

The Mo-Hud

Knock ff

Newsletter of the Mohawk-Hudson Region, Sports Car Club of America

November 2018

The REport

Fall Back Rally

The Solo season has ended. Another season of road racing is in the books. What's a car-lover to do now? Rally! MoHud Fall Back Rally, Saturday, Nov 3. A fun, simple, time-speed-distance rally. See details on the MoHud website and Facebook page.

Date Night

Please join us on Saturday night, December 1 for MoHud's awards banquet and annual meeting. Solo, club racing, and worker/volunteer trophies and awards. Details in this issue. Sounds like a perfect date night to me.

Give Thanks

Thanksgiving is only a few weeks away. During this time of giving thanks please take time to thank those whose friendship, assistance, and camaraderie you have enjoyed this year.

Thank you to all the race workers and volunteers, from registration, to stewards, flaggers, and everyone in between. Without your dedication, it would not be possible for racers to enjoy the sport we love.

Also, thank you to the officers and members of the Mohawk-Hudson region. Thank you all for your support and dedication to the club.

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

Coming Events: November and...

- **November 3:** Saturday, late afternoon. MoHud Fall Back Time Speed Distance Rally. Another fun one from Trish Bucci. See below and on the MoHud Facebook pages for details.
- **November 7:** Wednesday, 7:30pm. MoHud Membership Meeting. Maggies Cafe and Sports Bar, Western Avenue, Albany, across from SUNY Albany main entrance.
- **December 1:** Saturday, 6:30-9pm. MoHud Annual Meeting at the German-American Club in Albany. Food, laughs, awards and prizes in the company of friends. No better way to spend Saturday night.
- **February 15-16:** Friday-Saturday. Northeast Division Mini Convention at the Radisson Harrisburg (PA) Hotel.

At the November 7th meeting, our own Greg Rickes ("The Voice of Lime Rock") will be conducting an open interview with Yuven Sundaramoorthy, the local teenager who recently finished third in the 2018 USAC F1600 open-wheel series.

Yuven has raced in karts, SCCA Formula F, and recently tested at the Indy brickyard in a Pabst Racing F2000 car.

Photo taken by Josh Wilbum of MotorClubMedia



It's time for another fun MoHud road rally

Join us for the Fall Back Rally

- Date:** Saturday, November 3, 2018
- Time:** 3:00p.m., registration; first car off at 4:00p.m.
- Start Location:** Sunoco Gas Station, 4005 NY Route 2, Cropseyville*
(across the street from the Tamarac Middle/High School)
- Cost:** \$20/car



What you need to know: this is a family-friendly rally that will require some simple math calculations for time and distance. The only equipment you need is a street legal vehicle with an odometer that measures to the tenth of a mile, and a method of keeping track of time to the second. The rally is starting in the late afternoon but will continue after dark, so a flashlight might come in handy, too. The instructions are straightforward, no tricks or traps. There are dirt roads but no car-breakers.

*FYI, Cropseyville was named after the Cropsey family, which happens to be part of Jim's mother's family

- Trish Bucci

MoHud Annual Membership Meeting and Banquet

Saturday, December 1st

6:30 pm

German American Club, 32 Cherry Street, Albany

Join the Mohawk-Hudson Region as we recognize Road Racing and Solo drivers, mechanics and volunteer workers for the 2018 season; vote on the proposed update of the region's Constitution & Bylaws;

vote on the proposed slate of officers for the 2019 season;

and celebrate another successful year with our fellow MoHud SCCA members.

Added bonus: fabulous door prizes.

The buffet dinner cost is \$25 per adult; \$10 per youngster 12 and under

Mail your check, made out to "MoHud SCCA" to E.J.Smith, 7 Oneida Court, Slingerlands, NY, 12159

Make sure you get the check to EJ by Monday, November 26th, so's he can give the Club a head count

Questions, more info? E-mail to EJEvo8@gmail.com or call 518-858-4082

Once again you are asked to donate a new toy to Bob Karl's annual drive for Unity House in Troy

TRSS a Great Success

The joint MoHud-BMW Patroon Tire Rack Street Survival event at the Saratoga Auto Museum on Sunday, October 21st, saw 22 students gain experience and skills in handling their cars in extreme conditions. MoHud had over 25 members serving as instructors and organizers, with several MoHud Solo drivers joining the instructor ranks for the first time.

From the after-event comments of students, and MoHuders posting on Facebook, it is clear that everyone benefitted from the experience.

The event got great positive publicity through a feature story and photos in Monday's Schenectady Gazette. If you've not seen it, the MoHud Facebook site has links.

We do not receive the TRSS student registration fees, but are given a grant from the SCCA Foundation to offset expenses. After paying for the doughnuts and lunch, sending thank-you amounts to the Museum and the Volunteer Fire Department, any grant money left over is split between MoHud and Patroon BMW. Everyone wins.

Road Racing Report- November 2018

Jim Bucci/ Jack Hanifan

2018 U.S. Majors Tour Northeast Conference Point Champions

The SCCA U.S. Majors Tour Northeast Conference has wrapped up its 2018 racing season. More than 600 drivers were involved in the Northeast Conference's 12-round season that visited six different venues. Drivers who amassed the most points in each of the 28 different classes have grabbed Northeast Conference championship honors. Two of those champions are Mohawk-Hudson region members.

