

The Mo-Hud

Knockoff



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

August 2021

The REport

Rain. We're probably all tired of it; I know I've seen enough. It has been a major presence in every event I've recently attended. First up was the amazing Time Trials National Tour event at Palmer Motorsports Park on July 3-4, which featured some rain and unseasonably cool temps. MoHud had a fantastic showing at this event, and I couldn't be prouder of our region and the members who represented us. See my write-up for more details later in this KO. Needless to say, rain was the dominant theme on track, with some MoHud folks doing well in the rain sessions and conspiring to do a rain dance to keep it that way. I was ready to participate in the dance but wanted to add a "10 degrees warmer" twist to it.

Next up was NER's Majors races at Thompson Speedway on July 9-10, with special appearance by the remnants of Hurricane Elsa. Elsa made a big splash with her performance, shutting down Friday after only two sessions with copious amounts of rain that pooled in apexes and flowed across portions of the track. I've been pulled off station for lightning delays before (not including the IMSA LRP event that stopped early after I wrote this!), but I've never seen a race day cancelled due to extreme weather like that. The rain was relentless Friday, and announced delays of noon, 1pm, and 2pm became a cancellation of the first day. To NER's credit, they assessed, planned, and persevered with a consolidated schedule for the next day. Saturday dawned with drier conditions, but there were still small rivers running across portions of the track. Thompson's track crew dug a few trenches as the sessions progressed and eventually solved some of the problems that were causing issues for racers. Congrats to those who came out and made it to the end!

Finally, on Sunday July 11, MoHud hosted our second autocross of the season in Kingston. The forecast called for thunderstorms to show at the end of the event, but the weather decided to throw us a curveball and show up at the halfway point, fortunately without the lightning. Despite the challenging conditions, participants took up the challenge and safely splashed their way to some impressive results for the day. Hats off to those who worked the course in the pouring rain portion and served their fellow autocrossers despite the conditions. Your dedication to filling your roles and responsibilities were noted and appreciated by all of us.

Here's to hoping as the season progresses, we can get some drier weather to enjoy our motorsports!

~ EJ Smith Regional Executive

Coming Events: August and...

- **August 8:** Sunday. 8am – 5pm. MoHud Solo Event #3. Tech City, 550 Enterprise Drive, Kingston.
Registration at www.motorsports.reg
- **August 12:** Thursday. 2pm until... Annual MoHud golf outing for the *Jack and Pete Trophy*..
- **September 1:** Wednesday. Membership meeting at the Gateway Diner, Central Avenue in Albany.
- **January 8, 2022:** Saturday. 5^{ish}. Annual Membership Meeting at the Saratoga Automobile Museum. Some business, some awards, the annual MoHud Runoffs (adult and kid classes), and maybe a special guest speaker. This is gonna be great!
PS: Russ and Ken will scare away any Northway snow...

As always, keep checking with the MoHud website and Facebook page, as well as motorsportsreg.com to make sure you've found all the nearby or "road trip" events that interest you.

Racing Trivia- The La Tell Special at Watkins Glen

You're at least vaguely aware that about 20 cars lined up for the very first Grand Prix at Watkins Glen in the Fall of 1948. If you've read one of the histories, you know that in fact there were 15 cars that started, out a field of 35 originally entered. And you're also aware that several of the "sports cars" were cobbled up from a mixture of foreign and domestic engine/ chassis combinations; but sports cars they were.

So it may come as a surprise that a gentleman down in Binghamton owns a 1930s "big car," – an oval sprint car – that the original owner claimed had "entered the first Watkins Glen road race in 1948." Sounds fishy, right? A sprint car running with the blue-blazer crowd? Maybe later when Roger Ward showed up for a Formula Libre race at the Glen, but not in 1948, for sure.

But research at the International Motor Racing Research Institute a few days ago finds that the story is more-or-less true. Resident MRRI *knows everything* historian Bill Green produced a contact print showing the car along Franklin Street, and another in front of hay bales near "Miliken's Corner." Bill surmises that the car was not allowed to formally enter the event because it only had brakes on one axle (rear) and no on-board starter. That would explain why the car does not show up on the final 35-car entry list... Interesting, yes?



