

Sixty entries --- of cars and drivers from many nations --- started on the twenty-four hours road race at Le Mans, in France; some with cars capable of a speed of two hundred miles an hour.

To win --- would require an average speed of more than a hundred --- including hills and corners and pit stops for refuelling. And the winner would cover some two thousand five hundred miles in a day and a night.

Mike Hawthorn was co-driver of the most-fancied British Jaguar.

Lance Macklin was the driver of ~~the~~ ^{the} Austin-Healey that was struck from behind by one of the Mercedes-Benz, driven at about a hundred and fifty miles an hour by the French ace, Pierre Levegh..... and the Mercedes hurled itself like a thunderbolt into an enclosure packed with spectators.

The race went on; with racecourse marshals warning the drivers to slow down as they roared towards the scene of disaster.

This was the Austin - Healey --- whose driver was thrown clear with only minor injuries. The race went on through the night --- and the cars still thundered round the circuit --- the ~~ix~~ leaders lapping at a hundred and twenty miles an hour. And the sunny weather turned to rain.

Mike Hawthorn in the British Jaguar established a commanding lead after the Mercedes team had been withdrawn from the race. One of the reasons given why the race was not abandoned was that the crowd of a quarter of a million leaving the circuit, would have prevented the ambulances from getting through. The Jaguar went on to win --- covering in the twenty-four hours a distance of ^{over} two thousand five hundred and sixty-five ~~eighty-five~~ miles and breaking many records. But the grim record that will be remembered from this race at Le Mans is of some eighty dead --- and more than a hundred injured.