

Ray Heppenstall

(1931 - 2004)

Ray Heppenstall was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, USA, in 1931. Although he was a great-grandson of Sam Heppenstall, founder of Heppenstall Steel, the largest family-owned steel company in the United States, Ray's future lay not in the steel industry, but in auto racing.

His lifetime with automobiles, mostly while a resident of Philadelphia, PA, covered a wide spectrum of US road racing, both open-wheel and sports cars, sometimes building, preparing and racing his own cars, more often building, preparing, and driving the cars of others.



Ray (right) with Rene Dreyfus at Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, 1993
(Photo by kind permission of Robert J. Salgado, New Hope, PA.)

The following is an – incomplete – outline of his 50 years of racing activities.

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Tampa, FL.¹

Although brought up in Pittsburgh, Ray completed High School in Tampa, Florida, and initially went to work in a local Austin agency. In his late 'teens ran a concours 1931 Chrysler CM6 roadster.

1954 Nash Metropolitan.²

In 1954 Ray entered his first real sports car race, the 12-hour endurance race at Linden Airport, New Jersey, on 22nd August. He had a new Nash Metropolitan, a compact 1250cc Austin A40-engined convertible, which he'd already used in several local endurance rallies. With a few modifications - a dual-throat Stromberg carburettor, and 12 inch front wheels - the little red car ran extremely well at Linden, although destroying its front tyres. However, after less than five hours, the left-front spindle broke and Ray and co-driver Howard Comly had to retire.

Mid-1950's Crosley.³

In the mid to late 1950's Ray built up a lightweight rear-engined Crosley Special (it's also possible that he had had a Crosley Hotshot around this time). Intended for SCCA Class H, the Heppenstall Crosley had fibreglass bodywork, independent suspension front and rear, a rigidly-mounted engine, transmission/differential from a Citroen 2CV, and also incorporated Renault, Fiat and Ford parts.

(Sports car Quarterly feature and pictures of the Heppenstall Crosley –

<http://sports.racer.net/chassis/heppenstall/page1.htm>

Ray also shared Charlie Brecht's Crosley in 4-hour races at Sebring and Fort Pierce, Florida.

1955 Siata.²

In 1955 Ray raced a 1086cc Italian Siata 300BC sports car.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
16.10.55	The Pegasus, Fairchild National	Hagerstown, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall		Siata	11 th o/a, 5 th class	
24.11.55	SCCA (handicap)	Waterboro', S. Carolina	Ray Heppenstall		Siata 300BC	2 nd	
24.11.55	SCCA	Waterboro', S. Carolina	Ray Heppenstall		Siata 300BC	1 st	
24.11.55	SCCA	Waterboro', S. Carolina	Ray Heppenstall		Siata 300BC	7 th	
9.12.55	Production under 2-litres	Windsor Airfield, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		Siata 300BC		G
11.12.55	Nassau Trophy	Windsor Airfield, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		Siata 300BC	DNF	(45 th o/a)

1956.

On the SCCA Appalachian Mountain National Rally in November 1956 Ray navigated Richard Smith's Corvette to 12th overall out of 76 starters after two days and 726 miles of driving, mostly over twisty mountain roads.⁴

Also around this time Ray first met Tom Fleming, campaigning a series of Lotus' (Mk.9, Mk.11, Mk.15). Fleming was a customer who was later to have a significant role in the Howmet turbine car programme.

Known events:

Date	Rally/Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
7.7.56	SCCA National (FM,GM,HM)	Beverly, Mass.	Ray Heppenstall		Heppenstall Spl.	DNF	
3/4.11.56	Appalachian Mountain National Rally	726 miles. Hershey, Pa – Staunton, Va	Richard Smith / Ray Heppenstall		Corvette	12 th o/a	2 nd Team.
7.12.56	Governor's Trophy heat	Windsor Airfield, Nassau	Tom Fleming	Tom Fleming	Lotus XI	5 th	
7.12.56	Governor's Trophy	Windsor Airfield, Nassau	Tom Fleming	Tom Fleming	Lotus XI	13 th o/a 2 nd class G	
9.12.56	Nassau Trophy consolation	Windsor Airfield, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall	Tom Fleming	Lotus XI	7 th 1 st class G	