In Spec Racer Ford Gen3, Jeffrey Lehner came home the winner by only two points and Charlie Campbell claimed the F-Production crown. Congratulations to both.

Road racing awards

In an effort to be more fair to those MoHud road racers who compete in less-subscribed classes, the format of the MoHud road racing championship points will only consider your finishing position in your class. We will no longer count the number of cars in class that you finish ahead of.

Points are awarded for races as follows: 1st-20, 2nd-15, 3rd-12, 4th-10, 5th-8, 6th-6, 7th-4, 8th-2, 9th and higher-1. All road racers who send in their points will receive a newly designed 2018 MoHud Road Racing t-shirt. Total the points from your best five (5) finishes and send them, along with your t-shirt size to hdjimbu@gmail.com by November 15th.

In addition, we need nominations for our year end awards: *Driver of the Year*, *Rookie of the Year*, and the *Dave Riggi Mechanic of the Year Award*.

- **Charlie Campbell** placed third in his F-Production Miata at the SCCA National Runoffs in Sonoma, October 13th. Unfortunately his Spec Miata only completed one lap in the SM race earlier that day.

Full details, from Tom Campbell's journal will appear in the December KO.

- **Maclin Norray** ran well in another Club Racing Experience at Thompson a few weeks ago. We expect him to be our newest *young lion* as 2019 rolls around.

- **Evan Karl** continues to cut Friday afternoon classes at Wooster Poly in order to race his new Spec Miata. Look for his comments and videos on his Facebook page.

- **Worker Appreciation Awards:** Trish Bucci says "If you wish to be eligible for a 2018 MoHud Worker Appreciation Award, please send a list of events you worked to Worker Award Committee Chair, Trish Bucci at trimar71@gmail.com by November 15, 2018."

Membership Report- November 2018

Jim Garry

We've got four new members this month.

Well, actually three and one returning member after a hiatus. The Barker family joins us; James, Anna, and James. Club Racing and Solo are listed as interests. Welcome to the club!

Our fourth "new" member is Jeremy Treadway, who I first met about 20 years ago at a Mohud winter banquet. At the time he was very young and his dad was looking to put him into a Formula Ford. I had one for sale, but wisely they didn't buy it. Jeremy was at the beginning of a career that would show he is one of the best that Formula Ford has ever seen. He's been away, but we welcome him back.

Our membership numbers are holding steady in the upper 390 range.

Significant Anniversaries

The Karl family, Dominic, Bob and Bob have been with the club 15 years. Congratulations!

As always, if you see someone with a cool car or someone who expresses enthusiasm at driving, send him my way: mhr.membership@gmail.com.

Random Road Racing Results

The Fun One at Watkins Glen, Sunday September 16th, final races of the day...

- **Patrick Stringer** 2nd in SRF3; **Doug Garrison** also running; **Chris Brassard** out on lap 4.
- **George Kline** 3rd in EP; **Evan Karl** running in STL; **TJ Hanifan** in FP.
- **Chip Van Slyke** running in FF.

New England Regional at Thompson, Sunday October 6th, final races of the day...

- **George Kline** 1st in EP.
- **Evan Karl** 2nd in SM. Look at his Facebook page for video of his race-long dice with Ralie Rookey. **Jared Lendrum** running in T4; **Dominic** and **Bob Karl** running in SM.

If we missed anyone it's because results via SPEEDHIVE and RACE MONITOR are not always as complete as we'd like when it comes to things like *what car, what Region*, etc.

October 3rd Membership Meeting

Ron Bass

Maggies Cafe; Western Avenue, Albany: Meeting called to order 7:30 pm.

September meeting minutes approved unanimously.

Treasurer - previous month's income and expenses summarized.

Membership - Jim Garry reported that our membership is at 395. There are four new members. Interests include Club Racing, Pro Racing, and Rally.

35 year anniversary - John Coffin.

Solo - there were 89 entries at the last solo event of the year. Entrants had 6 runs apiece. Three members went to Nebraska for the Solo National. Jim reminded the membership that the "tow fund" will provide \$200/member for those members who submit an article to the Knock Off. Jim Garry attended the Solo National, and expressed concern about the large number of entrants (1,400) that compromised the quality of the event.

Road Rally - will be on Saturday November 3. It is A TSD rally. Registration is at 3:00 pm at the Sunoco station on rt 2 across from the Tamarack HS. Entry is \$20 per car. It will end at a restaurant for awards presentation and dinner.

Tire Rack Street Survival will be on October 21 at the Saratoga Auto Museum. Students entries are sold out. A few more instructors are needed. Please email Kevin Belden or Jim Bucci for more information if you're available to instruct.

Activities - we're still searching for an Activities Chairperson. Please see Jim Bucci if you're interested in volunteering for this position.

Knock Off - reminder that deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month.

Club Racing - Thompson will be the weekend of October 5th. Diane Malecki reported on her experience on the Club Racing Experience she attended at Palmer.

