

1978 Pace Car Front Spoiler: Dealer Prepped or Factory Installed?

Extremely low-mileage 1978 Pace Cars continue to emerge from a nearly forty-year hibernation still wrapped in their original shipping protective gear and with miscellaneous items stuffed in the luggage area behind the seats as shipped from the St Louis Assembly Plant. Auto enthusiasts marvel when an original Corvette displays. New car scent lingers, carpet cardboard remains tucked under the trim edge and plastic covers the seats while the steering wheel sports that classic, tight-fitting formed plastic protection.

The most recent example was the Roger Judski seven-mile, MSO (Manufacturer's Statement of Origin) Pace Car (Figure 1). Judges and owners are accustomed to viewing decal boxes and roof-top tie-down straps in the luggage area but the Judski Corvette revealed items rarely seen... wheel caps, carpeted floor mats, roof panel bags and the three-piece front spoiler wrapped in plastic bags. Freight trucks in 1978 could not accommodate and transport the Pace Car with the spoiler installed. Therefore, it was stowed and listed as a dealer installed item to be included in dealer preparation and included both mounting hardware and a two-sided instruction sheet.

Which raises the question "How is exterior judged with the three-piece front spoiler in the rear storage compartment?" The Pace Car spoiler is judged per the 1978-79 Exterior Section of the Technical Information Manual & Judging Guide (TIMJG). Consider also that this standard as applied is not limited to the Pace Car. The 1979 Corvette buyer could order RPO D80 optional front and rear spoilers.¹

Dealer Preparation

Dealers administered the Chevrolet Dealer New Car Preparation and received a fee. In 1978-79 dealer prep included the front spoiler



Figure 1: Judski MSO Pace Car: Front spoiler not installed per buyer instruction. as a Chevrolet-directed dealer installed item. Thus, the expectation when a 1978 Pace Car (or D80 equipped 1979 Corvette) is presented for judging, is that the three-piece front spoiler is installed as are wheel caps (and/or wheel rings) and floor mats. However, judging a non-installed three-piece, front spoiler, takes place in the context of the NCRS Judging Standard, which addresses dealer preparation:

Cars are to be judged to the standard of vehicle appearance, and as equipped, at the time and point of final assembly by the Chevrolet motor Division. Presentation for judging is to be in the condition normally associated with that of a Corvette, which has undergone the then current standard Chevrolet Dealer New Car Preparation for delivery to the purchaser exclusive of any dealer or purchaser inspired additions, deletions, or changes.



Figure 2: Interior protection shipping gear

¹ The 1979 RPO D80 included a screw & acorn nut to secure the top of left and right spoiler corners to the fender.

¹ *Judging the Pace Car Spoiler*

Dealer prep for Pace Cars included removal of plastic and cardboard (carpet protective mats), application of decals, installation of carpet mats, installation of wheel caps (aluminum wheels), wash and a final wax and polish. Pace Cars were equipped with U75 Power Antenna installed at the factory. In contrast, coups with base antenna (fixed-mast) were stowed in the rear and installed by the dealer.

Owners and judging teams are accustomed to working around plastic and cardboard when accompanied with an original, low-mileage Corvette. Plastic normally appears where seat backs come to rest on the bottom cushion stops and/or around where seatback lock assembly secures to bottom cushion. Cardboard is tucked under the sill plates and up under the console side carpet trim. When plastic is present, it is expected and therefore there is no deduction for the appearance of torn plastic at the base of the hardware. It is typical and represents the vestiges of dealer preparation. So, how is an MSO Corvette judged when still wrapped in plastic (seats), cardboard on the carpet and steel wheel covered in its protective plastic cover?

Judging interior with shipping gear in place

A different type of judging question but one worth exploring: “How are the remnants of plastic and cardboard shipping protection judged by the interior team?” Figure 2 depicts the typical factory protective gear as shipped from the factory and before dealer preparation. The task of the judging team is to apply the elements of originality and condition to interior components. The typical guidance is that as long as the interior components are available for judging and the elements applied, than each item, per the TIMJG, is judged as presented. If the carpet is seen and the seats viewed to determine originality and condition than interior is assessed with plastic and cardboard in place without disrupting the placement of the gear as shipped from the factory.



Figure 3: Spoiler in luggage area

The dilemma for an owner presenting an MSO 1978 Pace Car, such as the Judski Corvette is preparation for flight judging or even Bowtie judging. The practical advice always offered to owners of original Corvettes is consistent... present it as it is rather than changing items around or over cleaning.

Judging the three-piece front spoiler

In top-flight judging, the TIMJG assigns 64 points for originality and 56 for condition in Section 3. BODY, FIBERGLASS & COMPONENT FIT and that includes spoilers. The judging process considers the non-installed front spoiler in the context of the body, fiberglass and the overall fit. The spoilers than, both front and rear fall within this section. The team applies, in the process of judging, the five elements of originality, completeness, date, configuration, installation and finish. The five elements collectively represent 100 percent of originality points with each element representing 20 percent.

So, how is the front spoiler judged stowed in the rear storage compartment? When the judging team applies the elements of originality, and when an installation deviation exists, 20 percent deduction is applied. However, the 20 percent of the 64 originality points is limited to the front spoiler and must represent a fair and reasonable proportion in contrast to the body, fiberglass and fit. Given the condition is relatively the same as

when shipped from the factory, the deduction out of the 120 points (Section 3) for the front spoiler would be minimal, in the range of 2-4 points. In contrast, the standard deduction for a regular production 1978 Corvette with RPO D80 spoilers (front and rear) installed is 20 points. Judges are trained to judge the body, ignore the item when owner-inspired items are installed such as passenger side mirrors or luggage racks on 63-76 Corvettes.

Flight judging for a non-installed, front spoiler is straight forward once the context within Section 3 scoring and elements of originality are taken into consideration. In contrast to flight judging, Bowtie judging uses a pass/fail for the list of items to assess originality. Given that a correctly configured front spoiler is available for judging and it is an original, three-piece configuration, the item would pass the individual item test.

Pace Car Decal Application

An owner could argue (and probably will) that the spoiler stowed in the luggage area as shipped from factory (See Figure 1) is not unlike the decals...shipped from the factory in the box but not installed! Pace Car decal application was a buyer option and Chevrolet did not reimburse the dealer for installation. The dealer could charge for installation or install without charge as a consideration of their customer service package.

When decals are on the body a deduction occurs in contrast to judging a non-installed spoiler. The deduction depends whether two decals are applied or all four a deduction as described in Section 2 BODY PAINT of the TIMJG. The Indy Speedway winged-tire logo represented one set (one per side) while the OFFICIAL PACE CAR decal was the second set, one per side. The decal box (GM# 476282) included GM# 476285 that was the instruction sheet to guide dealer installation of decals. According to Section 2 scoring, "eight points are to be deducted if Pace Car decals are applied or missing." Section 2 BODY



Figure 4: Depicts Pace Car front fender with factory-drilled holes for three-piece spoiler. Silver paint can be seen in mounting holes.

PAINT assigns 45 points to originality and 40 points for condition.

Decals applied at the factory branded the Limited Edition Pace Car and therefore are original factory installations. Factory installed decals included the red pin stripes at the body break, the silver accent stripe applied to the hood power bulge, and the words "LIMITED EDITION" in white outline letters placed beneath the cross flag emblem on each side.

Summary

The purpose of this article is to provide judging guidance for owners and judges, when a non-installed three-piece front spoiler is presented for top flight or Bowtie judging. The article reviewed how the protective shipping gear is viewed in the judging process, how the non-installed front spoiler is judged and how this compares to Pace Car decals stowed in the rear storage luggage area.

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