

The Mo-Hud

Knockoff



NEWSLETTER OF THE MOHAWK-HUDSON REGION SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA (MoHud)

June 2017

The REport

While cruising the old interweb for the best racing brake fluid to put in our T4 Honda Civic, I came across a very interesting article and information on the Turner Motorsport website about brake fluid and what the various ratings mean. Here is some of what I learned:

Brake fluid has gone through several evolutions in the last ten or so years with new formulas, materials, and standards being introduced. We have swept away the clutter and this page should help you understand each type of fluid and why it exists.

First, the golden rule of brake fluid: **change it often**. And change it more often if it's a track car. Nearly all brake fluid on the market is hygroscopic and will absorb any moisture. The higher water content the thicker the fluid and the more likely it is to boil under extreme heat. So it's vital that you change your fluid regularly. Some brands require fluid changes more often than others so pay attention to the advice on the label. No brake fluid should be in use for longer than two years. Once opened the shelf life of a can is generally considered to be no more than one year.

The key to a good brake fluid is how much it can resist compression when pressure is applied. The more the fluid compresses the longer the pedal travel and the longer it takes for the fluid to push on the caliper pistons. Fresh brake fluid out of the bottle is very resistant to compression but as it absorbs moisture and/or air it will compress more and more (water and air have very poor resistance to compression).

During the next few REports I'll share more of what I learned about brake fluid. Especially as it relates to what we should be using in our track and competition vehicles.

*...For the good of the sport,
Jim Bucci
Regional Executive*

Ed's note: See John Cory's relevant brake saga in this month's Journal, page #

Did you ever wonder why the Dunn Bridge between Rensselaer and Albany just ends in mid air the way it does? Come to the June 7 membership meeting and learn the answer to this and many other odd feats of Capital District road engineering.

Coming Events: June and...

- **June 4:** Sunday, 8:00 – 5:00. MoHud Solo Points Event #2; OGS McCarty lot, Thruway exit 23
Contact: Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

- **June 6:** Tuesday, 3:00 – 9:00. SCCA Track Night in America at Thompson Speedway, Thompson CT.
Details at < www.tracknightinamerica.com >

- **June 7:** Wednesday, 7:30pm. MoHud Membership Meeting. Orchard Tavern, 68 North Manning Boulevard, Albany.
While the formal meeting starts at 7:30pm, we start gathering around 6pm to share time with our fellow members.
Contact: Jim Bucci hdjimbu@gmail.com

- June 10-11: Saturday - Sunday, 9:00 – 4:00. Tri-vette/AMEC solo event at Plateau Sky Ranch Airport go-kart track, Edinburg.
Contact: willys46@nycap.rr or Brian French (518) 674-0465

- **June 15:** Thursday, 3:00 – 9:00. SCCA Track Night in America at Palmer Motorsports Park, Ware MA.
Details at < www.tracknightinamerica.com >

- **June 17-18:** Saturday - Sunday, 6:30 – 5:00. SCCA Tire Rack Solo at Devens, Ayer MA. Limit of 300 cars.
Registration: < www.Motorsport.reg >

- **June 24:** Saturday, 9:30am. Gimmick rally/tour for Hospice honoring Cindy Webber, longtime member of VSCCA.
Starts at Litchfield (CT) Saltwater Grille; wanders near Lime Rock and related points of interest. Contact: edhyman@charter.net

- **June 24-25:** Saturday-Sunday, 8:00 – 5:00. MoHud Test & Tune (Saturday); Solo Points Event #3 (Sunday).
OGS McCarty lot, Thruway exit 23
Contact: Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

- **June 27:** Tuesday, 3:00 – 9:00. SCCA Track Night in America at Thompson Speedway, Thompson CT.
Details at < www.tracknightinamerica.com >

- **July 23:** Sunday, 8:00 – 5:00. MoHud Solo Points Event #4).
OGS McCarty lot, Thruway exit 23
Contact: Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

- **August 13:** Sunday, 8:00 – 5:00. MoHud Solo Points Event #5).
OGS McCarty lot, Thruway exit 23
Contact: Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

- **August 27:** Sunday, 8:00 – 5:00. MoHud Solo Points Event #6).
OGS McCarty lot, Thruway exit 23
Contact: Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

- **October 1:** Sunday, 8:00 – 5:00. MoHud Solo Points Event #7).
OGS McCarty lot, Thruway exit 23
Contact: Russ Burckhard russtduck@gmail.com

- **December 2:** Saturday, 5:00. MoHud Annual Awards Banquet. (Don't forget to bring a new toy for Unity House.)