Old Business

- Draft By Laws were published in the September Knock Off. They will be open for discussion at the November meeting. National By Laws have been used as a guide for the current draft. National has reviewed and approved the draft for voting by the general membership. We need to constitute a "Nominating Committee" - Trish Bucci has agreed to be the Chairperson and Diane Malecki has agreed to be a committee member. One additional person is needed to complete the Committee. Interested members should contact Trish.

- Motion approved to provide \$100 to race volunteers/workers who have assisted this past year. Submission of an article to the Knock Off is required. Saratoga Auto Museum

- Tom Campbell described recent activities including the Wine and Food Festival (which was part of the Bugatti Tour); the Auto Auction had approximately 260 vehicles - a number of Mo Hud members volunteered.

New Business - field trip to the Jim Taylor Collection in Gloversville NY will be Sunday October 27, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. All members are invited. The Car Collection is at 181 Elmwood Ave. Extension. We will make a donation to the museum.

Next meeting will be the first Wednesday in November at Maggie's Cafe. Guest speaker will be Yoven Sundara Moorthy. Yoven competed in the Formula 1600 Championship Series and the Cooper Tires US Formula 2000 Championship sponsored by Mazda. The presentation will be moderated by Mo Hud member and the Voice of Lime Rock Park Greg Rickes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Mo-Hud Officers and Contacts

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Rally Chair

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SOLO Chair

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Chief of Pits

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Scrutineering (Tech)

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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 Maggies, Western Avenue (Rt. 20), Albany, across from the SUNY-Albany main entrance.



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The KnockOff Journal

This Month...

- Aashish C. Vemulapalli Goes to the
1st EverTime Trials Nationals



Attending the Inaugural 2018 SCCA Time Trials Nationals NCM Motorsports Park, Bowling Green, Kentucky

The build-up to the event:

Roughly twenty two months ago, I had an opportunity to purchase a Subaru BRZ. I liked the slide happy characteristics of the car and watched the Chris Harris review on YouTube more times than I'd like to admit. I figured it'd make for a good HPDE car - I was making progress moving up the ranks with other groups and figured that with a tin top over my head, I could finally run with the Patroon BMWCCA (I secretly wanted to work my way up to becoming an instructor).

With the BRZ, I doubled the number of days I spent on track, and running with the Patroon group as well as with my S2000 buddies helped me up my game. I attended an EMRA event last season at Lime Rock Park and not only finished first in class, but also briefly held the lap record for the 86Cup in the Stock class. My wife and I learned during the course of last season that we were going to be parents and knowing how parenthood can affect time on track, I asked her for permission to attend the Time Trial Nationals no sooner than it was announced as the big news at the National Convention in Vegas on January 19th.

I had always wanted to attend a large SCCA event as a participant. I didn't have a racecar nor a race license (not to mention the speed to qualify) to attend the Runoffs nor was I as adept at dodging cones like many of my fellow autocrossers. What I did have was plenty of time on track in wet and dry conditions and the situational awareness that derived from that. I felt that the TT Nationals would be a more natural fit for me. Perhaps I even harbored dreams of glory, who doesn't?

I signed up as soon as registration opened, after double-checking with my primary sponsor to make sure she was fine with it. Our daughter was now about a month old and I was diagnosed with chronic sinusitis. This was affecting my confidence on whether I could drive my car on track at all as my head felt heavy. With trepidation, I attended a Patroon event and while my doctor said he did not think I'd have any issues with driving, I was nonetheless nervous and ready to pull off track at the first sign of trouble. The first session went well and my confidence came back. I then did a few more events and altogether spent about 6 days on track this season. The car was shod with new Hankook RS4s for an EMRA Time Trial event last season and those tires had seen 8 days of track time before the drive to Bowling Green. Yes, they were probably past their prime, but they were RS4s and they had plenty of tread and the sidewalls looked strong unlike my prior set of Bridgestone RE71Rs that were corded without the season having ended.

The date was fast approaching and my time to do car prep was rather limited. But thanks to some friends from the S2000 community, especially Jeff Bugliari and also Semir of All Tech Automotive in Ballston Spa, I was able to complete all necessary maintenance. Semir even saw me on a Saturday at his shop and refused payment, but I insisted. G-Loc Brakes sent me a set of new front brake pads at a nicely discounted price.

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Time Trials Nationals: 2

Getting to Bowling Green:

With new pads in the front, and all fluids replaced, I kissed my wife and child goodbye and hit the road on September 26th at 1:00 PM. Although my good sponsor suggested that I should probably spend the money and get new tires given the long drive, I shushed her worries away now that we had additional expenditures and savings to put away for the newborn in our lives.

I hit the road with plans to get to Cleveland, OH, stop for the night and then make further progress on Thursday. As it turned out, I made it further than that and spent the night in Medina, OH. The next day, I got back on the road after breakfast and arrived at the Holiday Inn event hotel in Bowling Green at 3:40 PM. After checking in and a moment's rest, I walked outside and greeted the first person I saw in the parking lot wearing an SCCA hat. Jeff Banker, was from the Atlanta area and was awaiting his son and a friends arrival. All three of them would be flagging at the event. He said that it was a choice between flagging at the Charlotte Motorsports Park Roval and NCM, and so when Heyward called asking for a favor, he jumped right in and decided to drive to Bowling Green. I told him about Eric Smith and how he encourages a lot of us to come flag with him and then we talked about tracks that we'd been to. He then asked me what car I was driving and I pointed my car out to him and told him, he'd probably be showing me plenty of blue flags. We laughed about some flagging experiences that he shared and parted ways with a promise that we'd catch up at the track.

