

Issues Plague Factory Five Racers at Beaverun

June 26th and 27th saw the Great Lakes & East Coast Factory Fives meet at Beaverun Raceway in Wampum, PA.



Friday, the 25th, the racers arrived at the track in the late afternoon sun. The Great Lakes contingent arrived first (their only first of the weekend) with Brain Sanders – 49, Gregg Wellinghoff Sr. – 29, and Greg Wellinghoff Jr. – 77. Wayne Patterson - 62 arrived next, followed by Carl Thompson – 1 and his wife Eileen, Jim Schenk - 52 and his girlfriend Bridgett, Paul Kaiser - 8 and his wife Michelle, John George – 48 and Ed Boothman in the 85. All in all the snake pit looked great and drew the attention of the rest of the NASA family and other onlookers due to the turnout. The FFR boys spent a great deal of time talking up the cars and the series to a number of interested people. You never know just who you might talk into purchasing a challenge car and thus growing the series. Carl grilled an amazing dinner for everyone as the racers sat around and chit chatted amongst each other. After all of the teams had gotten setup, and reacquainted, all of the drivers turned in for an early evening.



Saturday



Saturday morning weather was great for racing. Morning practice saw Wayne get his doors blown off by the rest of the racers, literally. The driver's side door came off of the 62 car during the practice. It seems as though all the racers wanted to claim it was them going by Wayne that resulted in the door coming off, but only Wayne knows for sure. Fortunately the track workers were able to recover the door with only a few scratches in it. An impound check after qualifying found Gregg Sr. disqualified due to a discrepancy in his timing advance and he would have to start at the back. John did not run qualifying as he was troubleshooting a brake problem he had uncovered in practice. Unfortunately his brake problems resulted in his spending most of the afternoon changing out calipers, pads, and his master cylinder and missing the Saturday race. The race began with a standing start and Paul jumped out to an early lead, which he held to the end. Attrition would prove to be a factor during the race as a number of cars dropped out. First out was Greg Wellinghoff Jr on lap 8 as his shifter handle came off during the race. Second out was Jim Schenk with fuel cutout issues. Next out was Brian Sanders with only a few laps remaining due to what was later found to be a bad distributor. (It was a good distributor when the Wellinghoff's gave it to him!) It took some time for Brian to get towed back to the paddock as the wrecker had numerous other cars to bring in following the Thunder race. 29 cars started the race and only 19 finished under their own power.

Paul finished in first, followed by Carl, Gregg Wellinghoff Sr., and Wayne Patterson.

Paul also set a Great Lakes region track record for BeaverRun on Saturday of 105.831 during the race.

Work began on the damaged cars shortly after the race and continued well into the evening as the various drivers tried to fix their problems.

Sunday



John's brake problems were fixed and he was ready to go. Jim had not found the cause of his fuel cutout issue yet. Brian's car was back in running order. Greg Jr. had jury rigged his shift handle to get him through the rest of the weekend. John and Paul set an identical lap in qualifying of 1:05.524, both claiming the fastest lap of the weekend. Paul was granted the pole position as he turned his fast lap before John in the session. Unfortunately Paul discovered both of his front rotors were cracked following the qualifying run and was unable to get them both changed in the short time before the morning race, thus he was forced to watch from the sidelines.



The morning race started off with John out to an early lead, followed by Jim, Brian, Carl, Greg Jr., Wayne and Gregg Sr. Carl made an aggressive pass to get around Brian in turn 1 and then proceeded to spin out in turn 10 of the first lap, as Greg Jr led Gregg Sr. and Wayne three wide into turn 10. Wayne on the outside was forced off track as the racers took evasive action to avoid Carl and as the racers exited the corner, Gregg Sr. led Greg Jr. down the front straight until his steering wheel detached prior to the start finish line. As Gregg Sr. quickly reconnected his steering, Greg Jr. passed him back for 4th place. Jim Schenk was unfortunately forced to retire early once again for fuel cutout issues. Carl moved quickly back up through the field passing Gregg Sr., then Greg Jr. and then Brian Sanders. As the race progressed Greg Jr. found his rear brakes began to go away (apparently he lost an inside pad halfway through the race and the piston was going directly against the rotor, causing the brake fluid to boil away). Greg Jr. was unable to hold his father off until the end of the race as he was forced to brake earlier and earlier due to the failing brakes. Gregg Sr. got around Jr. with 2 to go and took over 4th place. At the end of the race, it was John, setting a new track record of 1:05.760, followed by Carl, Brian, Gregg Sr., Greg Jr. and Wayne. John's morning race video is available for viewing at <http://www.vimeo.com/12930629>

Greg Jr. immediately went to work on his rear brakes to fix them before the afternoon race and was grateful to have John George's help. Jim found the cause of his fuel cutout issue. Paul finished his rotors up and had his car ready to go. It looked promising that all eight challenge series cars would be on the track together for the afternoon race. Alas, it was not to be, while bleeding the brakes using a reverse bleeding tool, the hose popped off the caliper and Greg Jr. got a strong spray of brake fluid in both eyes. His yell caught everyone's attention and he was immediately aided by the other racers who brought water to help him flush his eyes. Unfortunately this wasn't enough to stop the burning and Greg Jr. (now drenched from all of the water) had to take a ride to the local ER to get a proper flush, thus taking him out of contention for the afternoon race. Finishing order of the first race determined starting order for the second race and a few of the racers barely made it to grid on time as they were kind enough to reassemble the 77 and put it in Greg's trailer before their race. Paul was able to come from last to first in 2 laps and overtake John on lap 2 after a scary moment in turn 7. John and Paul would battle neck and neck, at times only inches apart up until lap 15 when Paul began to pull away from John. Paul would hang on for the win in the afternoon's hot race, followed by John, Jim, Carl, Brian, Gregg Sr. and Wayne. The tired racers returned to their pits physically exhausted from the heat in the second race of the day. John's Sunday afternoon video available for viewing at <http://www.vimeo.com/12928726>

Brian and Gregg Sr. left to pick up Greg Jr., now properly flushed and feeling much better. The racers bid their farewells to each other after a fun weekend of racing at Beaver Run.



Ed Boothman spent the weekend running his 85 in time trials and getting used to the car and its many modifications. It was good to see Ed at the track driving again, and proving he hasn't lost it as he had the fastest time trial lap of the weekend at 1:06.322.

With the exception of Carl, it seems as though each of the factory five drivers had some type of issue pop up over the course of the weekend and it was great to see how all of the racers helped each other out this weekend to fix the cars when they were having issues. It was also good to see how everyone came to the aid of one of our drivers when the driver was injured. In the interest of time we all sometimes neglect proper safety equipment when thrashing on our cars; however incidents like this should remind us all to take the proper safety precautions and use things like safety goggles even when we are performing what would seem to be simple tasks.

Next up for the NASA Great Lakes Region FFR's is Mid-Ohio on July 23-25. This event promises to see new blood at the track as three new cars will make their first appearance.

-- Greg Wellinghoff Jr.