SOLO Report

The season is off to a great start. We had our first event, April 29th and 30th, on the new McCarty Avenue pavement that was placed after the season finale last fall.

Saturday's Test and Tune had just over 20 entrants that came out to a nice spring day. The smooth pavement over the whole lot gave me a nice canvas for a course design. There were two elements that I wanted to incorporate and I did a good job on both of them. We had a nice long slalom and a direction optional skid pad. What I didn't do well was the transition between the two. We had a number of people get lost between them. The rest of the course was an easy to follow large S-turn. Overall it was an easy but technical course that gave the opportunity to learn multiple elements where everyone had the chance to have 9 runs. We had quite a few first timers that got their feet wet and could not wait to come back for Sunday's event.

Sunday's event started with a threat of rain. After promising everyone that the rain was not going to happen during the drivers meeting, it started to rain just as we were about to start. I seemed to have made Mother Nature unhappy. It had rained most of my first heat and lightly sprinkled early in the second heat. The fresh pavement took a while to dry and the cars that ran late had the advantage. This was proven as the times dropped a second or two throughout the event. Jon Kirschman set up a very nice course that used just about all of the lot. We all had 6 runs to try to get the most out of our cars. The one that figured it out the best was Andy Furlong in his Atomic Rabbit. He had the fastest raw time and the fastest Pax time out of the 51 entrants. Rounding out the top 5 in Pax were Ian Wallace from HS, Eric Smith from Pro DS, Jose Martinez from DS, and Carmine Russo from Pro HS. Top class winners were Tim Frink in Street, Even Merrill from Touring, Dan Whaley from Street Prepared, Charles Dickenson from CAM, Gary Mazzone from Street Mod, Ian Morse from Modified, Moises Samaniego from Kart, Brendan Heyck from Novice, and Andy Furlong from Pro.

Full results can be found at <http://www.mohud-scca.org/solo/schedule-results/>

- Russ Burckhard -

RPI Race Car Engineers Test & Tune



Thanks to the Mo-Hud Solo Program and the generosity of two of our members, the Rensselaer Motorsports Team was able to hone their driving skills at the April 29th Test & Tune session. This in preparation for the Formula SAE challenge May 10th through 13th at Michigan International Speedway.

116 universities from the US and eight foreign countries registered for the Challenge, with RPI finishing 37th overall, and 37th in both the skidpad and autocross events. And for the first time in several years, an RPI entry *finished* the 22-lap "endurance" event! No word as to whether the entire team took a victory lap aboard the 421 lb #38...

June 2017 Competition Report

- Jack Hanifan -

NERRC Kickoff Weekend at Palmer- May 6th and 7th.

MoHud did well at Palmer; Rookie Joe Nolette won all 3 of his races in his T1 BMW. Evan Karl also won all three of his race and set a lap record in Spec Miata. Jonathan Eriksen won his 1st race but had to withdraw with an oil leak problem. In SM2, Bob Karl, BK Karl and Nick Karl finished 3rd, 6th and 7th, in the first two races. In the last race it was Bob jr, 3rd, Nick 5th and BK 7th.

65th Cumberland "Fire and Ice" Majors- May 13th and 14th, Pittsburg International Race Complex, Wampum PA.

Charlie Campbell had a First in F Production and an 11th in SM. Gregg Goss had a 2nd and a First in STU.

If I missed anyone please let me know.

Licenses- I have taken over the position of NeDiv Driver Licensing Administrator.

Eds note: This month's Journal includes notes on Campbell Racing and Yuven Sundaramoorthy's FF and F1600 events.

