Z-owners to come. Back in late 1969 Nissan shipped three of its new Datsun 240z's (chassis #HLS30-00006, #HLS30-00007 and #HLS30-00008) to tour the North American auto shows. During the tour (oddly enough - at the Toronto Auto Show), one of the show models sat on the roof and dented it. Now... what do you do with a perfectly brand new car that can't be photographed or re-sold to the public? Turn it into a race

car of course!!!

Interesting Fact: The first five Z cars have never been seen. It is assumed that they were destroyed at the factory in testing. So the beloved #00006 is really the first international Z car - not just the first in North America.

Bob Sharp Racing took possession of the car and prepared #33 for SCCA C Production racing in 1970. A second Z car joined BSR (with driver Jim Fitzgerald) late in 1970 (both were branded with the oh-so-notorious red, white and blue BSR paint scheme). #33's first year out was with driver Bob

Sharp and the car became the first 240z to win a SCCA national race. In 1972 and 1973 it won the C Production National Championship. When Jim Fitzgerald left BSR in 1974, he took the original Z car (which had become #38) and continued competing in SCCA C Production until 1979 when he switched to a 280zx. Fitzgerald ran IMSA predominantly when it visited his home track of Road Atlanta and at least one Trans Am race - the last race he ran with #00006 was the last race held at Virginia International Raceway (VIR) before the track was rebuilt - and he won! This original 240z is credited with having won over 250 races before its first retirement. What an accomplishment!

Interesting Fact: the Brock Racing Enterprises (BRE) Racing Team headed by Peter Brock (with Driver John Morton) also raced a Datsun 240z starting in late 1970. However, they had to wait for the regular shipment of Z Cars to the U.S. (the first 20 cars for re-sale shipped in January of 1970), so the BSR team actually got their Datsun first! (Both the BSR and BRE teams qualified for the C Production class at the Runoffs



The E31 block and head prepared by Dave Rebello



Sam Posey was among the legends to drive the BSR cars

with roadsters!)

Now what you may not know about the original chassis #00006 race car is that it was subsequently purchased and brought out of retirement by a passionate Z car enthusiast, Dr. Allan Robbins. Allan is an honored and well-respected Z historian. Today this car can be seen racing in its astounding original-condition-glory at various events around the U.S. – many of which are right in our own U.S. backyard, Watkins Glen. The car's current engine is an E31 block and head (exactly as the original was prepared). Porting and polishing were done by Dave Rebello in California; the compression ratio and cam specs are a carefully guarded secret – adding to the awe and mystery of this car.

Interesting Fact: The first shipload of Z cars to the U.S. are the only ones that had crankshafts with only six full counterweights (others had eight). This caused clutch and flywheel problems during races. BSR had special billet cranks built to overcome this, but #00006 now runs the stock crankshaft with careful balancing and race preparation – and that seems to be quite reliable.

Dr. Allan Robbins, a prominent ophthalmologist who performs laser surgery in Rochester, New York, formed SharpSight Motorsports Inc. in 1992 as his tribute to racing Datsuns. (There's a great picture of his 240z on his professional website www.lasik-rochester.net) At the time he and his friends owned three of the original BSR race cars, so the motorsports name came easily. The SharpSight Motorsports team captured the New York State Road

Racing Championship in G Production and GT-2 in 1995 and 1996 and continues competitive racing to this day.

Interesting Fact: the current SharpSight inventory includes other historical BSR and Electramotive race cars including Bob Sharp's personal 1971 Datsun 240z street car (in red of course). SharpSight is currently restoring the Electramotive 280ZX that won the IMSA GTU championship in 1979 with Don Devendorf. They hope to have it ready for the Japanese Sports Car feature at the Classic Motorsports Walter Mitty Challenge at Road Atlanta at the end of April. (www.hsrrace.com)

Allan's longtime passion with Z cars started in 1970 when the car first came out. He

followed Z cars as a hobby – watching Bob Sharp race, visiting his dealership, following Paul Newman's career and many other aspirations. His documented passion includes a scrap book that any Datsun Z fan would love to get their hands on... pictures, slides, negatives, promotional brochures, race results, racing specifications, tech sheets. I felt simply honored to even get a glimpse, never mind a personal tour.

Allan started the racing portion of his hobby with a 1963 Porsche 356 coupe. After acquiring a truck, trailer and the famed BSR Datsun 240z in 1991, his dreams came true. For the last 14 years he's been racing the Z at the likes of Lime Rock, Sebring, Elkhart Lake and most predominantly Watkins Glen. This year they're preparing one of the Datsun cars for SCCA E Production class and are hoping to be competitive there.

SharpSight's 2006 race schedule starts out strong this year... The HSR Race at Sebring (March 2 – 5), The Mitty at Road Atlanta (April 27 – 30), Watkins Glen Historic Races (June 15 – 18). Be sure to watch for the blur of the red, white and blue.

Chassis #00006 Racing Specs

2400cc inline-6, Carrillo rods, forged pistons, 270 hp

Triple Mikuni 44 carburetors, Nissan Competition manifold

5 speed Direct Drive Nissan Competition gear box

Front disc brakes; rear drum brakes

Hoosier Street TD tires

Original 1973 suspension setup; rack and pinion steering

MacPherson struts and Koni shocks.



A shot of the original 1970 BSR Datsun 240Z