SOLO – August Report

~ Russ Burckhard

Tracey and I went to our final National Tour of the year in beautiful Bristol, Tennessee. After a couple of hours' extra drive time due to rain, accidents, and holiday traffic, we arrived at our hotel on Thursday night after a quick stop at Chick-Fil-A for dinner. Different dining options are a benefit to traveling.

Friday morning, we had a late start after sleeping in until 8:00. It was still early, but late compared to what was to come on Saturday and Sunday. We stopped for bagels on State Street in Tennessee. The other side of the street is in Virginia, and we walked to the middle of the street for a photo of Tracey in both states. The bagels were delicious, and the employees and customers were very friendly. We struck up conversation with some locals and they confirmed that where we planned to go to lunch was a good choice. A short ride later and we were at Bristol Motor Speedway. Last month when we went to Indy, the track sort of blended in with its surroundings and was hard to find until you were right next to it. Bristol on the other hand was visible from a distance. It could probably be seen from further if a mountain were not in the way. Up on a hill in a valley, it was not something you could miss. It was much easier to find than the Peru Tour. They also had big "SCCA Event" signs out front of the entrance. These would be nice at all events (even ours). Driving into the site we were in awe of the size of the speedway and stands. For only being a half mile track, the facility was huge. The lots we passed all had a lot of elevation changes on the way to the back lot where we would be competing. We found a place to set up paddock near Matt Huchro and saved a spot for Mark and Dean VanDeCarr, and Steve Eckelman. We changed tires before it got too warm with no issues, and we were set for the weekend.



Not Picking Favorites

Since we were early, we decided to watch some of the Pro Solo event. Matt Huchro was one of the competitors and he ran earlier in the day. The previous day was pretty much a washout from what I was told. A couple people showed me some pictures of how wet it was during the event. It made the New Jersey Tour's rain look like a sprinkle and it lasted for most of the day. It was Matt's first Pro and he had to learn quickly on how to do it.

The Pro Solo is Different from a Tour. I don't know all of the rules, but this is what I saw. There are two courses set up in a mirror image with a drag strip light setup to start the runs. A .5 light is perfect. Any faster and it is considered a red light and the run does not count. Any slower and that time is added to your run. The times are added together and that is what your time is against that competitor. All runs are back to back to back. There did not seem to be any time between runs for air pressure, cooling, etc. This is where I get lost in the rules. I am not exactly sure, but everyone is on a bracket in their class and eliminated until there is a winner. This whole process was new to Matt, and I think he had a hard time concentrating on his driving. He wound up 4th in class and 134th overall.

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SOLO – Bristol, cont'd

While we were watching the Pro, we went up the hill towards the racetrack. When we got up there, we saw a gate was open. We went in and were amazed at the size of it all. For a half mile track, the number of seats and suites was overwhelming. On a good day, 162,000 will fill the seats for an event. This is about 100,000 less than Indy, but it is 2 miles shorter. Indy has the largest capacity of all the tracks in the world while Bristol is the 6th largest in the world. It must be a site to see when it is full of spectators. The racing there is action packed and fans come from all over to see it. There were traces of dirt on the track from the spring NASCAR race and in the stands as there was a worker pressure washing the stands to get the dirt off. There is a lot of history at Bristol since it opened in 1961.

Saturday came around and we were all ready to go. Matt and Tracey were first to go in the 2nd heat. Matt was up first in STS. His first run was 3rd quick in a class of 11. His second run was a half second faster. Another driver found time and moved Matt down to fourth. His final run was a touch slower than his second run, so he had no improvement. Six of his competitors had their best run on their last run. The 3 ahead all increased their lead. The other 3 got closer to his time but could not catch him leaving him in fourth after day one.

Tracey was up and she had some stiff competition. The one driver is a past National Champion and the other was running neck and neck to her in the Pro Solo with less than a half second separating them. Maria, the National Champ, set the fastest first run with Frances 1.2 seconds behind. Tracey was another 7 tenths behind her 1.9 out of the lead. This is kind of typical for Tracey as her first run is usually a little slow. Second runs; Maria slowed down, Frances sped up about 9 tenths, and Tracey took off 1.8 seconds. That was an awesome run and it served notice to the other two that she was in contention. It moved her up to second place just .139 out of first. Final runs for the day. Both others improved while Tracey slowed slightly. Frances went to the top, Maria moved to second and Tracey dropped to third. It was close though. First to third was only separated by .241 of a second. Sunday was set to be a battle.