SCCA Gets a New Leader

"TOPEKA, Kan. (May 15, 2017) -- After an extensive and thoughtful search process, Sports Car Club of America® proudly announces Michael Cobb as the organization's new President and Chief Executive Officer. An SCCA® member with more than 25 years of diverse experience transforming brands, companies and cultures, Cobb will officially embrace his new role June 1 with the Club... The Dallas-area resident comes to the SCCA after serving as Chief Marketing Officer for Gold's Gym...

Racing firmly embedded in his DNA, Cobb established his competition "career" at an early age by winning a Texas Soap Box Derby event, and competed in the Nationals in Akron, Ohio. In 2007, he began participating in SCCA autocross with the Texas Region, claimed the Novice of the Year award in his first full season of competition, and competed in the Tire Rack SCCA Solo Nationals. Through such participation, Cobb discovered what keeps SCCA members returning year after year."



While it was easy to spoof the selection process in the KnockOff's April 1st edition, the CEO job is not an easy one. Since the early 1960s, warring "amateur" and "pro" interests within SCCA have at times threatened to tear the club apart. We wish Cobb success in leading SCCA, and remind him that Solo Trabant and Spec Trabant were our ideas first...

June Membership Report

- Jim Garry -

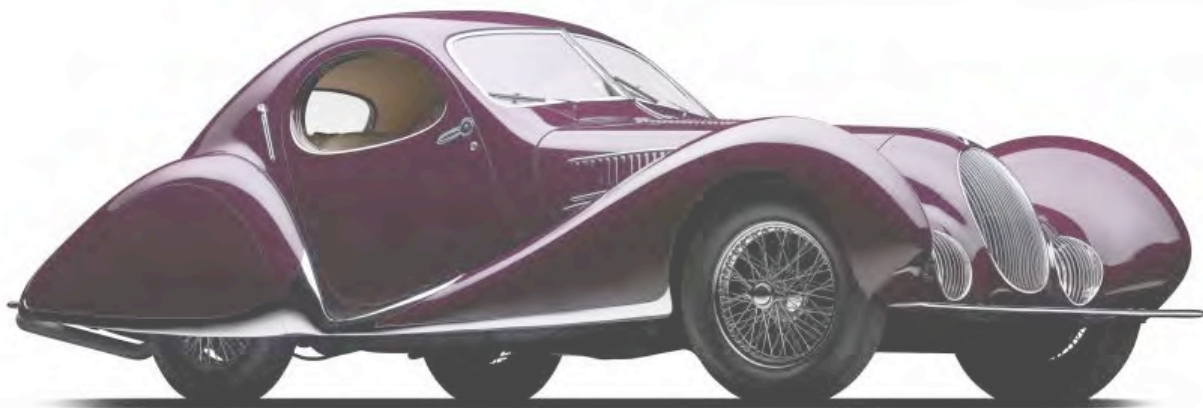
As of May 20th, Mohawk Hudson Region has 580 members. This might be an all-time high. Since the last Knock Off Membership Report this is an increase of 45 new members.

Thirty-four of the new members listed on the following page were April 9th Teen Street Survival participants and parents.

A small note, it looks like if you fail to renew on time the SCCA National Office lists you as a brand new member instead of as a late renewing member with x years of time with the club. And the membership data that I see doesn't make note of this. So please get your renewals into SCCA on time because otherwise it taxes the brain of your aging membership chairman.

Significant Anniversaries

Thirty Years	Deborah Riggi Ernest Riggi Jennifer Riggi Kathleen Riggi
Fifteen Years	Jill Wright
Ten Years	Annamarie Cioffari Edward Granka
Five Years	Aashish Vermulapalli



New Members

David DiSanto, Troy
James Gallo, Halfmoon
Josh Smith, Albany
Bryce Bellan, Medina
Jacqueline Blazejeski, Ballston Spa
Paul Blazejeski, Ballston Spa
Jill Christiansen, Ballston Spa
Sydney Christiansen, Ballston Spa
Jeffrey Coffin, Maryland
Lisa Constantino, Saratoga Springs
Ryan Constantino, Saratoga Springs
Emily DiNallo, Halfmoon
Marybeth DiNallo, Halfmoon
Kimberly Dumond, Medina
Julia Frutchey, Clifton Park
Madalyn Frutchey, Clifton Park
Michelle Frutchey, Clifton Park
Carmine Grippo, Burnt Hills
Courtney Grippo, Burnt Hills
Lori Grippo, Burnt Hills
Nicholas Jerome, Ridgefield, CT
Aidan Kiernan, Saratoga Springs