1957 Jomar.²

In 1956 Ray Saidel of Manchester, New Hampshire, imported one of the first TVR chassis from England, marketing this 1100cc Coventry Climax powered sports-racing roadster as the Jomar Mk. 2. When Saidel imported three new cars in 1957, he asked Heppenstall to drive the original car. Ray's first race was at Lime Rock, CT, where he finished third, a broken chassis causing braking problems. His second, and final, outing was at Virginia International Raceway, where a front spindle breakage resulted in a suspension wrecking spin.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
21.7.57	LISCA	Lime Rock, Connecticut	Ray Heppenstall		Jomar Mk.II	5 th o/a, 2 nd class	
3.8.57	SCCA E,F,G modified sports	Virginia Int. Raceway, Danville	Ray Heppenstall		Jomar Mk.II	DNF	
4.8.57	SCCA E,F,G modified sports	Virginia Int. Raceway, Danville	Ray Heppenstall		Jomar Mk.II	DNS	
11.8.57	SCCA under 1600cc	Hatfield, Pennsylvania	Ray Heppenstall		Austin A30	15 th o/a 4 th class	

1958-59 D.B. Panhard – SCCA Champion.^{1,2}

During 1958 and 1959 Ray raced a D.B. Panhard HBR5 Super Rally Coupe for Howard Hanna from Philadelphia, the US Eastern distributor for D.B. The car gained numerous class wins, with Ray winning the SCCA Class H production championship in 1959, following Hanna's win the previous year. Acting as D.B. salesman throughout the eastern United States, Ray drove the car to and from all the race meetings, including Riverside in California.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
19.7.58	SCCA GT	Berwick, Pennsylvania	Ray Heppenstall		DB	3 rd o/a 2 nd class	
16.8.58	SCCA National, GT, G, H	Montgomery, New York	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	5 th o/a	
17.8.58	SCCA National, G, H, HM	Montgomery, New York	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	8 th o/a 2 nd class	
12.10.58	Sam Collier Memorial, HP	Venice, Florida	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	11 th o/a 1 st class	
16.11.58	HP	Dunnellon Park, Florida	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	1 st class	
4.12.58	Nassau TT under 2000cc heat	Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	11 th , 3 rd class G	
4.12.58	Nassau TT	Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	2 nd class G	
7.12.58	Nassau Memorial Trophy	Oakes Course, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	1 st class G	
7.12.58	Nassau Trophy	Oakes Course, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	20 th o/a, 4 th class G	
5.4.59	Fiesta of Five Flags, SCCA Nat.	Pensacola, Florida	Ray Heppenstall		DB	1 st class	HProd
18/19.4.59	SCCA National	Marlboro, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall		DB	1 st class	HProd
3.5.59	SCCA National	Virginia International Raceway, Danville	Ray Heppenstall		DB	14 th o/a	Points for 1 st HP, but ran in GP as insufficient HP entries.
16/17.5.59	SCCA National	Cumberland, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall		DB	1 st o/a 1 st class	
30.5.59	SCCA National (F3 & GT)	Bridgehampton, New York	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	1 st class	
30.5.59	SCCA National (F,H,I)	Bridgehampton, New York	Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	10 th o/a 1 st class	
7.6.59	SCCA, H, HM	Vineland, New Jersey	Ray Heppenstall		DB	1 st class	
20/21.6.59	SCCA National	Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin	Ray Heppenstall		DB	1 st class	
4.7.59	SCCA National G,H,I	Lime Rock, Connecticut	Ray Heppenstall		DB	12 th o/a 1 st class	
4.7.59	SCCA National GM, HM	Lime Rock, Connecticut	Ray Heppenstall		DB	DNF	

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
11.7.59	SCCA National	Buckley Field, Denver, Colorado	Ray Heppenstall		DB	2 nd class	
12.7.59	SCCA National	Buckley Field, Denver, Colorado	Ray Heppenstall		DB	18 th o/a 1 st class	
17.7.59	SCCA	Riverside, California	Ray Heppenstall		DB	1 st class	
18.7.59	SCCA	Riverside, California	Ray Heppenstall		DB	14 th o/a, 1 st class	
9.8.59	SCCA National G,H,I	Montgomery, New York	Ray Heppenstall		DB	DNF	drive shaft broke at start
9.8.59	SCCA National G,H,I	Montgomery, New York	John Hearst Jr./Ray Heppenstall		DB	24 th o/a	took over John Hearst Jr's DB on lap 2
1959	SCCA National HP Championship		Ray Heppenstall		DB Panhard	1 st	80 points

1960, Scorpion Formula Junior.

