

Late July 2003

TOP GUN

Saturday: Hammer it off the line. Break right, then back left as the pavement drops off over the bump. On the gas in the lane, remember to set up left for a 90 degree right into the shade of the building. Gather the car up and grab a gear, the track bottoms and bears left. Trail brake into a 120 degree left and stand on it hard. Not too much, though, because as you exit the next left you lose road camber and transition into a loose off-camber right immediately into a Chicago box that's faster than it looks. Down a gear out of the box, hard downhill into a very tight 180, then back up into a right hand sweeper with a pinched exit onto a sorta straight, but it turns into a left-right switch over a dip in the track only to unload the car into another brake-wiggle section before a final mini-sweeper to the left. In 101 degree heat. Four runs.

Sunday: Repeat as necessary with minor alterations, only backwards, so reverse all entry, apex, and exit strategies. Slightly shorter and faster course. In 101 degree heat. Four runs.

Do that with over four dozen of your closest competitors and you've experienced Top Gun, an autocross trial by fire (well, it was hot!). Fun, huh?

Damn right it was fun! Nearly 400 competition runs in two days in those conditions is a challenge, and drivers from Idaho, Missoula, Great Falls, Helena, Billings, East Helena, Columbia Falls, Stevensville, Florence, etc, all met the challenge.

Cumulative results (Saturday and Sunday times added) follow this story, but the times don't tell the story properly or in enough detail. Stick with me, here.

Dave Ebert has the nicest umbrella and the coolest squeeze-horn, but **Jim Arnett** has programmed the theme from Star Wars into his high-tech air-powered T/A horn. **Ed Austin** didn't get lost. **Bob Stevenson** (you know, the course designer?) did. Fudgesickles are good in the heat. **Justin Hickman** won the drive-while-laughing-hysterically trophy in the low-rider Monty. The two ZO6's finished .735 of a second apart on cumulative time after 8 runs. **Peter Hern** beat his dad, **Rick**, by about 1.8 seconds over two days. Some other close finishes were mere tenths away from each other over the two days. Pizza is speed food! Ever notice that Wolf's Saab sounds like a fart when it hits the wastegate at the top of

first gear? **Jim Messick** makes his children actually cheer for him. **Anita, Judi,** and **Ev** were voted most tolerant and helpful. **Tom Masterson** drives a mean fork lift. **Bruce Schlaebitz** is fast, smart, and terrific help. The **Gillilands** are not really considering air-conditioning their car; they just don't spend too much time in when it's hot. Thanks to all (apologies for not specifically mentioning every one of the wonderful volunteer helpers; it's the heat!) for a most memorable weekend.

Cumulative results:

A Production

1st Namen Paul, Great Falls, Firebird, 2:00.006

A Sedan

1st Jason Rukavina, Great Falls, Monte Carlo, 2:09.317

2nd Justin Hickman, Great Falls, Monte Carlo, 2:14.722

B Production

1st Tim Helms, Great Falls, Fiero, 1:54.747

2nd Tom Masterson, Great Falls, Porsche 911, 2:01.077

3rd Ed Austin, Great Falls, Mazda RX7, 2:09.725

B Sedan

1st Zack Gilmor, Great Falls, Contour, 2:02.388

C Production

1st James Rowan, Great Falls, Honda CRX, 1:56.986

2nd Jim Messick, Great Falls, VW Golf, 2:01.038

3rd Warren Fisher, Coeur d'Alene, Audi, 2:01.312

4th David Thurston, Great Falls, Plymouth Conquest, 2:07.137

C Sedan

1st Dave Wilcox, Missoula, Subaru Legacy, 1:59.924

2nd Peter Kern, Missoula, Dodge Neon, 2:01.660

3rd Rick Kern, Missoula, Dodge Neon, 2:03.496

4th Galen Smith, Great Falls, VW Scirocco, 2:05.219

5th Larry Meinzen, Missoula, Subaru Legacy, 2:08.208

6th Jamie Wilkins, East Helena, Honda Accord, 2:08.992

7th Julie Wilkins, East Helena, Honda Accord, 2:14.737

GT-1

1st Jim Arnett, Billings, Trans-Am, 1:49.725

2nd Jerry Rukavina, Great Falls, Camaro, 1:52.818

3rd Steve Nutter, Great Falls, Maverick, 1:55.453

4th Bob Stevenson, Great Falls, Mustang, 1:56.969

5th Kent Yoder, Great Falls, Camaro, 1:58.236

6th Dennis Figarelle, Great Falls, Camaro, 1:58.838

7th Kelly Rolfe, Great Falls, Camaro, 1:59.163

GT-2

- 1st Clint Houge, Great Falls, Mazda RX3, 1:54.925
2nd Rick Cummings, Great Falls, Mercury Capri, 1:59.337