Justin King, Delmar
Mark King, Delmar
Charlie Liebers, Saratoga Springs
Edward Liebers, Saratoga Springs
Jeanette Liebers, Saratoga Springs
Emma Limoges, Averill Park
Rob Limoges, Averill Park
Laith Matari, Hawthorne, NJ
Sal Matari, Hawthorne, NJ
Lauren Miller, Glenmont
Paul Miller, Glenmont
Kim Nemeth, Clifton Park
Matthew Nemeth, Clifton Park
Marcus Ortiz, Saratoga Springs
Christopher Jones, Menands
Michael Budai, Philmont
William Bachner, Ravena
Joseph Lagdao, Niskayuna



Mo-Hud Goes to the SAM Spring Show Saratoga Auto Museum, May 21st

Mo-Hud had an active presence in the SAM Spring Show, exhibiting a *grid* of Solo and Road Racing cars at the Museum entrance, while providing a *sentence of judges* to award honors to their pick of twenty among the 300+ cars entered on the main show-lawn.



Tim Frink: Ford Focus RS
Diane Malecki: F-Type Jaguar
Charles Dickinson: Corvette C5
Tracey Burckhard: Ford Focus ST
DJ McArdle: BMW
Jack Hanifan: FProduction Miata
Pete Smith: FProduction Miata
Tom Campbell: FProduction Miata
Steve Charles: working



Tom Campbell, Chief Judge
Jim Bucci, Associate Judge
Trish Bucci, Associate Judge
Jack Hanifan, Associate Judge
Diane Malecki, Associate Judge
Paul Malecki, Associate Judge
Lee Schaller, Associate Judge
Pete Smith, Associate Judge
Tony Tovsen, Associate Judge
Gene Tricosi, Associate Judge



Chopped & bobbed, shaved, decked, frenched;
with skirts and lowrider hydraulics.



Best of Show...
1919 Detroit Electric

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For more information about the Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA, and membership in the Sports Car Club of America, go to < <http://www.mohud-scca.org> >

Membership meetings of the Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month, excepting July and August, 7:30pm, at the Orchard Tavern, 68 North Manning Boulevard, Albany.



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The KnockOff Journal

This Month...

- Honor Thy Brakes
- Yuven's Progress
- Chasing a Rabbit
- Campbell Racing



Honor Thy Brakes... A cautionary tale by John Corey

Since Jaguar's introduction of reliable disc brakes to win the 1953 Le Mans 24-hours, and their use in Jaguar production cars since 1957, we've become smug on the subject of brake fade and failure. But the following story by John Corey, written October 24th last year, reminds us that adventure awaits when brakes are taken for granted.

So, last weekend son Ethan and I headed south to Delaware for a TSD rally. We took the heretofore reliable XJS coupe, which he had just driven over and back to school across the Adirondack Park (yes, MOUNTAINS).

We had some heavy traffic and at one point braked hard. Apparently, that pushed at least one front brake piston farther out than it had ever been, and it stuck there. The resulting brake drag, not so fierce that we couldn't continue (or even much notice the slight pull), heated that caliper enough to boil the brake fluid. As we approached a toll booth, the pedal went to the floor! Unbeknownst to us, the back brakes were already not operable, so loss of the fronts from boiling meant we had zilch left. Fortunately, there was a closed EZ-Pass lane with nothing but a rubber pylon in our way. R.I.P. one rubber pylon, as we blew through, still at 30-40 mph.

We pulled over, coasting down and rolled to a stop. No visible major damage to the car, so once the brake cooled, we nursed it off the highway. We pulled into a plaza with gas station and drug store. No brake fluid in the gas station, but the drugstore had some! Go figure.