In 1960 Ray imported a modified version of the front-engined Elva Formula Junior cars built in England by Frank Nichols, known in the USA as the Scorpion. This was powered by an 1100cc Rytune DKW engine, Rytune being an associated company of Elva.

Known events: ^{5,8}

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
16.4.60	SCCA National	Marlboro, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	3 rd	
15.5.60	SCCA National	Cumberland, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	DNF	
30.5.60	SCCA National	Bridgehampton, New York	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	DNF	
19.6.60	Vanderbilt Cup, Heat 2	Roosevelt Raceway, Long Island, New York	Chuck Wallace	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	2 nd	
19.6.60	Vanderbilt Cup, Heat 2	Roosevelt Raceway, Long Island, New York	Pedro Rodriguez	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	5 th	
19.6.60	Vanderbilt Cup, Final	Roosevelt Raceway, Long Island, New York	Chuck Wallace	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	2 nd	
19.6.60	Vanderbilt Cup, Final	Roosevelt Raceway, Long Island, New York	Pedro Rodriguez	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	5 th	
16/17.7.60	SCCA National	Continental Divide, Colorado	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	3 rd	
20/21.8.60	SCCA Regional	Vineland, New Jersey	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	3 rd	
23.9.60	SCCA National, Seneca Cup	Watkins Glen, New York	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Scorpion DKW	DNF	

Ray was commissioned by the DKW importers to prepare two cars for the small sedan 8 hour endurance race at Lime Rock, Connecticut in July 1960, to be driven by Harry Carter/Newton Davis and himself with Roger Penske. Owing to rain the race was called off and rescheduled for October 1st, however it's not clear if the cars participated in October.^{2,4}

Sometime around this period Ray had a Fiat-engined Osca Formula Junior, run for paying customers as a rent-a-racer. Also, sometime late 1950's/early 1960's he drove the ex-Otto Linton Osca of Dr. Hal Baumann at Vineland, Jersey, on one occasion.²

1961.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
25.3.61	12 Hours (FIA World Sports Cars)	Sebring, Florida	Tom Fleming/ Ray Heppenstall	Thomas T Fleming	Osca 2000S	DNA	
16.4.61	SCCA National	Marlboro, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall		Fiat Abarth	5 th o/a	

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
30.4.61	SCCA National, Presidents Cup	Virginia Int. Raceway, Danville	Ray Heppenstall	Team Roosevelt	Fiat Abarth	9 th o/a	Car lighter than permitted for HP. Disqualified for points
14.5.61	Vandegrift Memorial Trophy	Cumberland, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall	Thomas T Fleming	Osca		Possibly non-started
28.5.61	SCCA National	Bridgehampton, New York	Ray Heppenstall		DB		
25.6.61	USAC Hoosier GP, Heat 1	Indianapolis	Ray Heppenstall		Osca	22 nd	USAC RRC
25.6.61	USAC Hoosier GP, Heat 2	Indianapolis	Ray Heppenstall		Osca	DNS	USAC RRC
30.9.61	Canadian GP	Mosport Park	Ray Heppenstall		Osca 2000S	DNF	Started

1962.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
16.9.62	Double 400 (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Bridgehampton, New York	Tom Fleming/ Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	Jaguar E-type	DNS	Fleming's car
2.12.62	Tourist Trophy heat	Nassau	Tom Fleming	NART	Osca 1600GT	5 th	
2.12.62	Tourist Trophy	Nassau	Ray Heppenstall	NART	Osca 1600GT	DNF	30 th o/a

1963.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
3.2.63	US RRC	Daytona, Florida	Ray Heppenstall		Osca	DNF	
17.2.63	3 hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Daytona, Florida	Bill Storey/ Ray Heppenstall	Bill Storey	Lotus Elite	16 th o/a, 9 th class	1300cc GT class
23.3.63	12 hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Sebring, Florida	Tom Fleming / Harold Baumann / Ray Heppenstall	NART	Osca GT1600	Not classified	1600cc GT class
28.4.63	SCCA Divisional	Waltersboro, South Carolina	Ray Heppenstall		Ferrari 2-litre	2 nd	
18.8.63	6 hours	Marlboro, Maryland	Otto Linton/ Ray Heppenstall		Abarth Simca 1300	6 th o/a, 1 st class	BP
14.9.63	500 Km (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Bridgehampton, New York	Tom Fleming / Otto Linton/ Ray Heppenstall	Thomas T Fleming	Abarth Simca 1300 Bialbero	15 th o/a, 1 st class	1300cc GT class

