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NATIONAL AUTO SPORT ASSOCIATION

NASA Midwest Inc.
5250 Grand Avenue
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Chicago, September 16, 2010, NASA Midwest, Inc.

Riggen Takes Three Wins at Autobahn Friday, September 10, 2010

A sunny day greeted Factory Five racers, Lyle & Julie Riggen – 09, Gregg Wellinghoff – 29, Brian Sanders – 49, and Gregory Wellinghoff – 77.

Also showing up in his brand spanking new Challenge Racer was Todd Ayers – 91.



Team Warbird (Wellinghoff Jr, Wellinghoff Sr, and Sanders) & Team Riki Tiki Tavi (Lyle & Julie Riggen) arrived and began prepping their cars for the afternoon's three hour enduro race. As it was Wellinghoff Sr's. first trip to Autobahn, he took the 77 out for an uneventful practice to learn the track. As race time rolled around Sanders took the first stint in the 77, while Lyle Riggen started the race in the 9 and immediately took the E1 lead. Sanders missed a shift at the start causing him to fall behind early, however after a few laps he recovered and began moving up through the field. Unfortunately Team Warbird had their day cut short when a rear brake line cracked 40 minutes into the race. Sanders managed to hang onto the car and keep it out of trouble; however, with no spare available team Warbird retired early to seek out a replacement part before the weekend's sprint races. Team Riki Tiki Tavi made their first pit stop/driver change on lap 21, and Julie took over. At this time team Riki Tiki Tavi was in the lead of the E1 class and was running 3rd overall. They returned to the pits on lap 39 to make a final driver change putting Lyle back in the car for the completion of the race, winning the E1 class and placing 9th overall. Both teams are grateful for all of the crew support they received. Team Warbird is particularly grateful to the folks from Winner's Circle in Joliet, IL for their help in making a new brake line for the 77 on Friday evening, after their close.

Saturday, September 11, 2011

The remnants of Tropical Storm Hermine brought a wet morning to Autobahn Country Club. None of the Factory Five racers chose to take morning practice in the rain, and only Sanders and Wellinghoff Sr. dared to run qualifying. Fortunately the rains moved out shortly after qualifying giving the track a chance to dry before the race. Ayers spent the day shaking down his new car in HPDE 3, finding a few things he would like to change with the car throughout the day. The starting grid for the afternoon's race was Sanders on the pole, followed by Wellinghoff Sr., Lyle Riggen, Wellinghoff Jr., and Julie Riggen taking her first sprint race start in Ayer's 91. As the green flew, the outside lane moved and Wellinghoff Sr. moved around Sanders and into the lead, Wellinghoff Jr. also took advantage of the faster outside line and



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moved past Lyle Riggen into third. As the racers moved down into turn 4, Lyle Riggen shot from 4th to 1st on the outside as his competition was slowed by traffic on the inside. Lyle would remain in first and finish the race unchallenged for the victory. Back in the field a nose to tail battle ensued between Wellinghoff Sr., Sanders, and Wellinghoff Jr. Wellinghoff Jr. had slight contact with a ST1 Miata just before turn 6, as the Miata did not see the 77 passing on the outside. A scary moment took place on lap 10 as Wellinghoff Sr. spun to the outside in turn 5. Sanders, right on his bumper steered hard to the inside to avoid contact and as a result spun to the inside.



Wellinghoff Jr. and a few GTS cars were able to narrowly escape making contact with the two machines blocking different parts of the track. Wellinghoff Jr. moved into 2nd as a result and was able to hold off a late charge from Sanders to finish 2nd. Wellinghoff Sr. returned to the track in 3rd place after his spin, but another spin on lap 16 moved Wellinghoff Sr. back to 4th, where he would finish. Julie Riggen had mechanical issues with Ayers car on the opening lap and was unable to complete the race.

The racers returned to their trailers and exchanged the typical, “did you see that” banter and even got naps before the NASA awards dinner. Finally the racers retired from the track, tired but overall relieved to have all their cars in one piece.

Sanders became the dirtiest racer of the weekend when a BMW dropped a wheel off into a mud puddle right in front of the 49, literally covering the front of Sanders, the car, roll bar, helmet visor, and in car camera with mud.



Sunday, September 12, 2010

Unfortunately work commitments called Ayers back home and he would not be able to participate in Sunday's HPDE. Unfortunately this also meant Julie would not get another start. The racers ran an uneventful morning practice with Rigger setting fast time of 1:39.900 a FFR record. Sanders chose to make a tire change after practice, feeling that his Toyo RA-1's had passed their useful life. Qualifying saw Lyle set another FFR record of 1:39.442, followed by Wellinghoff Jr. 1:40.717 Sanders 1:40.736, and Wellinghoff Sr. 1:41.016. The racers enjoyed lunch and began packing up their gear to be ready to head for home immediately following the conclusion of the event.





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The race began with the inside line again being slow for the FFR Pole sitter Riggen and Sanders. Wellinghoff Jr. shot into the lead on the outside followed by Wellinghoff Sr., Riggen, and Sanders. Wellinghoff Jr. opened up a strong lead on the other racers, who battled nose to tail for position. Eventually Riggen was able to move around Wellinghoff Sr. and began running down Wellinghoff Jr., setting a NASA Factory Five lap record of 1:39.634 in the process. Halfway through the race Riggen was finally able to catch up to Wellinghoff Jr. and the 77 worked hard at driving a defensive line to hold Riggen off. As the laps wound down, Riggen and Wellinghoff Jr. raced each other hard. Each time Riggen would stick his nose in, Wellinghoff Jr. would slam the door, leaving Riggen very little room to pass. With 3 laps to go Riggen finally got it done and was able to move into first place and give himself a little breathing room. The race would finish with Riggen in first, followed by Wellinghoff Jr., Wellinghoff Sr., and Sanders (who retired early with tire issues).

After the race the drivers congratulated themselves on the weekend and set out for home.



One weekend left on the Great Lakes & Midwest schedule at Putnam Park on October 8-10, where the 2010 Great Lakes Championship will be decided. Only 10 points separate Wellinghoff Sr. and Sanders, while Wellinghoff Jr. sits only 30 points out of second place, mathematically out of contention for the championship, but still with a shot at 2nd. Will team orders come into play? Will Peter LaRose make it to an event in 2010? Will Brian ever get all that mud off his car? Tune in next month to find all these answers and more!

Gregory Wellinghoff - 77

For complete results and a list of lap records, please see www.nasamidwest.com

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