I arrived at the track a few minutes before 5 PM and took my place in a line of cars waiting to enter the track. I could see the Armco and barriers beyond which lay the track and I could hear the sounds of angry cars wailing as they appeared to clip apexes and dance off of the curbing towards the next corner. Was that the crew from Road & Track I wondered?

I entered the track and was directed to park in a lot the size of which could probably hold 2-3 McCarty Ave OGS lots (The Tenn. Region SCCA holds their solo events at NCM) and walked over to complete registration. As I was headed back to the car clutching my welcome package and a Tire Rack windshield banner that was intent on blowing hither thither in the strong wind, I spotted a familiar face dressed in scarlet garb. It turned out to be Jeff Grosbard who was there at the track with a 488 Pista for the Road and Track program. We chatted briefly, and parted ways. In the parking lot, I struck up a conversation with Michael Neat, another 86 owner. Turns out he was from the Louisville area, making NCM his home track and was in the garage spot next to me. Our acquaintance forged, we helped each other put the Tire Rack windshield banner stickers on in the strong breeze. I was then accosted by someone else that came over seeing the NY License plate and then stayed to chat seeing the MoHud sticker on the car. She said she'd seen me somewhere, and I remarked that she looked familiar too. It was Kathy Barnes from the New England Region and I told her that I'd met her with Greg Goss at the Track Night in America at Lime Rock. She immediately pegged me down as one of Greg's guys and then stayed to help me with sticker location and questions I had about mandatory stickers. I was suddenly feeling at home and very welcome. Barely 2 hours had passed and I'd already met half a dozen friendly people that seemed really happy to see me there.

Once tech was complete, I headed over to the welcome party in the Kimberlee Fast Pavilion. Heyward Wagner (or Haywood as the cool kids seem to be calling him) was present and after welcoming everyone, talked a bit about what was planned over the next three days. The first day, would contain three practice session on the full course, followed by a timed session on the East Course that they called a Track Sprint. On the second day, each group would again have three timed sessions on the full course and then a track sprint on the west course. On the last day, each group would have two sessions on the full course followed by a track sprint that utilized the entire course except for the front straight. It would start near Turn 1 at the Start Finish line and would finish at Turn 22, just before one enters the final corner on to the front straight. >>>

Time Trials Nationals: 3

A brief primer about the Track Sprint format - Like autocross, it has a Start Gate and a Finish Gate. Unlike autocross, there are no cones nor penalties from knocking a cone over. Penalties are handed out by disqualifying a lap if a driver exceeds the track limits, i.e., all four wheels off of the racing surface even if you decided to take a Spec Miata line and used paved runoff past the curbing. The track limits penalty was also applied to the full track sessions.



There was supposed to be a track walk on Thursday evening, but that got cancelled. Road & Track had rented the track for their track evaluation of the Alfa Stelvio Quadrifoglio, Audi RS5, BMW M5 Competition, Corvette ZR1, 488 Pista, AMG E63 S Wagon (that occupied the garage I had rented for the following day), Porsche 911 GT2 RS and the king among them all, a McLaren Senna. Because they encountered a lot of rain during the morning, they had to push off their evaluation until the track had dried up.

JR Hildebrand was on hand for R&T to set the pro driver fast laps as were Jack Baruth, Sam Smith and Travis Okulski. The Senna was parked two spots away from where I was, but I was so in awe of the car, I forgot to take pictures. I guess I'll forever carry that vivid memory of its unique doors and spacecraft exhaust and that gorgeous blue color in my mind.

Day One:

I got to the track 30 minutes ahead of the drivers meeting and prepped the car. There was a thick fog that morning but it was expected to evacuate by the time the track went hot. Michael Neat, my garage buddy recommended that we go out on the novice parade laps and offered to do a lead-follow. We received approval from Justin Barbry, who was our Advanced B Run Group coach to go on the parade laps, but with a warning to stay in the back and play nice with the novice group. We got about 3 sighting laps before we were called back in.

It was then time to go out for the first practice session with my group. As we went out, the laps were tentative, cars were backed up as everyone tried to understand the track and the passing zones. In our group, the rule was we could pass anywhere on the straight without a point by and with a point by going into corners. I pushed a little harder in this session, and found out how easily I was exceeding track limits. While I did not go off, my attempt at rolling more speed into certain corners was causing me to push over the rumble strips into the paved runoff areas. This wasn't pleasant and I made a note of the corners where I needed to slow down more, and also a note to tap my brakes to make sure I wasn't getting any pad knockback after I'd run over the rumble strips. Our times were being recorded via transponder, and that is what was setting the grid for who got to go out on track first. Setting a good time was key, but then there were several fast cars and faster drivers in my group, so I had to settle for being gridded towards the lower end of the pack.