So we bled the bad fluid out of the still dragging caliper. No old Jaguar parts in Delaware on a Friday evening, so we sought a hotel for the night. Alas! There was a Marching Band Convention in town (really! We can't make this stuff up) and all rooms were full. We eased our way carefully up the road about 20 miles to find one.

Next morning, we went to the nearest home center and bought the following: hacksaw, file, cordless drill with bits, C-clamps, prybar, and a strip of 1/8 thick by 2 inch wide aluminum. You win extra style points if you can figure out what we did (following picture here is a clue).

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Brakes, cont'd



Ethan "McGiver" Corey got the brakes to sufficient functionality that we could head on home (300 miles) in relative safety. No rally for us (oh, yeah, that WAS the original idea...), but no highway death, either. Permanent repair parts were on order before we got home and have arrived for use this weekend. See next paragraph (after you guess a bit), explaining the actual work done in the home center parking lot. Thanks, Ethan, ALWAYS a pride and pleasure. And yes, I do expect a letter in the mail soon, fining us for blowing through the tollbooth...

Did you guess what we did with each bit we bought at the home center?

Keep in mind we needed BOTH front brakes to work reliably to justify driving home. One front brake would have pulled uncontrollably in any hard stop, and left very little margin for error. So here's how we figured the fix.

Recall that the trigger for the dragging brake was an earlier hard stop that moved at least one piston out past its prior place in its cylinder, where it stuck. To get it to behave again, we first pried it back to free the rotor and pads, then pressed it well back into its bore with C-clamps, removed the associated friction pad and using that as a template, hacksawed and filed a piece of the aluminum strip to size, drilled holes in it to match the retaining pins for the pad and slipped the aluminum spacer thus formed in between pad and pistons, thereby putting the piston well back in the cleaner, un-bindy part of its caliper bore, even when the pad was pushed out to contact with the rotor under braking.

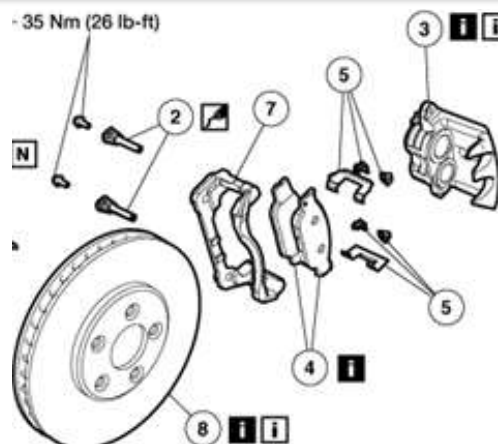
We also squished the recalcitrant piston in and out a few times, using the bleeder to force out any watery or rusty fluid that might contribute to repeat binding. Ta-da! semi-functional brakes. In the end, it freed up enough to dispense with the spacer (mostly due to flushing that nasty fluid, which we did on both sides - d'oh! - while we were at it).

We then drove with a double-eye toward avoiding hard braking, all the way home.

One more adventure in the history books... **-JohnC.**

Featured in the Preceding Tale...

- 8: Rotor**
- 7: Carrier**
- 3: Pistons**
- 4: Pads**
- 5: Pad Retaining Clips**
- 2: Pins**



Yuven Sundaramoorthy in Formula F/ Formula 1600

First, a word or two about Formula F/ Formula 1600. Originally this open-wheeled formula was based on the Ford (GB) Cortina engine, having no aerodynamic features such as spoilers and wings, and meant to be a first step toward Formula 1 or Indy Car. On this side of the Pond, SCCA grew the class over the years to include pre-1970 Cortina engines ("Cortina"), 1971-on Cortina ("Kent") engines, and from 2009-on, Honda Fit (L15A7) crate engines. For the last several years SCCA ran Formula F at the regional level, and F1600 as a national Pro Series. At the end of 2016 a significant group of Pro entrants switched to USAC sanctioning, and so now Formula F drivers have multiple venues to run their cars.

This year, Yuven Sundaramoorthy, one of Mo-Hud's upcoming cohort of young racers is running a Mygale/Honda in both SCCA and USAC events.