1963-64 Howe Sound Cooper-Ford.^{5,2}

Early in 1963, with sponsorship from the Howe Sound Company (arranged via Tom Fleming) Ray bought a 1960 Cooper Monaco sports-racer, less engine, from Jim Hall. In his workshop at his home in North Hills, Philadelphia, he widened the rear frame and fitted a 289 cu. in. Ford Fairlane V8 and Colotti Type 37 gearbox, one of the first transplants of an American V8 engine into a rear-engined British chassis.

The car's debut race was in November 1963 at Vineland, New Jersey, where driver Bob Holbert won, and the car also ran at Nassau that November. In December the rear bodywork was lowered and ran in the Daytona 250 miles in February 1964. The plan for 1964 was for a 14-race USRRR (C Modified) and FIA sports-car schedule. However, at the first USSRC race at Augusta in March, Ray crashed badly during practice when the car left the track and hit a culvert, with the resulting injuries putting him into Pennsylvania Hospital and out of action for six months.

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
2.11.63	SCCA Regional	Vineland, New Jersey	Bob Holbert		Cooper – Ford V8	1 st	
3.11.63	SCCA Regional, Feature	Vineland, New Jersey	Bob Holbert		Cooper – Ford V8	1 st	New lap record
9/10.11.63	SCCA Divisional	Marlboro, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall		Cooper – Ford V8	DNF	
6.12.63	Governor's Trophy	Oakes Field, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		Cooper – Ford V8	13 th o/a, 2 nd class	
8.12.63	Nassau Trophy	Oakes Field, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall / Bob Holbert		Cooper – Ford V8	9 th o/a, 1 st class	Holbert took over after his own car retired
15.2.64	America Challenge Cup	Daytona, Florida	Ray Heppenstall		Cooper – Ford V8	DNF	
1.3.64	USRRC	Augusta, Georgia	Ray Heppenstall		Cooper-Ford V8	DNS	Crashed in practice

1964 BMW 700.²

Ray bought a used BMW 700 Sports coupe road car, added a roll-over bar, bigger fuel tank and better wheels and tyres. An S-engine with dual carburettors, higher compression ratio and different camshaft was installed, and the car entered for the Marlboro International 6 hour endurance race with customer drivers. After 2½ to 3 hours the car was leading on index of performance when the engine broke. The car was then run reliably for a full season before being sold.

Known events:

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
15.3.64	12 Hours (Int. Championship of Makes)	Sebring, Florida	Tom Fleming / Otto Linton/ James Diaz	Ray Heppenstall	Abarth Simca 1300 Bialbero	24 th o/a, 1 st class	1300cc GT class. Heppenstall originally entered as driver.
16.8.64	Marlboro 12 hours	Marlboro, Maryland	Ray Heppenstall	Otto Linton	BMW 700	DNF	
20.9.64	Double 500 (Int. Championship of Makes)	Bridgehampton, New York	Tom Fleming / Ray Heppenstall	Thomas T Fleming	Ferrari 250 GTO	??	
29.11.64	Under 2-litre GT	Nassau	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	BMW 700 coupe	16 th o/a 1 st class	
29.11.64	Nassau TT	Nassau	Ray Heppenstall	Ray Heppenstall	BMW 700 coupe	DNF	35 th o/a
4.12.64	Governor's Trophy	Oakes Field, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		BMW 700 coupe	31 st o/a 1 st class	
6.12.64	Nassau Trophy	Oakes Field, Nassau	Tom Fleming / Ray Heppenstall	NART	Ferrari 250GTO	14 th o/a 2 nd class	
6.12.64	Nassau Trophy	Oakes Field, Nassau	Ray Heppenstall		BMW 700	43 rd o/a 2 nd class	

1965-66 Essex Wire Cobra and Ford GT40.^{1,2}

In 1965 Ray was appointed as crew chief and head mechanic of Skip Scott's Essex Wire Ford-powered sports car racing team of a Shelby Cobra and the Lang Cooper King Cobra. The Cobra was the first production 427 cu. in. car to be delivered and was nicknamed Oliver J. Dragon due to the puffs of smoke and flame that issued from the hood scoop when the engine was started. Its first race had been at Pensacola, Florida, in April 1964 where Scott placed 2nd in class and 4th overall in the USRRC event. Further outings included Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin (Dick Thompson/Ed Lowther 3rd overall), Watkins Glen (Scott, 3rd) and Bridgehampton (Scott/Thompson 3rd). At the end of 1964 the car was sold to Ed Lowther.

