

EDITORIALS



Auto race canceled but potential remains

- **The issue:** An auto race on Oahu billed as the world's richest has been canceled because of financial problems.
- **Our view:** Hawaii should be considered for other major auto races.

ORGANIZERS of an auto race next month at Kalaheo Airport with the world's richest purse had to cancel it after failing to meet financial obligations, but the potential for future auto races in Hawaii remains, perhaps on a lesser scale.

The inability of promoters to arrange a race on such a grand scale in only a few months' time should not reflect on Hawaii's suitability as a racing venue.

The long-established auto racing circuit's eagerness in trying to upstage the four-year-old Indy Racing League's legendary Indianapolis 500 may have led to cancellation of the Hawaiian Super Prix and its \$10 million in prizes.

Championship Auto Racing Teams Inc., or CART, the sanctioning body of the dominant FedEx Championship Series, blamed the failure to secure a title sponsor or a lucrative television deal for the cancellation.

Some observers maintain that the race's organizers had under-

estimated the cost of staging it in Hawaii and overestimated its potential number of television viewers.

Forrest Bond, a Los Angeles-based racing expert, said Super Prix organizers assumed the Hawaii race would attract 1.8 million pay-per-view cable viewers, nearly triple the average TV audience for CART's 20 other races. Even if the race had drawn such a large audience, Bond added, an inadequate share of the proceeds would have gone to the Super Prix to pay for the prize money and other expenses.

The short period allotted for such a huge undertaking was an important factor in the effort's failure. Plans for auto racing's "super bowl" were announced in February, only nine months before the Nov. 11-13 event at the former Barbers Point air strip. A lengthier planning period might have produced the desired result, despite Bond's criticism.

The miscarriage of the Hawaiian Super Prix should not sour planners for either CART or the Indy Racing League about the idea of staging major auto races on Kalaheo.

A grandstand that lies unassembled at the site should be put to use at some future date, but sufficient time must be allotted for planning.