At the SCCA Majors, Virginia International Raceway (VIR) on April 14-16th, with 23 entrants in Formula F, he came in P6, 6th overall, and P4, 5th overall in two races. Then two weeks later, again at VIR but with USAC, his record, according to proud papa Gopal, was "P2 in both official practice sessions; P1 (pole position) in qualifying; P9 in race 1, made up 8 spots after an opening lap spin; P4 in race 2 in a wild last lap finish; P4 in race 3, with the fastest lap time."

At Mid-Ohio (USAC) May 12th and 13th, he came in 2nd in race 1; 3rd in race 2, and 4th in race 3, out of 15 cars registered.



Formula F footprint...



When they say "crate engine," they mean it!



Yuven (l.) on podium.

Some Days, Your Cheetah Doesn't Have the Energy to Catch a Rabbit...



Jim Gary's Cheetah
Sunday, April 30th, at Mo_Hud's Solo Event Number 1 of 2017

Through the delaying-the-start-downpour, Jim's Cheetah had stayed tucked away on its trailer over near the LP pumps. But after the rain stopped and the course had been somewhat dried from first runs by the two session groups (roughly split into "stock" and "prepared"), the wraps came off and the Cheetah's cry made it clear it was going after any rabbits that might be around.

But while it sounded great off the line, the engine seemed to max out awfully early. The consensus was that it had something to do with electrons not going correctly through wires.

Here's what Jim wrote a few days later: "At Sunday's event it was apparent there was something wrong with the engine. So today [Tuesday] I towed 2 hours down the Mass Pike to see Bill at Small Fortune Racing to try to make the engine run past 4000 rpm (it redlines at nearly 13,000). It has to be an electronic problem.

We did some snooping. I cleared the memory on 2 after market electronic doodads and Bill did some wiring.

But during the day it occurred to him that the issue seemed like the engine was in a "run safe" mode. When he said that it struck me as absolutely correct.

We called the guru on this in the Northwest US. He stated that regardless of any codes, the engine will run fine (he didn't say, but I suppose because it's no longer in the original configuration as when it was in a motorcycle).

But that just doesn't sound right. The engine has an ECU, a computer. And during the time the battery wasn't being recharged it had to have thrown a code. So we went online to check it out, saw some code reset tools, then saw a home-made way to do it.

Won't know if any of this worked until the car is driven because with no load the engine runs fine."

Campbell Racing- Summit Point, West Virginia, April 29-30

This was the second of seven events in the Northeast Conference SCCA Majors Series. You will recall that we had two 2nd place finishes in F Production at VIR two weeks ago. Now we also have two 1st place finishes as well. It's early in the season but being the points leader is a good place to start the season.

We got to the track Thursday afternoon to set up for the test day on Friday. The race event itself was a two day affair. There was a qualifying session each morning, followed by a race in the afternoon. The test day went well. Charlie did three of the four sessions with the Spec Miata. It had a new motor (remember the last one was overheated at VIR) and needed a careful break-in. There was a Race Shop located at the track so he was also able to put the SM on a dyno to do a little fine tuning after the break-in was completed.

We knew the F Prod car was handling well so it didn't really need any actual testing. I did, however, put in a different motor so Charlie took the FP car out for one of the test sessions to ensure it was running well and not leaking anything: all was good. The VIR motor (the one we drove to Kansas to pick-up and have the engine builder tune) was working so well at VIR that I decided to save it for the Runoffs in September. So I put in the motor that was used at last year's Runoffs in Mid-Ohio. It really was just about as good and will provide good service for the rest of the summer before the Runoffs.

Saturday qualifying was a challenge. It was cool and damp and raining in the early morning. The FP car was first and, while we went out on slick tires, I did make a few changes to accommodate what was going to be a damp track. Everyone was a bit slow, we were about 5 seconds a lap slower than we had been in that one test session on Friday. Charlie came in early when it started sprinkling a little but One of the other FP cars stayed out until the very end and with a drying track was able to take the class pole position by a fraction of a second. We would start fourth, behind the two fastest E Production BMWs and the other FP Miata.

