

U.S. or foreign standard production automobile posting a faster lap time ...” Of the four models officially allowed to compete for the prize, “production” figures would dwarf Consulier’s factory output.

Those competitors included two Porsche Turbos, a yet-to-be-introduced 1993 Mazda RX-7 turbo, an Acura NSX, and a Lamborghini Diablo.

In the last year, Porsche sold about 500 Turbos, Mazda 8000 of the last generation RX-7 turbos, Acura more than 2000 NSXs, and even Lamborghini should sell about 150 Diablos in the States.

Sixty Consuliers have been sold so far, and, unless Phillip paid for his, none of the “Street Racer Package” versions have



bile GmbH, said he was a club racer.

“It’s not much of a competition against a professional driver,” Foubare said Saturday morning, “but what the heck? We’re here to have fun, right?”

As the weekend wore on, Foubare’s attitude changed. Particularly after he turned laps in the 1:19s when the best the Consulier would do was a 1:20.089. And especially after a post-Challenge Consulier press release listed his best time at 1:25.117.

Consulier officials will point out that Foubare’s 1:19s were done on racing slicks while the Turbo III rode on Bridgestone TARIs. But when he was asked to compete, Foubare says he was told he could not bring TARIs, so he didn’t. Instead he

experience on tracks then a 1:25 will be excellent.’ He said I wouldn’t do better than 1:25. So that was why and how he calculated the three seconds because he knew they could do 1:22.”

In addition to declining the \$100,000 bet, Foubare didn’t sign Consulier’s entry form because of a clause stating: “Any challenger who is determined to have deliberately violated the rules and regulations, as set forth, shall be subject to a fine of \$25,000.”

So while he was allowed to run lap times, Foubare didn’t officially enter the Challenge.

He should have. Saturday morning he did just over 1:24 on full-depth street tires. Considering that the Consulier had only been getting middle-1:21s Saturday, a 1:24 on streets



**Warren Mosler (above) just wants a little recognition for his car. The starting field (left) wastes time before the 12-minute dash**



**If you wanted to pick nits, you could argue that Louis Foubare’s RUF Porsche (above) ‘won’**



**The learning curve of Diablo owner/driver Mario Velardo (above) shot way up over the weekend**



**Michael Lesser brought his NSX to Sebring for a driving school, Challenge meant more track time**

gone out the showroom door.

With one exception, drivers of the Challenge cars were amateurs, out to enjoy a weekend of free track time.

For example, the Lamborghini Diablo belonged to home-building magnate Mario Velardo of Courtland Manor, N.Y. When it rolled off the trailer at Sebring it had 150 miles on the odometer and Velardo had been on a track twice in his life.

Peter Farrell was the exception among the Challenge drivers. He won the Touring Class of the IMSA Firestone Firehawk series last season piloting a Saturn SC. Since season’s end, he had been working with Mazda with the goal of driving the new RX-7 in the Supercar series.

There were other cars present at Sebring that weekend, including a Lamborghini Countach; Ferrari F40, Testarossa and 328; Corvette ZR1 and L98; and a host of other vehicles, some legal for the street, others hopelessly modified. None were officially entered in the Challenge.

One entrant invited by Consulier to run for the prize was Louis Foubare, driving a RUF Porsche Turbo. Foubare, an authorized importer and distributor for RUF Auto-

brought full depth street tires and a set of slicks that he carries in the trailer. When he saw the Consuliers all running on Bridgestone TARIs, his eyebrows raised.

Saturday morning, Mosler offered Foubare a deal.

“He made a side bet which was precisely this: He said, ‘If you get within three seconds of our time, I will pay you a hundred thousand dollars. But if you don’t, you have to give me a hundred thousand-dollar deposit on a RUF automobile.’”

That side bet, which Mosler acknowledged Saturday afternoon, was offered with the RUF Porsche riding on slicks, but it was offered before anyone knew

how fast Foubare could go. The problem was Foubare didn’t know either, and didn’t want to risk \$100,000 finding out.

“I had no feel for what my times could be, nor his,” Foubare said. “He was dealing with a little bit of a stacked deck. But the point is that he had said, ‘Look, a rear-engine car like that, if you turn 1:30 you can consider yourself good. If you have a lot of

would have been worth 100 grand at that point had Foubare taken the bet.

It was then that the Consulier people began to point at the RUF Porsche’s ancestry. Was RUF Automobile GmbH a manufacturer or a tuner? Foubare said RUF has been a manufacturer for eight years. Was the Porsche “... as delivered by the manufacturer”? Foubare said yes. Were the tires “... original