



The Panic Slip



Racing Approaches Mid-Season!!!

We're approaching mid-season with the points race still in contention. For those not racing for points, we're nonetheless having our best race season in years. We've welcomed many new members both to our races as well as our monthly membership meetings – a welcome change from last year's fall-off due to lack of venue availability.

Feedback from our first evening event on July 7th at Expo Park was overwhelmingly positive especially the opportunity to enjoy the cooler sunset weather during course cleanup. Our dry summer continues to be a boon for racing with participants in the second round of the Montana Challenge on July 27th and 28th enjoying more sun and heat.



Terry Root nails a run during our first evening race

Upcoming events include Top Gun (details on this event later in this newsletter), another evening race at Expo, and our first Cone Heads race...refer to the schedule on our web site for details and registration!

New Web Site

If you haven't already noticed, our web site has been updated and improved with new format, features, and a new address. Although you'll be automatically forwarded to the new site if you use our old web site address, you can reach the new site directly at www.GreatFallsRacing.com.

2013 Race Schedule

Date	Event
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
8/10-11	TOP GUN in Helena, MT
8/25	Expo Park Evening Race
9/7-8	Cone Heads in Helena, MT
9/15	Expo Park
10/6	Expo Park
10/13	Expo Park

Top Gun Race is Coming Soon!

Our annual shoot-out between the four SCCA regions in Montana is coming up on August 10th and 11th at the Helena Emergency Services Facility located at the Helena Airport. This is our

biggest race of the year, regularly drawing over a hundred novice racers competing in the event as well as some of the top drivers in the Pacific Northwest testing their skills against their peers.



If you haven't ever participated in Top Gun, I highly encourage you to make the trip to Helena. Our four Montana regions compete head-to-head in a winner take all two day racing event on one of the top race courses in the state.



A happy car – he's just heard he's going to Top Gun!

Besides the excellent competition, there's a carnival atmosphere for the entire weekend with prize giveaways to the crowd, on-site vending of breakfast and lunch, and a wide assortment of race vehicles both contemporary and exotic (Lotus, BMW, Porsche, Ford Pantara, etc.). In addition to the festivities throughout

the weekend, the top scoring participants in each race class take home event trophies/awards. The top scoring region takes home not only bragging rights for the next year but also the coveted Top Gun trophy.



The coveted Top Gun trophy (chess set not included)

If you can't come out to race, you'll want to come out to enjoy the festivities. However, trust me on this, if you come down without being registered to race you'll be kicking yourself while watching the rest of the racers playing! Please visit our web site to pre-register...if you have any questions, please feel free to call one of our officers (listed at the end of the newsletter) for more information.

July Meeting Minutes

Our complete July meeting minutes will be reviewed and finalized at our next monthly meeting on August 29th; however, some of the highlights of our meeting were:

- Malmstrom AFB racing is still being worked with a new, five-year contract for use of their facilities. Coordination is taking longer than expected but we're still happy to be working once again with the base and will continue to pursue working out our new arrangement.
- Discussions on the final arrangements that have been set for hosting our four-region Top Gun race.
- Our club is donating a free race entry to be auctioned during a local charity fundraiser.
- Resuming award of recognition pins for multi-year club members



Full front suspension compression during a turn

Tips from the Grid

This month's Tips from the Grid discusses crossing the finish line as well as your actions between racing runs. Much of this information doesn't improve your performance for the run you've just completed; however, it prepares your car for your

next run as well as helping to extend the life of your car and its systems.

Your race finish needs to be just as planned as all of the previous elements we've discussed over the past few months. A properly designed course will allow you to cross the finish line at a brisk but controlled pace. Although you're trying to squeeze those last few hundredths of a second out of your run, it is your responsibility to ensure you can safely bring your car across the finish line to a complete stop in the finish area. Besides the danger to spectators, yourself and your car by exiting the course without full control, hitting a cone past the finish line is normally an automatic disqualification for the run you just completed. Ensure you cross the finish line in control of your car and bring the car to a complete stop in the finish area.



After you've stopped your car take a deep breath, mentally shift gears from "race" mode into "grid" mode, and immediately exit the finish area at a controlled rate of speed. For the safety of all, you must not exceed the briefed speed limits in either the grid or the paddock – excessive speed or unsafe driving most often leads to being asked to leave the event. After you've left the race course, drive back to your grid position (or the paddock if that was your last run for that particular run group) and park your car. Don't walk away yet – you have a number of post-race actions you'll need to take to protect your car's engine and other components.

First, you'll need to leave your engine running for a minute or so after you park to dissipate heat evenly from your last run. Assuming wind conditions permit it, you should open your hood as well to help the engine heat dissipate. You should normally not spray or mist your radiator or engine with water or other cooling spray; the rapid, uneven temperature change when hot drivetrain components are mixed with the cooler liquid can result in the metal, plastic, or rubber cracking.



Do not set your parking brake – your pads and rotors will be extremely hot. By setting your brake, you are clamping your hot pads onto your hot rotors thereby preventing them from cooling evenly. The end result is that your rotors will warp, compromising your braking effectiveness and costing you the time and money for replacing them. A note of caution – you've left your engine running and have not set your parking brake. Do NOT walk away from your car in this condition as it is likely to roll!

As you exit your car, there are a number of other post-race checks to do: check tire pressures, look under the hood/car for leaks, check the condition of your tires, etc. As you're completing these, you should periodically roll your car a foot or so forward or back to change the position of your brake rotors with respect to the brake pads. Although you haven't set your parking brake it's still helpful to avoid leaving the brake pads in one position on the rotors while they're cooling.

One of the most important actions between and after your racing runs is to take care of yourself -- drink some water! The stress both physically and mentally you experience while racing take a toll on your body including dehydrating you. In order to perform at your best you must take care of yourself as well as your car.



Once you've seen to the immediate needs of both your car and yourself ensure your engine is shut off and your car in gear, relax, and network with fellow racers. Pay attention to the progression of the grid – you'll want to be helmeted and strapped in when the grid master gets back to your grid position for your next run to avoid slowing down the flow of the day.

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