My heat was next. 19 cars in G Street. 11 Civic SI's, 3 GTI's, 2 BMW's and a Focus ST. I had some stiff competition and was up against a National Champion, the guy that won in Peru, and the guy that won NJ and Fingerlakes, and a few others that are nationally known. My first run was decent. Good enough to be in 6th place. My second run was 3 tenths better and enough to keep me in 6th place. My last run started really good, and I was flying. I went into a corner about halfway through the run a touch fast and pushed out to the wall taking 3 cones with me. It got worse after that as I pushed to see where the limits were. It was sloppy, but I learned what the limits of the pavement were and I could apply that on day 2. While I did not improve, most of the others found more and I was moved to 10th place 2 seconds out of the lead.

Final heat for day 1. Time for Dean and Mark VanDeCarr and Stephen Eckelman in their open wheeled B Mod cars. Just like in Peru, they all bumped up to A Mod to make a full class with a total of 7 drivers. Two of those drivers are previous National Champions making third the realistic goal for our friends. Steve was first and he failed to follow the course resulting in a DNF.

Dean was next up, and he struggled to come to grips (literally) with the course. It was slow, but it did result with a clean run. Mark was the last one out. He ran a fairly good run that put him 4th in class overall.

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SOLO – Bristol, cont'd

The second run did not help Steve. He previously developed a hole in the side of his driving shoes and when he took his foot off the gas to apply the brakes, the fabric got caught on the side of the brake pedal and he could not apply the brakes. This resulted in over-driving a corner and going off course for the second time. Dean figured out what he did wrong on his first run and made some corrections resulting in over a 2 second improvement. Mark was up and he found close to 2 seconds keeping him ahead of Steve and his brother. Time for final runs and Steve needed a time. He went out and set a run that was slightly better than Mark's second run. Unfortunately, he hit 2 cones in the process leaving him in 7th place for the day. Dean was next and he slowed down about 4 tenths making his second run his best and in 6th for the day. Mark also slowed about the same as Dean also making his second run his best. His 2nd run was good enough to keep him in 4th overall.

Day 2 was up. The weather was like Saturday's only with less clouds and a few degrees warmer. Matt was first up and started with a decent time. Most of the times were about two seconds faster than Saturday's. Matt was only 1.3 better. This told me he had another 7 tenths to gain. On his second run he found that 7 tenths. This has him on par with most of the other driver's improvement between the two days. His last run had a couple of mistakes he would have liked to fix. He was faster in other spots on that run, but his time was a little slower than his second run because of the mistakes. Unless he had a perfect run, he may not have been able to get the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second that he would have needed to move up and he had to settle for 4th place in the final trophy spot.

Tracey had her battle plan and was in striking distance of the other two. Her first run had her 2 second improvement that the others had. She had moved to 2nd about 2 tenths out of first. Her second run had another tenth disappear from her time. Maria set her fastest 1.2 seconds faster than Tracey at that point and Frances was 2 tenths quicker knocking Tracey back to third. Final runs had no improvement for Maria, but Frances found another 7 tenths. Tracey was in a hole and needed to find some time. She looked fast on the course and when her time displayed it proved what we saw. She was about a second faster than her previous run. This time was 2 tenths slower than Maria, but 1 tenth faster than Frances. This moved Maria back to first and Frances to second leaving Tracey in third. The gap from first to third was just .398 and second to third was only .131 over the two days. This was a close and exciting battle.