The SM qualifying session went well but it seemed that the new motor just wasn't putting out the power that it should. Charlie would spend all weekend in mid-pack. But in SM there is always someone to race with, no matter where you are in the field and Charlie does like the close racing.

The FP race went as we expected. Charlie moved in behind the two BMWs and the three of them just moved away from the rest of the field. It was a clean race, green flag all the way, and at the end Charlie had about a 15 second lead on his closest FP competitor.

The SM race was also a good clean race and Charlie finished a position or two ahead of where he started. However, at the end, as he slowed, the car started to overheat and run poorly. Seemed like the same problem as two weeks ago at VIR.

On Sunday we decided to skip the morning qualifying session. The times from Saturday carried over and our fastest lap time from the race appeared to be enough for the class pole position without putting additional stress on the machinery and to save a heat cycle on the tires, which were getting near their end of useful life. This turned out to be as we hoped but the same guy who beat us to the pole on Saturday came within a couple tenths of a second of doing it again.

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Summit Point, April 29-30, cont'd

Charlie took the SM out for Sunday qualifying to see if it was going to continue to run hot. It seemed ok, although he didn't run long or especially hard. Qualifying about where he was on Saturday.

The FP race was the first after lunch. The weather was very hot (high 80's) and very humid, as it had been all weekend. And a strange one it was. On the pace lap one of the cars back in the pack had some sort of failure and stopped on track and couldn't move. As a result, the first 4 laps were behind the pace car. Since this race had a time limit on it, it became a race to the clock rather than the full distance as planned. Once the race started Charlie, behind the lead BMW (the second BMW didn't show up) and the lead GTL car moved away from the pack just like on Saturday and all was quiet for a while. But then one of the other FP cars started closing from further back. We were rather surprised he hadn't been doing better before; we knew he had a fast car in the past. He caught Charlie at about half way and the two of them had a good race going for a few laps. Then, in one lap there were two or three incidents. The result was 4 or 5 cars off track in various unsafe positions, one of them on fire. The Safety Car came out and paced the field around until the time limit was reached. Just to keep it interesting, the FP car behind Charlie missed the full course caution flags when they came out and when the leaders (including Charlie) slowed, he passed everyone to put himself in the overall lead of the race. This was, of course, reported to the Stewards of the event and after reviewing the situation they penalized him by setting him back to fourth in FP.

The SM race was later in the afternoon. Charlie went out and raced in about the same place he had been all weekend. Actually, he had moved up a couple more positions but at some point was forced off course into the grass. He drove back on and continued. However, shortly thereafter the car started to overheat again and he had to bring it into the pits and retire at about half distance. After the car had cooled down and we had loaded it into the trailer, he noticed that the radiator was full of grass, picked up from his off-course excursion. This explains the sudden overheating and our conjecture is that the air side of the radiator is probably badly restricted from the past and may explain the VIR overheating as well.

So, a weekend of mixed results. Two wins for the FP car. But a couple things aren't quite right and need attention before the next race. For one thing, I really think this motor isn't putting out the power it did in the past. I had an 8 hour drive home to think about it and may have figured it out. I'll let you know.

The SM car overheated again. Since it was two different motors, both freshly rebuilt, it appears that the root cause may be in the cooling system and a plugged radiator may be the problem.

Next up, Pittsburgh International Race Complex. I'll leave in only 9 days so I need to get to work.

Tom and Charlie.



Campbell Racing - Pittsburgh International Race Complex, May 13-14

Another race weekend, another story to be told. Another difficult event but with a happy ending.

Test day on Friday went well; two sessions with the Spec Miata and two with the F Prod car. A new radiator solved the SM overheating problem and the motor that was cooked at Summit Point two weeks ago turned out to be no worse for the experience. There was an electrical problem but it was quickly traced to a bad alternator which was changed. The FP sessions were used for a quick shakedown and to scrub in a new set of tires for the races on Saturday and Sunday. Even so, the lap times were very good and after a few laps on the new tires the car was actually a couple tenths of a second below the track record.