Essex Wire also received their first Ford GT40 in 1965, Skip Scott placing 4th on the first outing at Mid-Ohio at the end of August. Further appearances in 1965 included Watkins Glen (retired), Times GP, Riverside (11th), Stardust GP, Las Vegas (6th) and at Nassau in December.

For 1966 the team moved up to International competition, acquiring a further two GT40's, with Ray carrying out the initial build and preparation in his North Hills workshop. The GT40 was eligible for the FIA International Group 4 sports car championship, and the successes of the Essex Wire team, with class wins in the Sebring 12 Hours (Skip Scott/Peter Revson, 3rd overall), Monza 1000 Km (Sir John Whitmore/Masten Gregory, 2nd overall) and Spa 1000 Km (Scott/Revson, 3rd overall) effectively won the championship for Ford. Further appearances were in the Daytona 24 hours, Nurburgring 1000 Km, and the 24 hours of Le Mans, where the sole entry for Scott/Revson retired while leading the class.

1967 Ford Falcon/Howmet Sprint.^{1,2}

With support from Tom Fleming and the Howmet (formerly Howe Sound) Corporation Ray bought a very used Ford Falcon GT Sprint, fitted fibreglass doors, hood and deck lid, modified the front suspension to a similar set up to the Shelby 350, and entered the 1967 Daytona 24 hour race with Bill Seeley as co-driver. The original 289 Ford engine blew-up in practice, but was replaced with a spare, and the "taxicab" finished 12th overall, and 2nd in the over 2000cc Touring class.

After Daytona, Ray modified the car further, so that it could run as a prototype in the Sebring 12 hours. With opened-up wheel arches and bigger wheels, blanked out rear-quarter windows, and Webers replacing the Holley carburettor, the car was renamed the Howmet GT Sprint. Sharing the driving with Bill Seeley and Bob Nagel, the car finished in 19th place at Sebring, and 4th in the class for prototypes over 2000cc.

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
4/5.2.67	24 Hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Daytona, Florida	Ray Heppenstall/ Bill Seeley	Howmet	Ford Falcon	12 th o/a, 2 nd class	
1.4.67	12 Hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Sebring, Florida	Ray Heppenstall/ Bill Seeley/ Bob Nagel	Howmet Corporation	Howmet GT Sprint	19 th o/a, 4 th class	

1968 Howmet TX turbine car.

The successes with the Falcon led to Howmet agreeing to take up Ray's proposal for a turbine powered sports-racing car, resulting in the Howmet TX turbine car programme of 1968.

(See the Howmet TX story here: <https://bpmc.org.uk/petestowe/Lib/HowmetTX.pdf>)

1969-70.

With Howmet pulling out of racing at the end of 1968, Ray appeared at Sebring in 1969 with his own prototype Heppenstall Special VW, shared with Howard Brown.

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
23.3.69	12 Hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Sebring, Florida	Ray Heppenstall/ Howard Brown		Heppenstall Special Volkswagen	Not classified	

In 1969 Ray converted Tom Fleming's street Ford GT40 to track specification for Francis T Grant⁹. The GT40 ran at Sebring and Watkins Glen in 1969, then in 1970 at Daytona where the car retired before Ray got to drive, and at Sebring where they retired after 117 laps.

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
12.7.69	12 hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Watkins Glen, New York	Francis Grant / Howard Brown	Auto Enterprises	Ford GT40	DNF	Heppenstall nominated as driver, but did not practice or race.
31/1-1/2.70	24 Hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Daytona, Florida	Francis Grant/ Ray Heppenstall/ Buzz Marcus	Auto Enterprises	Ford GT40	DNF	
21.3.70	12 Hours (Int. Manufacturers Championship)	Sebring, Florida	Francis Grant/ Ray Heppenstall/ Brown?	Auto Enterprises	Ford GT40	DNF	

In 1970 Ray was also chief mechanic for Philadelphian Grant with a Formula 5000 Crossle 15F, modifying the car to stiffen the single-seater chassis. Also in the 1970s, Ray prepared a Formula Ford for Tuck Hunter.