My runs were up, and I came out swinging. My run was 5th quickest and just over 2 seconds faster than Saturday. Statistically I should not be able to go faster, but I knew I was slow on that run and I could improve. I set out to do that on my second run and slowed down about a half a second. I was struggling in one area and needed to do something different. I was talking to one of my competitors (the one that won Peru) about how he was doing it and he showed me in car video of his last run. I saw what I was doing wrong and set out to fix it. I got through the area I was having trouble with better, but with another run I could do it better. Unfortunately, I did not have another run so that run was what I had. I was amazed when I saw that I went about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second faster than my best run. This was faster than a father and son that were ahead of me making me 8th fastest for the day and within 6 tenths of second place. I was only .039 from moving up to 9th place and just over a second out of the trophies. I had my worst finish position on tenth at this event, but I felt that I drove the best at this event and if I didn't screw up my last run on Saturday, I could have been a lot closer to the top contenders.

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SOLO – Bristol cont'd, and MoHud Event 2

Final heat of the event. Time for Dean and Mark VanDeCarr and Stephen Eckelman to run. Steve went out and set the bar high. He had the third quickest time for the first run. Dean didn't do as good and a cone call slowed that run even more. Mark went .07 quicker than Steve for the 2nd quickest run of the heat. As the second run times started to come in, all but one driver improved. Steve took another 8 tenths off his time. Dean cleaned his run up and found a lot of time. He dropped about 4.7 seconds from his previous run. A great improvement, but still a second slower than Steve. Mark was almost two tenths faster than his first run. He would need another 6 tenths on his final run to move ahead of Steve. Final runs of the event. Saying Steve struggled on his last run would be an understatement. He came across 12 seconds slower than his previous run. Dean was next on course and then he went off course. Pushed a little too hard and missed a gate leaving his second run as his best. Mark went next and besides the class winner was the only one to improve on the final run. Steve was 2 tenths faster for the day and won the battle. Mark had a much better Saturday, so he won the war against Steve and Dean. Mark wound up fourth in A Mod, but would have been the winner in B Mod if they had not combined the classes. Dean was sixth (2nd BM), and Steve was seventh (3rd BM).

All of us had a great time in Bristol. Matt was the only one to bring home hardware with his fourth-place finish. The rest of had good competition, good food, and good friends that made for a nice weekend. I am not sure about the others, but Tracey and I want to go back next year.

Mohud Event #2 at Tech City

We had a great turn out for our second event. Fifty Five set times on a day that started overcast for the first half of the event with an occasional sprinkle. The second half of the day had rain. On the bright side, conditions were the same for everyone. The rain held off until after everyone had 4 dry runs. Most everyone had their fastest run in the morning's dry runs. Jon Kirschman set up a nice course that was fun in both the wet and dry. Cone hits were pretty low and DNF's were almost nonexistent. Flow of the course was good and everyone had the opportunity to have 8 runs.

Official overall event Pax leaders were Nick Austin, Russ Burckhard, Caleb Pocock, Matt Huchro, And Jim Garry. Except for Matt, these drivers were all from the Pro class. Top Street drivers were Ed Craven, Sheri DeJan, and Ian Wallace. Top Touring drivers were Matt Huchro, Dave Cowie, And Adam Wright. Street Prepared went to Joe Cassidy followed by Paul Beechner. CAM was Salvatore Baisley. Prepared/Modified Had Kirby Vallant-White on top followed by Jason Jendzeizyk, and Phil DeJan. Novice's best drivers were Mike DiGiovanni, Brad Dunn, and Travis Aanensen. A couple of notable finishes that need congratulations were Sheri DeJan finishing in 9th on the Pax. I believe that this is her first top ten Pax.

Former Junior Kart driver Aaron Wright in his first autocross in a car and still on his *learners permit* was only 3 seconds behind his dad. Michael DiGiovanni was the highest ranked novice with a 13th place Pax finish.

Drivers that were faster in the wet than the dry were Sean Mayo in his Electric BMW, Patrick Whitton in Sarah's WRX, and Kyle Yuhas in his Honda Civic. Russ Gorman, Paul Isbester, Jim Garry, Ed Craven, Sarah Deihl, Jon Kirschman, and Paul Beechner rounded out the top ten that were less than a half second slower in the wet compared to the dry. Fastest Pax in the wet were Jim Garry, Ed Craven, Caleb Pocock, Matt Huchro, Russ Burckhard, Phil Redington, Paul Isbester, Mike DiGiovanni, Jon Kirschman, and Nick Austin.