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Time Trials Nationals: 4

The second session was a bust. As I finished my recon lap, and started my flyer, I caught sight of the SSC coupe driven by the SSC Solo National Champion in my rear view as I was exiting Turn 2. I knew I had to let him by at some point. I floored it through the Corvette curves and by the time I was nearing the entrance for Deception, he was on me. I let him by and as I watched him go by watched the flagger waving a black flag. I brought my pace down, acknowledging the flaggers and was among the first cars to enter pit lane. We were sent out again, but no sooner than I wrapped up my recon and started my flyer, the checkered flag flew on the back straight as I exited Deception and was making my way towards table top. In impound, which was really just an area where the group received feedback from our coach, I raised the issue of traffic and not being able to get a full lap in. We were told, that we must manage traffic and find a gap so we can set our best time.

In the third session for the day, I still had traffic and issues where people would use their performance advantage on the straight but then park it in a corner and I may or may not have muttered some curses or shaken my fist, but I was able to get a somewhat clear lap in and set a time of 2:47.6 that was preceded by a lap of 2:48. I had improved from my first session lap time of 3:03 but there was little consolation for me. The Solo Spec Coupes that were running in the same Sport 6 class that I was in were over 10 seconds faster with Adam Benaway, the SSC Solo champ leading the way. All the 86s that were in class were either in full SSC trim (spec springs, dampers, swaybars and camber adjustment that allowed them over 3 degrees negative camber in the front and about 1.25 degrees in the rear), or at the very least were running Bridgestone Potenza RE71Rs. To further add to the challenge, there were two NB Miata's that also were prepped very well. My car on the other hand, was running Hankook RS4s that had seen eight days on track and about 32 heat cycles.

It was time for the first timed session. A Track Sprint on the East Course. We'd start along an access road from the front straight and enter the back straight going through Turn 15 (Faux Rouge) and ending the run as we exited the sinkhole into Turn 21 that was among the esses that lead back onto the front straight. After my first exploratory run that told me where I should be shifting, I went back on my consecutive runs and banged in a time of 50.7 on both of them for a 10th place finish in a class of 14.



Photos in this Journal by Aashish, Jack Baruth and ABI Photography

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Time Trials Nationals: 5

The challenge was real, and the weather didn't call for any rain, so I'd just have to dig deep and do my best. Hagerty's, one of the event sponsors, threw a party at the end of the day, at which I got a chance to talk to Jon Krolewicz. I asked him if the format could be changed to send a group of 3-5 cars out spaced 10 seconds apart for about two laps. He said that's how the SCCA conducted Time Trials in the past and that it wasn't very popular and lead to dwindling attendance. He said I should try to find a gap and then set a time and that they'd bring it up at the drivers meeting the next day, so all the cars would roll out behind each other and as they entered the last sequence of turns, they'd then head out counting down to 5 behind each other. I then wondered within myself if that would have worked had the event sold out with 225 entrants (123 entrants were signed up). After speaking with Jon, I hung out for a while with John Krupa and his friend Carl. They were running a 1981 Pontiac Trans Am. This car was raced by John and autocrossed by Carl in the CAM-T class and John was running in the Unlimited class here. They talked about how they were changing things around to make the car handle neutrally and that struck my mind. I was experiencing understeer in the BRZ and it hit me that I should probably play around with tire pressures. I also ran into my flagging friends, Jeff, Josh and Sean. Jeff was very encouraging and said that I looked good out there and that he had no need to show me a blue flag as I was managing traffic well. I thanked them again for keeping us safe and after spending some time talking, headed back to the motel.

Day Two:

As I'm fixing coffee, I hear my phone ding (yes phones these days make other noises in addition to ringing). It was fellow MoHud member, S2000 owner and my mentor, Greg Goss. I'd sent a message the night before about how I was getting beaten by the SSCs and Greg messaged me to call him if I had time to talk. He gave me some much needed motivation and provided the mental adjustment that I needed. As I went to bed the night prior, I had accepted that I could possibly finish at the lower end of the class, but that I'd give it my best to stay in the Top 10 and Greg reinforced that notion by saying that I was at a National event against excellent drivers in well prepared cars and I had to stay in there and give it my best shot.

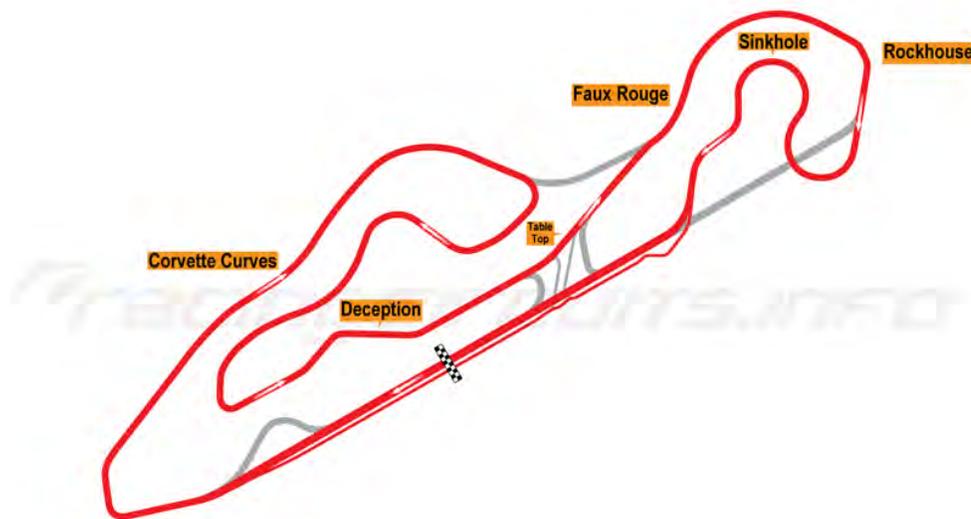
At the drivers meeting, they informed us that we'd be gridded according to our times on the full course and further added that as we went out on track, the cars should start accelerating out of Deception and from the Sinkhole onwards, each car should wait a few seconds after the car in front had rolled off to start their flyer. This way they reasoned, that we'd be assured that all drivers got at least one clean lap before the leaders came up on the back of the pack.