Formula Super Vee.^{1,2}

When Formula Super Vee was announced Ray first acquired an old, damaged, Lotus Formula 3 chassis, which he repaired and fitted with a VW engine.

He then acquired an ex-Bill Scott Royale, redesigning the chassis to prevent it flexing, and ran in the SCCA Super Vee championship series.

Known events: ⁷

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
3.7.71	Formula Super Vee	Daytona, Florida	Ray Heppenstall		Royale	4 th	
21.8.71	Formula Super Vee	Talladega, Alabama	Ray Heppenstall		Royale	10 th	
29.8.71	Formula Super Vee	Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin	Ray Heppenstall		Royale	6 th	
6.9.71	Formula Super Vee	Lime Rock, Connecticut	Ray Heppenstall		Royale	9 th	
3.10.71	Formula Super Vee	Riverside, California	Ray Heppenstall		Royale	DNF	
17.10.71	Formula Super Vee	Laguna Seca, California	Ray Heppenstall		Royale	8 th	
1971	SCCA US Formula Super Vee championship		Ray Heppenstall		Royale	11 th equal	\$1775 prize money



Ray's Royale RP9-2 Supervee of 1972-73

(Photo courtesy of Walt Stewart and Liz Souter)

Date	Race	Track	Driver	Entrant	Car	Result	Notes
22.7.72	6 Hours (World Manufacturers Championship)	Watkins Glen, New York	Robert Wechsler/ Ray Heppenstall	Robert Wechsler	Royale RP4 Ford	Did not practice	2000cc sports class
26.11.72	SCCA ARRC Formula Super Vee 'Runoff'	Atlanta, Georgia	Ray Heppenstall		Royale RP9	DNF	
4.11.73	SCCA CSPRRC Formula Super Vee 'Runoff'	Atlanta, Georgia	Ray Heppenstall	Heppenstall Inc	Royale	13 th	

Ray continued to run a team in Super Vee, but when the formula changed from using air-cooled engines to water-cooled, around 1978, he decided that racing had become far too expensive, and closed his workshop.

Ray then moved out of racing, becoming advertising manager at a successful tri-state Subaru distributorship in Philadelphia, and later being involved in a Classic car business in New Jersey. Around 1990, by now living in New Jersey, he became involved in the US vintage racing scene, racing an immaculate 1949 Crosley Hotshot three or four times a year at tracks such as Pocono, Virginia International Raceway, and Meadowdale, and in 2000 was also building up a Miller for vintage racing.

(Photo of Ray's Crosley Hotshot at the Crosley Automobile Club National Show in 2000 - http://www.crosleyautoclub.com/00Nationals/00_Nationals_11.html)

In today's terms Ray Heppenstall would probably have been referred to as a race preparation specialist, or maybe race engineer. Ray, however, didn't even describe himself as an engineer, just a mechanic, but that belies the vast knowledge and expertise demonstrated throughout his years in auto racing.

In a 1976 Autosport interview, Philadelphia race driver Ted Wentz described how, a few years previously, Ray had helped him as a then struggling young Formula Ford driver:

"He was incredible. He taught me more about racing than anyone. He taught me how to drive. He taught me how to set a car up. He taught me everything because before then, the knowledge that I'd gained was mostly mechanical preparation and making sure the car finished. But Heppenstall told me how to save money. He taught me what was bullshit and what was worth looking into. He told me how to know when you're quick and when the car's slow and how to know when the car's quick and your're slow." "That's what Heppa taught me. He was fantastic. You couldn't bullshit the guy. He just knew his shit. I really owe a lot to that guy."

From then Wentz went on to be runner-up in the 1972 SCCA Formula Ford championship, and then in the UK win the 1973 Wella Formula Ford, 1975 Formula Atlantic and 1976 Indylantic championships.

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The above information has been compiled from various magazine and internet sources. It is not complete, nor can I guarantee the accuracy of all of it. If anyone can provide any further information, or would like to make a contribution to this page, please e-mail me at petestowe@talktalk.net

To read more about Ray's auto-racing activities in his own words, see the interview he gave to the Watkins Glen International Racing Research Library in July 2000 or read his monthly 'Ramblings and Rememberings from the Right Coast' column in Victory Lane magazine 1994 to 1996.

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Website: bpmc.org.uk/petestowe/HowmetTX.htm

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