This goes to show how important car control is as these drivers are at the top of both the wet and dry lists and the top 5 are only separated by just over a second.

~ Russ

Solo – Bristol Pics



Team Burckhard Arrives
Bristol Takes Note



MoHud's Tracy Burckhard
Winner of a Wendi Allen Memorial Scholarship
for Solo Competition
With Wendi Allen's Daughters



Dean Vandecarr
Heads for the Course



G-Street Ladies
Maria, Frances, Tracey
Show the Spirit of Competition

Time Trials

~ EJ Smith

Time Trials National Tour Report; Palmer Motorsports Park, July 3-4

As I've mentioned in the REport, rain was a factor in this event, but despite it MoHud came away with a lot of trophies and awards. This was my first time attending a TTNT, and I have to say I found it a fun way to enjoy some track-based competition. The event was split between two days, with the Saturday featuring two practice sessions in the morning, and then our first competition sessions in the afternoon for each group of drivers, based on experience. Similarly, Sunday had two competition sessions in the morning, and then two competition sessions in the afternoon. For scoring purposes, SCCA takes the best time from each group of two sessions; you add the resulting three best times and that's how you were ranked within your class. I think only two of my drivers' group's six competition sessions featured a dry surface. Some groups didn't have one dry session. It was fascinating to see how the wet or dry conditions changed up the results for each session, as well as the learning curve of drivers who hadn't been to Palmer prior to the event.

Despite the cool and damp conditions, it was an enjoyable event (probably enhanced by my being in the running for a trophy, I'll admit). Sure, the on-track action was exciting, but the fact we had so many fellow MoHud members (14 by my count) in attendance made it that more special as we supported each other and visited between sessions. I could not be prouder of our region when it came to awards (despite my deadpan expression in my awards photo). MoHud was represented by NINE trophy winners. In addition, MoHud claimed FOUR of the five specialty trophies awarded. It was an incredible experience to see so many of our members recognized, and it made me very proud to be a part of MoHud.

Congratulations to our trophy winners (in roughly class order):

- Mike Park, 2nd in Sport 1, 9th overall
- Nigel Boyce, 1st in Sport 5, 40th overall
- Bill Bennett, 3rd in Sport 6, 51st overall
- Nick Austin, 1st in Tuner 4, 6th overall
- Adam Wright, 2nd in Tuner 4, 10th overall
- Dan Gorss, 1st in Tuner 5, 49th overall
- DJ McArdle, 1st in Max 3, 16th overall
- Dave Burnham, 3rd in Unlimited 1, 33rd overall
- EJ Smith, 2nd in Unlimited 2, 8th overall

In addition, congrats to our specialty award winners:

- Adam Wright, Time Trial National Champion Recognition Award
- Sal Baisley, Spirit of Time Trials Award
- Shelby Blanchette, Breakthrough Award
- Nigel Boyce, Top Novice Award

Other MoHud members competing included Caleb Pocock (5th in Tuner 4), Aashish Vemulapalli (4th in Max 4), and Stephen Tresco (9th in Tuner 3). Congrats to all!



Road Racing

As none of the KO reporters were taking notes on the ground, results have been put together by using several bots. Blame them for any errors...

July Sprints - Watkins Glen

- JC Ogle had mixed results in SM. Looks like a 6th, then hard luck in the last race. Maybe we can get JC to provide us with some thoughts on getting back on track this year.
- Doug Garrison and Pat Stringer shared podiums in SRF3. Always having fun, these guys.
- Adam Figarsky on the podium in SM2.
- Chip VanSlyke came in first in FF.

New England Majors - Thompson

- Jared Lendrum with a third in T4; Ken Lendrum's T4 close on Jared's bumper.

Northeast Conference Majors Title

- Charlie Campbell, 1st in F-P. See Tom's report in this month's Journal.

Pennywise Cyclekart Series

- John Corey hosted another round of competition on the Pennywise circuit recently. Can't understand why more MoHuders haven't built a cyclekart...



