



# The Panic Slip



## Let the Racing Begin!!!

For those that haven't yet made it out, we've started our racing season with two two-race weekends since last Panic Slip – Montana Challenge Race #1 in Helena and our first local event of the season at Expo Park on May 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

The Helena event went well despite some less-than-perfect weather conditions. It's early in the season but our representative racers made a strong showing over the entire weekend.



*Race Group #1 Grid at Expo, May 25th*

The May 25-26 Expo Park event drew a record number of new racers – more than we've seen in many years (see the photo gallery at the end of this e-mail for pictures of Saturday's newcomers). For this race the weather cooperated resulting in an outstanding event throughout the weekend.

Results for our events are available on our web site at <http://www.mtscca.com/results.html>.



## 2013 Race Schedule

Date	Event
4/13	Expo Park
5/25-26	Montana Challenge Race #1 in Helena, MT
7/7	Expo Park Evening Race
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

In addition to our schedule, there are two additional Montana Challenge races in Helena to enjoy. The first is hosted by the Big Sky region (Missoula) on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>; the second is hosted by Southwest Montana region (Bozeman) on July 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

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### May Meeting Minutes

Our complete May meeting minutes will be reviewed and finalized at our next monthly meeting on June 27<sup>th</sup>; however, some of the highlights of our meeting were:

- Malmstrom AFB has offered a 5-year “contract” for the facility use to help streamline our annual request. The SCCA reviewed and approved the contract. We are working to finalize the arrangements.
- Street Survival - update as detailed in this newsletter was briefed.
- Many other details relating to behind-the-scenes tasks for our events were discussed with the membership providing great feedback.
- It was pointed out that we forgot to pass on to our new racers the nature of our organization in that our racers’ assistance is needed to set up and tear down our racing events. In essence, we need to add a short reminder that we are a membership club that can only make racing happen with the help of all our racers at an event.

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### Tips from the Grid

This month’s subject is Slower is Faster (otherwise known as “Skills to being smoother and faster on the course.”

You’ve launched off the start – now all you have to do is aggressively fling your car through the course, stabbing at the pedals, jerking the steering wheel, and maximizing your g-forces through the corners.

But is this really a formula for success? Many of us (including me!) unintentionally start our racing experiences with these actions and, no matter our level of experience, can backslide into these behaviors if we let our concentration lapse. However much fun these actions are, none of these will actually make your racing faster and most will significantly slow your times.

Performance driving is both a mental and physical skill, much like swinging a baseball bat. How successful would you be as a first-time baseball player if you swing for the fences with every swing before you learn how to hold the bat, judge the baseball’s approach, and make the bat and ball meet in mid-air? Racing is much the same – you must learn the basic physical and mental skills before you can excel as a racer.

Basic skill #1 – smooth pedal inputs. The main action you control from the driver’s seat that determines how much traction (and therefore speed) your car will have is how smoothly you manage your



accelerator and brake inputs. Given the rapid changes in direction, the short span between corners, and the rapid transitions in autocross racing, pedal inputs are even more important than in open track racing. Smooth is important but don’t misread “smooth” to mean “slow”. Rapidly stabbing at your pedals greatly unbalances your suspension and compromises your traction – you need to smoothly and swiftly “press” your pedals as opposed to jumping on them. But maximizing your performance isn’t confined to just pedal control.

Basic skill #2 – smooth steering. Your steering wheel inputs are one of the other factors in your car's stability; abrupt inputs on the wheel unbalance your car on its suspension and rob you of traction. Power sliding through the corners is undeniably fun and the smoking tires are movie-chase impressive; however, you aren't racing your car to its potential by doing this. For maximum speed, you need to smoothly input your steering changes to your steering wheel. Keep your eyes up, focus on where you want the car to exit the corner (and beyond!), and steer the car smoothly to execute your turn. Your inputs don't have to be slow BUT they must first and foremost be smooth to master the last basic skill.



Basic skill #3 – cornering. Properly cornering your car is an extremely complex skill involving picking the proper driving line and applying skill #1 and #2 to smoothly execute it. Although feeling the g-forces generated in hard cornering is one of the most gratifying indications that you're racing, a well-executed corner at the novice to experienced racer level doesn't always generate those crushing g-forces that pull you sideways in your seat. Picking a poor line through the corner means you have to lean on your tires/suspension more than needed for a good line – this uses up your traction to pull the car through the corner, pushing you sideways against your belts and giving you the false impression that you're really smoking through the course. Take your time walking the course during morning race preparations to plan your corners (entry, apex, exit).

These are only three of the basic skills we need to increase our race times. There are more advanced details to each of these skills; unfortunately, we don't have space to cover them in this month's column. Next month, we'll expand on the details of cornering to help shave seconds off your time.

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### New Racer's Gallery

We only have new racer pictures from May 25<sup>th</sup>'s race at Expo Park. If you have pics of any racers that I've missed, please send them in and I'll get them in next month's newsletter:







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