During the first session it appeared like everyone went slower on the recon lap. I was still not quite in the Sinkhole but could hear the leaders starting their lap. On my flyer the leading cars having completed their flyer, came up to me as I was entering Deception. I made room for them and send them by and managed to get a lap of 2:46 in that session. A second faster wasn't bad. I hoped I could do better. During the session, I spotted Jeff Banker, my flagging friend working the station between Turns 9 and 10 and resolved to make a gesture thanking him a little different than the usual wave. After the checkered was displayed, I slowed the car down as I went by Jeff's station and started bowing to him with my hands out of the window. I saw him smile and respond back the same way. One of the SSC cars behind me then followed suit by also bowing to him. We kept up this routine for the rest of the day as I identified where Josh and Sean were working and gestured accordingly.

During the second session, the track had warmed up and I wasn't going any faster. My times slowed and that understeer was still present. I wasn't doing great time wise in the class moving up to 9th at one point and then dropping back to 11th. So I used the break between sessions to go find Andrew Rains from Apex Pro. I had one of their units and Andrew was conducting brief data sessions to suggest changes. We reviewed the data, and he said I should turn in a tad later for Deception as that would give me a longer line to accelerate along. This was also confirmed by my garage mate, Mike who was having a good time running at the top of his class.

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Time Trials Nationals: 6



After the advice about going deeper into Deception, I got talking to Jack Baruth who I think is one of the best auto journalists since Peter Egan. I initially approached Jack very carefully. After all he was there the day before testing a million dollar McLaren and was back crewing for his brother Mark and his wife, Danger Girl. I figured he'd probably be polite and then brush me off, but then I couldn't have been more wrong. He was soft-spoken and very kind and always stopped by to ask how I was doing and kept encouraging me whenever he was track side.

With the data review, and the words of advice from Jack, I formed a plan of attack, and then also decided that I would raise the rear tire pressure by two PSI. Mike Neat was a bit concerned. He said that it might give me way too much rotation. But at this point, I really had nothing to lose and I figured I had the good sense to keep the shiny side up and between track limits. As I went out for the third session, I opened up a longer gap to the Mazdaspeed Miata in front of me. In earlier sessions, I'd catch up this car under braking, but had no power to make a pass offline and open up a gap. I started my flyer and got two clean laps with no traffic. Through the session I kept repeating what Bruce Kosakoski said about keeping my eyes up and what EJ once told me about planning to hit the apex with my door as opposed to the front wheels. I felt good and kept going for the remainder of the session to the checkered. I came back in and looked at times and found that I'd managed to get a lap that was my fastest at 2:44 on my first flyer. I'd gone up to 9th in class and hoped my time was good enough to stay there, but nevertheless I dropped back to 11th and was happy. I thanked all the guys that helped me especially Andrew from Apex Pro. The two PSI difference between the fronts and the rear made the car rotate on corner exit in nearly all the corners, and while I had rotation even where I did not need it, I was happy.

We then staged up for the Track Sprint on the West Course at NCM. We'd get three runs starting on the straight that runs adjacent to the Mulsanne chicane (Turns 1A and 1B) and then finish at Turn 11 just prior to entering Deception. This section was higher speed than the prior track sprint and would get very technical towards the finish. I knew I did not stand a chance against prepared cars (and better drivers) and ended up half a second away from 10th place to an 86 that was running on the RE71Rs.

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Time Trials Nationals: 7

I'd done as well as I could have for the day and headed over to the evening party with Chris Meeks, my garage mate. Chris is from Atlanta, and he'd hit the wall exiting Deception on the first day during the practice sessions. When he pulled back into the garage, he was set that his event was done and that he'd go back home. I encouraged him to give it some time, and go over what happened. I said the car wasn't damaged too bad - only the front bumper on the passenger side was bashed in a tad and his headlight assembly had some broken glass. I offered him track tape (fancy duct tape) to cover the damaged headlight and hold the bumper in place and was happy to learn later that he was going to run.



As we were sharing a beer at the party, he said that Jack Baruth had come up to him and encouraged him to keep going and had even posted about Chris on Instagram and that had motivated him to keep going. That really brought home to me how much everyone there participants, officials, workers, pro-journalists moonlighting as crew and all were working together to keep each other going.