Membership Report- *-Jim Garry Mohud Membership Chairman*

< mhr.membership@gmail.com >

As of July 23rd Mohawk Hudson Region membership stood at 332, our highest count since July 2020 when our numbers were in the middle of a serious decline which was to end in December at a low of 296 members. As the graph indicates we are pulling ourselves up into much more healthy numbers.

New Members

Six new members joined in July, bringing the total for new members in 2021 to 56. Our overall membership increase during that time period is only 36 due to the offset of lapsing memberships.

Here are our new members in July plus a few from late June that didn't make it into last month's Membership Report. Primary interests, if chosen, are shown in parentheses:

Linda Murphy	Peru
Steven Murphy	Peru (Track Days/Nights)
Darren Desimone	Saratoga Springs
Jerry Huchro	East Nassau
Tyler Liberto	Lackawanna
Jack Leung	Brooklyn
Andrew Nicolella	Rexford (Club Racing, Rally, RallyCross, Solo)
James Mulder	Lake George
Per Moberg	Clifton Park (Solo)
Richard Plotkin	East Chatham
James Shea	Albany



Welcome everyone, and please don't hesitate to reach out to any of our officers listed on the masthead of this publication.

Significant Anniversaries

This month we have only two members celebrating significant anniversaries but if you participate in our autocross program then you know who they are. *Both of them are twenty five year members this month!*

Russ Burckhard - Our autocross chief for a very long time, Russ along with Tracey do a very fine job of keeping our program healthy and on track. Russ is known for being a very fast driver and with Tracey has been attending National Tour events this year. They will both be in Lincoln Nebraska in September driving their G Street VW GTI at the SCCA Solo National Championships. Russ has won many Mohawk Hudson Region seasonal solo championships.

Andy Furlong - Driver of the "Atomic Rabbit", Andy drives the lime green E Prepared car very quickly. Although this is a quiet year for Andy, in past seasons he has attended many National Tours and some National Championships. Andy too has won his share of Mohawk Hudson Region season championships.

Mohawk-Hudson Region SCCA Board Meeting of July 27th, 2021; 7:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Officers Present: Russell Burkhard, Eric Smith (presiding and recording), Salvatore Baisley, Jim Garry, Paul Malecki, Bruce Kosakoski, Chip Van Slyke

Total Members Present: Not Reported

*** Treasury report**

- \$33K on Bank statement, but really only \$31K (outstanding checks).
- received monthly membership renewal funds from SCCA
- Solo event 2 netted just over \$400
- Russ has one outstanding ice bill

*** Aug 4th member outing at Guptill's**

- Sal will reach out to Gateway for Sept.

*** Bus maintenance update**

- Invoice about \$960, includes NYSI and forgotten tailpipe, plus unanticipated fab work.
- EJ will pick up check and pay for bus, Russ will pick up.

*** Membership Report**

- Jim: staying level or increasing, doing well.

*** Solo generator discussion**

- MoHud rec'd an anonymous donation of a new generator.
- EJ will take the Mitsubishi generator and try some maintenance.

*** 2020 Solo Banquet**

- Russ B: Cooks Park, pavilion \$200, use rain or shine.
- Timing might be later this September/early October.
- Potentially combining 2020 & 2021 awards at this makeup banquet.
- T-shirts about \$9, polo shirts for specialty awards under \$20.
- Pizza, wings, tray of ziti - probably could feed folks for around \$250.
- Could do at Gateway, max of 60 folks - pay on your own.
- Potentially Oct 23/24 if including 2021 awards.

*** Solo timing equipment discussion**

- Farmtek timing equipment, Yagi antennae
- "Anonymous donor" says pay for bigger antennae and they'll cover cost.
- Motion made (Paul M), second by ?, to move forward with purchase - motion passed.

Annual Meeting/Banquet update

- Sal B has discussed details with Tom C. Locked in Jan 8th. 2022 for date
- Will need to decide costs

Meeting wound down approx. 8:30pm...

The KnockOff Journal

This Month...
- Campbell Racing 2021



2021 Race #3 - Pocono Raceway May 28-29

This was a two-day race event with the test day on Friday. We arrived Thursday afternoon, unloaded, and set up in our favorite paddock spot. The weather forecast was for a cold and wet weekend, and it didn't disappoint.