On Friday the FP car was first up (and first race group in the rotation for the weekend). It went well and Charlie qualified on the class pole about a half second below the track record and third overall behind two faster GTL cars. He had a tough time getting a clean lap and felt there was more time to be gained. SM was next – literally. It was second in the rotation and so Charlie would be going back to back in the two cars all weekend. Again, all went well, the SM qualified 8th out of 24, by far the best qualifying position of the year.

The first race Saturday afternoon got off to a great start. Charlie fell in behind the two leading GTL cars and the three of them opened up a big gap on the rest of the field. The lead car just left everyone behind and Charlie was able to get ahead of the second place car and had a nice lead in second overall (first in class) until about half distance when disaster struck. He slowed coming down the front straight reporting on the radio that he had lost 4th gear, and then, as usually happens, that the whole transmission had failed. He pulled over at the end of the straight and our race was done. A big disappointment, but tempered by the fact that before the end he had set a new track record by over two seconds! (Helped by the fact that they had repaved about half of the track since last year)

Charlie jumped into the SM car for the second race and, again, got off to a good start. At about half distance an overly aggressive driver hit him and got him sideways, inflicting some minor body damage. He recovered and finished mid pack. But the lap times were good and he had a good time in the SM for a change.

Meanwhile, I got started on preparing the FP car for a transmission change. Charlie carries a spare transmission that will fit in both cars. It isn't as well suited to the FP car as the full race gear box that is usually in there but will serve if necessary. We have done this before (those race transmissions can be fragile) and have not lost much speed. Also, the steering rack seemed to be tightening up again as it had at Summit Point so I decided to change that out as well.

All the work was done about 8pm (with a break for dinner) and we put the car down off the jack stands to adjust the front suspension alignment only to discover that the spare transmission was locked up and car wouldn't move. Something was wrong internally and we weren't about to fix it at the track. It was now about 9:30 so we pulled out Plan B. Charlie jumped in his truck and headed home to pick up another spare he had there. He lives about three hours away but was able to arrange with his son to meet him half way which helped save a lot of time.

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With Charlie on his errand, I put the FP car back on the jack stands and proceeded to remove the failed transmission. It is a lot of work but nothing very hard and, as you guessed, we have done this several times in the past so we know just what has to be done and what tools to have before rolling under the car. I finished about 11:00 and Charlie got back to the track about 11:30 and we called it a night at that point. Did I mention that it started raining about 10:30 – just to keep things interesting.

On Sunday morning we got started early to put the second spare transmission in the car. We skipped the Sunday morning qualifying session, confident that the lap times from Saturday which carried forward to Sunday's race, wouldn't be beat. The feature race for the FP car was scheduled to start at 11:25, so we would have to go to the grid without a shakedown. We finished the installation, and completed the suspension realignment and then did a few laps around the paddock roads to make sure everything was working well. We then did the usual pre-race preparations with probably a half hour to relax before the race.

It turned out that our best lap during the race on Saturday moved us up to starting on the front row for the Sunday race and the race started just as the one on the previous day. The lead GTL jumped out to a sizeable lead and Charlie, in second place, likewise, had a big lead on the rest of the field. At the end of the first lap he reported that the gearing in the stock transmission really didn't suit the course and he had to take the engine to about 8200 rpm at some places. But by the end of the race over half of the laps were within a second of the lap record time set on Saturday. His closest competitor had fallen back at the start but closed the gap to about 4 seconds by half way. For the rest of the race we watched the two of them as the gap would close by a second or two and then grow again. They were turning about the same lap times and a big variable became getting through the lapped traffic. At the end, Charlie came in with another win; one we worked very hard for.

The SM race was next, but after the lunch break, so Charlie had an hour or so to recover. Unfortunately, this race didn't end as well. A little short of half distance something in the rear of the car started to fail, perhaps a wheel bearing or something in the differential. He knew it wasn't going to last to the end of the race and so brought it in and parked it.

So we headed home tired but pleased with the FP win to show for all the hard work. Charli now has a comfortable lead in the Northeast Conference points championship.

On to Pocono in two weeks; although, as before, we have only 10 days to turn the cars around before loading up and leaving for the track. My transmission builder promised me a new transmission by the end of this week so I have another major work list to accomplish.

Tom and Charlie