The spirit of the SCCA was well and truly alive and that #FunWithCars was more than just a fancy social media buzzword

I then had a chance to share a drink and have dinner with Frank Putman, who is the RE of the Detroit chapter. Frank and I were gridded at the lower end of the group and we'd gotten to know each other. We got talking about our backgrounds and I learned that Frank who grew up on a farm in California, went to West Point and then on to a 39 year career at Ford Motor Company where he was in charge of drivetrain development on several projects. He'd had plenty of racing and hillclimb experience and following retirement, he had grown more active in the SCCA. Their chapter was 1600 strong and had active programs for Solo, Club Racing, Rally and Rallycross. Frank was there with an A Street C5 Corvette Z06 that he'd acquired a couple of years ago. Before dinner, they had a gokarting challenge that I chose not to attend, choosing rather to participate in free pictures of each car on track at the Mulsanne Chicane.

Day Three:

At breakfast, that morning in the motel, I shared a table with Angel. Angel was from the Chicago area and was flagging for the very first time and having a grand time. He was amazed that people were acknowledging and waving to him on their cooldown lap and that made him very happy. I thanked him for volunteering to flag and told him that acknowledging his work was the least that we could do given that he and his fellow flaggers were out there all day keeping us safe and informed. I then got a chance to talk to Jeff, Josh and Sean, my other friends from flagging. Jeff said he'd be at Turn 1 at the Start/Finish station and that Josh would be in his line of sight at the Mulsanne Chicane. I told him I'd keep up the bowing as a gesture and see if that'd catch on. Jeff laughed and said he'd rather have me focus on Turn 1.

I checked the weather forecast and temps were expected to get into the mid 80's before noon with nary a cloud in the sky. The prior two days were partly cloudy with a nice breeze and temps in low to mid 70s.

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Time Trials Nationals: 8

For Day 3 I knew I had to keep a close watch on tire pressures. We'd have two sessions on the full course unlike three on the prior days, and the best time would count from both sessions, just like it did from the prior day full track sessions.

I lined up alongside Frank Putman in grid. Tire pressures were set to 29 cold just as I'd done in the days prior. The Mazdaspeed Miata was in front of me in grid. We rolled out and while I did open up a gap at the Sinkhole, I caught back the Mazdaspeed Miata at Turn 2 under braking. He didn't point me by and I figured he'd open up enough of a gap on me as we made our way on to the rest of the course. We had a comfortable distance on our second flyer and then I noticed the leader (in a Lotus 7) get close to me, I pointed him by past Turn 10 knowing he'd easily leave me behind and then continued on my lap. As I made my way down Table Top towards Faux Rouge, I noticed the leader stuck behind the Miata and I squeezed on the binders to make it around the fast off-camber Turn 16, I could feel the rear end step out and then a slight tank slapper as I corrected. There was no way I could add gas at that corner so braking was better. I felt the car leave the asphalt and enter the grass on the inside of the turn. I stayed on the brake and was about to go two feet in, but then felt the tires grip as the car had slowed enough. I was still pointed in the right direction, and after a quick check of my mirrors, I rejoined the track and self-reported to pitlane to Justin Barbry about my incident. I told him, how I had caused myself to lose traction and went four off into the grass. He said what I'd experienced was what he termed an incident, to learn from and get over. He asked if I was ok and when I nodded in the affirmative, he said I should go back out and set another lap. At this point, I hear someone calling my name from the paddock side of pitlane. I look over to see Jack signalling with his hands that I should take a deep breath and let it go and then he says, go get that 2:30. I laughed and did as he suggested, and went back out and got one more flyer before the checkered flew. As I reviewed my times, I was going fastest on that first flyer (2:46) and no doubt had lost some time with the Mazdaspeed MX5 parking it at Turn 2. I had one more session to improve and figured I'd go out and do my best.

We had a short break between sessions, and as I hustled to check on the car and also go see Andrew Rains about my off to talk about it, I skipped the part where I had to check my tire pressures. We went out for our second session, and as I rounded Turn 2 and was making my way towards the Corvette Esses, I saw black flags waving. I eased off the pace and entered pitlane. A car had stopped past the Corvette Esses offline and had to be retrieved. The driver was ok and it was a mechanical. Luckily this seemed to be a built race car so I assumed the only worry would be to get it back onto its trailer. We were sent back on track once the car had been removed and I worked with traffic trying to open up a gap. I finally got a gap and went for it down the front straight and as I braked and entered the Mulsanne Chicane, I could tell my tire pressures were worked up and the car was sliding all over. But, I had clear track and I resolved to do the best I could to salvage the lap. I made sure I braked a hair sooner and was gentler on the gas exiting the corners as I was getting a lot of understeer going in and oversteer coming out. I entered Faux Rouge and was as nuanced as I could be with the brake, balancing the car through there and heading towards Turn 17 and 18. Entering the sinkhole, I used as much throttle rotation as I could to get out of there. It was an exercise in patience and what seemed to be on the very edge of grip, I exited the sinkhole, made it through the esses and hammered the gas pedal as soon as I could as I got back on the front straight. I could see entering the straight that Jeff had the Checkered out at his station waiting for me and started waving it as I got closer. As I passed the Start/Finish line, I put both hands and head as much out of the window as I could and bowed down to my flagger friend and as I entered the chicane, I stuck my hand exaggeratedly out of the window with thumb up and waved it at Josh who himself was waving a large cutout of a hand with thumb up. As I passed through the track, I bowed to all the flaggers. They'd been there through cooler and warmer temps and helped keep us safe and my gesture was the least I could do to offer them my gratitude.