Friday went well for us. Cold and windy but we were able to get in the full round of testing. Unfortunately, it started to rain, rather heavily, immediately after our last session and, since we were the first of the 5 groups, the rest of that round were washed out. We did the testing on the F Production car. We tested a new set of transmission gear ratios than were used on our last trip here (way back in 2017) and the usual study of tire pressures and brake pad compounds.

The forecast called for rain all night and until noon on Saturday which meant that the only qualifying session on Saturday morning would be wet. So, Friday evening I put the rain set up on the car. It involves several changes to protect things from the water, improve the handling on the wet track, and improve the performance of the brakes.

And it did, indeed. rain all through Saturday morning - hard. We kicked around not going out, risking the car, and starting the race from the back but decided against it. Instead, we timed it so that Charlie went out at the back of the qualifying group without having to sit on the grid in the rain. He did only two timed laps while I monitored the lap times for the whole group on my phone, and, confirming that he was the fastest car in the group, we brought the car back to the nice dry tent. In the SM qualifying session (the last race group), about an hour later, the rain was letting up and the track wasn't quite as wet. Charlie did well, sitting 6th in a field of about 24 until the last couple minutes when two others managed to find just a little more speed moving Charlie back to 8th. Still a good performance.

The first of two races was on Saturday afternoon as usual. The rain had stopped around noon and, since our cars were both in later race groups, the track was dry for our races. But it was still very cold and windy (did I mention that it was 39 deg. when we got started on Saturday morning?). it was a miserable day to be standing in the pits watching the race and even worse sitting in the open cockpit going 120 mph.

The FP race went well. Starting from the pole Charlie led the first lap but the car sharing the front row was an EP Honda S2000 with about 25% more motor. He was way faster on the two long straights and, although Charlie was much better through the two infield sections, it wasn't enough to keep the Honda behind. He got around on the back straight on lap 2 and led the rest of the race with Charlie right behind the whole way. The pair just drove away and by the end of the race had lapped the entire rest of the field. The second victory of the season for the FP car.

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Campbell at Pocono... II

The SM race, the last of the day, also went well, but with a big footnote. Starting 8th, Charlie was up to 5th at the end of the first lap. Those 5 cars opened a growing gap to the rest of the field. About half distance two of the lead pack managed to spin off track, moving Charlie up to third. He raced his way to second briefly but the car that had led the first half of the race before going off track finally caught up and passed, moving Charlie to 3rd. The 4th place car was right with him, and they had a tight race to the end. Coming out of the last corner onto the finishing straight the other car turned into Charlie. He spun and fell back a couple places; the steering on Charlie's car was damaged but he was able to limp across the line in 3rd place. A well-run race and a great finish as the new car continues to impress.

Saturday evening there wasn't much to do on the FP car – had to wait until we could tell if it would be a wet or dry track for the Sunday afternoon race. On the other hand, Charlie had some body work to do on the left front of the SM and to replace a bent steering tie rod.

After a quiet night, Sunday started cold (38 deg this time) and the rain started at 7 o'clock, in order to get a head start on the racing which would begin at 8:30. Out two races were at the end of the day so we spent much of the day in the motorhome staying warm and dry.

The FP race went pretty much like the Saturday race except for the rain from beginning to end. There was one little twist: we were trying to avoid having Charlie sit on the grid in the rain any longer than necessary, so we delayed getting there to the last minute. Unfortunately, we got there a few seconds after the last minute, so he had to start from the back of the field. But he was back in second place by the end of the first lap so not a problem – I think he rather enjoyed it. He passed the leader, the EP Honda again, starting lap 3 and led for most of the race (Charlie is a great rain racer) but with 7 to go he was balked by some lapped traffic and the Honda got around him and the superior horsepower prevailed as it did on Saturday. At the end it was 1st FP and 2nd overall.

The SM race was the last of the day. Having gotten chilled and soaked to the bone during the FP race, Charlie decided he had had enough fun for the weekend, and we packed up and headed for home.

Watkins Glen next in three weeks. Our "home track" so we are really looking forward to this one. It may rain but I'm sure it won't be as cold as 38 deg.