GT-3

- 1st Gary Wolf, Great Falls, Saab Aero, 1:48.892
2nd Mike Williams, Missoula, VW Scirocco, 1:55.039
3rd Bob Morin, Great Falls, Totota Celica, 1:55.717
4th Russ Wilson, Great Falls, Toyota Celica, 1:59.422

GT-S

- 1st Dean Mikes Missoula, Corvette ZO6, 1:48.211
2nd Jason Roan, Helena, Corvette ZO6, 1:48.946
3rd Tracy Amt, Stevensville, Corvette, 1:56.714

Prepared 1

- 1st Walter Davis, Stevensville, Mustang, 2:01.607
2nd Jeff Miklautsch, Florence, Mustang, 2:05.283

Prepared 2

- 1st Randy Cheney, Columbia Falls, Porsche 930, 2:06.958

Prepared 3

- 1st Rico Salvino, Missoula, Subaru Imprezza, 1:51.685
2nd Bruce Schlaebitz, Missoula, Toyota MR2, 1:53.244
3rd Shawn Padina, Great Falls, VW GTI, 1:58.086

Modified

- 1st place Dwight Gilliland, Billings, Avenger MK 3, 1:33.887 **FAST TIME OF DAY BOTH SATURDAY AND SUNDAY**, \$25 per day for his quickness!
2nd Kristi Gilliland, Billings, Avenger MK3, 1:42.303

One-day participants (Sunday-not eligible for the overall two-day total):

B Production

- Allison Goodspeed, Great Falls, Fiero, 1:01.791
Joe Goodspeed, Great Falls, Fiero, 1:03.952

C Production

- John Weinzettel, Honda CRX, 0:57.433
Kyle Figarelle, Great Falls, Porsche 944, 1:01.191

C Sedan

- Drew Lovec, Great Falls, ?, 1:07.742
Jamie Crock, Great Falls, ?, 1:09.191

Modified

- Dave Ebert, Billings, Phantom F4-J, 0:57.232

Prepared 1

- Dave Cooley, Great Falls, Porsche 928, 0:55.916

Prepared 2

- Mike Taylor, Great Falls, Mazda RX7, 1:04.263
Ron Walker, Great falls, Mazda RX7, 1:07.105

Prepared 3

James Schneider, Great Falls, Porsche 968, 0:55.656

Whew! A final huge thanks for our sponsors, for whom we are so grateful:

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There are not five finer businesses in Great falls. Go! Shop/eat/drink/and use their services. Say thank you to folks who care about motorsports!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

NEW BREAKING NEWS!

Next club meeting is this Thursday, July 31, at 7:30 PM at the tenth avenue south Hardees. Please be there to discuss the rest of the season and this coming weekend!

Saturday, August 2, Demo Derby time. If you have not called **Jim Messick** at 268-1742 yet to volunteer, you need to. Your services will be needed! Tech inspection, the Herby Derby, and the main event will all need your help. When Jim calls, say, "YES"!

Our make-up event that was scheduled for August 3 at the old Buttrey's Warehouse has been cancelled. The Missoula club has rented the Helena Regional Airport site for the 3rd, so it would only be a beautiful 90 mile drive/tow for us to get there and compete. So our event has been scrubbed to allow us to compete (their national SCCA classification rules, not a points event for this club) with them instead. Hope to see you there! We will likely convoy out of Great Falls early Sunday at 6:30 or so, but more conversation will be had at the meeting on Thursday.

This club still has an ExpoPark points event on the calendar for the 17th of August, but that, too, may be discussed on the 31st. The Black Otter Hillclimb is in Billings on the 16th and 17th. Lots to do and

plan for!

Need more information? Call **Ed Austin** at 452-1135 or **Jerry Rukavina** at 761-4357. Much more later in the next issue. Lots to discuss and talk about. Rules, officer elections, lotsa stuff!