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Time Trials Nationals: 9

I reviewed the data after this session. That last lap, was slow at a 2:51, but the Apex Pro which assigns a percentage to every lap based on how much of the available grip I used at all the corners was way higher for that lap than for the fastest lap I'd set that day and also above the faster lap I had set the day prior. It was small consolation, but it gave me a shot of confidence that I was doing as well as I could, given the conditions and with the higher tire pressures.

I adjusted my tire pressures for the last track sprint of the day. I briefly checked how I was doing and it looked like I had made my way up to 9th, but then as the others went out for their sessions, I dropped back to 11th again. The third Track Sprint would utilize the full course. They'd have us start at the Start/Finish Line on the front straight and have the end at Turn 22. We would only get two runs to set our best time. At this point, I had to find 3 seconds to move up to 10th position and unless my fellow competitor had a DNF or set two poor runs, I would have to settle for 11th place. After being away from home, for 4 days already, I was ready to do my runs, pack up and head home. I went out and did the best job I could, hitting all my marks and being smooth as can be and finished with a best time of 1:51 and good feedback on the Apex Pro unit. After I came back to the garage, I again walked over to the timing center and watched myself in 9th position and then slipping back to 11th. I packed up the car, congratulated Mike Neat and Chris for running and walked over to the trophy presentation session. I stayed to see my garage mate Mike Neat receive his first place trophy in the Modified 3 class as well as the Sport 6 class I was running in. Congratulated a few of the winners and then hit the road. I got home on Monday at 5:15 PM and found that while I'd driven 2000 miles to Bowling Green, the real trophy was waiting for me at home as her face lighted up upon seeing her father back home.



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Time Trials Nationals: 10

Final Thoughts:

To sum up, I had a grand time. Yes, there were issues and teething troubles as with any event. But I had an excellent time and enjoyed meeting a great cross-section of people. From the drag racer from Texas who was staying at the motel and in a championship race of his own in that region who always reminded me to keep the shiny side up as we parted ways, to the friends I made at the track - Jeff Banker, Josh and Sean, and Angel. It was humbling to interact with Jack Baruth just as it was to interact with JG Pasterjak of Grassroots Motorsports. I survived the drive down and back and had a great three days on track with plenty of track time. So I didn't win a trophy, but I'd like to think I came away with a winning experience and knowledge on how I should prep the car to the fullest extent allowed by the rules.

As Heyward Wagner (he should just change his name to Haywood) said, the TT Nationals would be an experience, and it was. He said all of us would be working together, and we did. We looked out for each other, helped one another where we could and came away with great memories. The big news that Heyward announced and this really should be on the radar of all my fellow Mohudders, is that starting next year, the SCCA will hold Time Trials Regional Tours all over the country. Heyward named all the tracks they'd be at, but said that a track for the Northeast is yet to be finalized, but I got enough hints that it may be a Track that's a little over two hours east of us and its name is not Palmer or Lime Rock. The Nationals appear to be scheduled again in Kentucky.

All cars (convertibles too) are welcome as was evident from the cars I saw at Nationals. Groups for the nationals were based on track experience rather than class. This made for a much easier transition for newer drivers and allowed them to comfortably get up to speed. Keep in mind a proper street class car will fit into a Sport class, but may not run as well in class against cars prepared to the rules of the class. For instance, my BRZ is a D Street car and it was up against a field that was dominated by Solo Spec Coupes which fit well into the Sport 6 class rules. Modifying your car to the fullest extent for the Sport classes would likely take you out of the Street classes in Solo. Likewise, a well prepped STX, STR or STF car would run in the Tuner class but may not be entirely competitive against cars maxed out for that class. There probably is an opportunity for the SCCA to tweak the rules a bit to make it more friendly for Street class solo cars. The current classing rules appear to be based on the cars that they are seeing at the Track Nights in America. The CAM class cars are a great fit in my opinion and will easily blend into classes from Sport to Unlimited based on their level of preparation. As I think about it, I can see several of those competing at the moment in our Solo program easily make the transition to Time Trials. There are enough sessions to practice and learn the track and the Track Sprint is like autocross at a higher speed. Give it a shot, when the TT tour comes to our neck of the woods, you may just get hooked on to it. The cost of entry was very reasonable for three days on track.

In closing, I'd like to give a shout out to MoHud's support of the RPI Formula SAE program. In talking to Andrew Rains, I learned that both he and his partner that started Apex Pro as a data coaching tool, got their start in Formula SAE. They often struggled with data review and it got them thinking about why they had to wait until the session had ended to review data. Why not build something that would provide feedback in real time. And the answer to that question was the Apex Pro, a device that shows how much grip you have at corner entry, mid corner and track out and what percentage of that grip one is utilizing. Andrew also credits the SAE program with teaching them how to make presentations, submit a business plan and raising sponsorship. This enabled him to form the Rains Racing team and race in the Pirelli World Challenge while also teaching him key business skills.

Thank you for reading this journal. Should you have any questions, you can reach out to me via email (aashish2@gmail.com) or via the MoHud Facebook group. There are several videos uploaded by participants on YouTube including yours truly (YouTube: aashish2).