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Campbell Race #4 – Watkins Glen June 17-20

The Watkins Glen Super Tour event went well for Campbell Racing. The #89 F Production car won both races and the #98 Spec Miata car finished an excellent 5th on Saturday and 3rd on Sunday. This was the last regular season Super Tour event. The FP car is currently 4th in the championship points with the end of season Runoffs yet to be run – in early October at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. So, it is possible we may be able to move up a little more although there are some really strong cars up there with us.

The SM car is close to the top 10 in points out of 202 cars that have participated in the series. Again, there will be some movement in the points at the Runoffs.

We also locked in the NE Division Majors series championship in FP.

Back to Watkins Glen: Test day on Thursday went well. The usual program in place for the FP car – brake pads, tire pressures, some suspension changes; continuing the learning process. Thursday evening I had the Penske shock guy make some modifications to the rear shocks. Unfortunately we ran out of time to accurately reset the rear ride height so in the practice session on Friday morning we had some serious tire rub on the left rear. We set up the alignment stands and fixed that before the afternoon qualifying session. In the qualifying session we were 4th, second in FP to our friend Kevin Ruck in his Acura. Checked everything over Friday evening and tried again on Saturday morning with Q-2. 4th again, but 3rd in class when Craig Chima's Lotus was a bit faster. Both these guys have a pair of national championships. Combining the two sessions, we would start the Saturday afternoon race in 4th. Meanwhile, the SM car continued its strong performance, qualifying 4th in both qualifying sessions and gridded 4th out of 30 for the first race.

Race 1 for the FP car went well – as I said, we won. We had the Lotus covered but the Acura was substantially faster. Until he had a flat tire and had to abandon the race. That put us in 2nd overall, behind the lead EP car, a super-fast Mazda RX7. However, the Acura did set a new lap record before his tire failure. Since Charlie was the current lap record holder that was a big disappointment. But winning the race helped. And Charlie did set his best lap time of the weekend during the race.

In the SM race Charlie started 4th but was shuffled back to 9th on the opening lap as the pack tried to get itself sorted out. By the end of lap five he was setting the fastest lap times of the field and had worked his way back to 5th. On lap 9 he was again knocked out of the line by a badly behaving driver and, again, lost a few places. But he was once more able to make up some of the lost ground and finished 5th, setting his best time of the weekend.

On Sunday the Acura didn't make it to the grid so we started 2nd based on previous lap times, including during the Saturday race. The race started well and Charlie was setting a nice pace, holding second overall, first in FP as the EP Mazda motored off into the proverbial sunset. Then at about half distance a slower car turned into him while being lapped and caused a spin. Charlie lost about 15 seconds on that lap and the Lotus was able to pass him. Charlie set out to catch the Lotus and was getting closer when the Lotus pulled into the pits and retired. At that point Charlie had a significant lead on the rest of the FP field backed off a bit to run to the finish. Then, on the next to the last lap he radioed that if felt like one of the front wheel bearings had failed and he was coming in. He pitted and finished that lap in the pit lane. Luckily, the lead EP car had just lapped the 2nd place FP car so, since we finished the penultimate lap before the rest of the FP field did so, we were still the winners. A little pay back from Lady Luck!

Campbell at Watkins Glen... II

The Sunday SM race was more drama with a good outcome. Based on the fast times from the Saturday race Charlie started on the front row, in 2nd place. However, the pole sitter jumped the start, by a lot, and pulled his lane ahead of the field. Charlie was able to slot into 5th place. By lap 3 he was up to 5th when the pace car was dispatched for an accident. The race restarted a few laps later and Charlie was in a 5 car break away at the head of the field. Soon the second-place car crashed out and Charlie was later able to race his way to 3rd. He was right on the rear bumper of the 2nd place car but after a couple laps of trying to get by he decided to be satisfied with 3rd place, his first Super Tour podium finish.

The last couple months have been challenging and very time consuming. We have decided to take some time off and regroup before the Runoffs. We will find a race or two, or perhaps a test day somewhere to shakedown the cars before we leave for Indianapolis. But the next report will probably be from the Indianapolis Speedway.

~ Tom and Charlie



Different Year – Same Results – Charlie on the Top Step