



NASA Midwest Inc.  
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## Great Lakes Racers Welcome East Coast Challenge Racers to Mid-Ohio

Friday July 15, 2011



Friday Test and Tune saw little drama as racers John George, Jim Schenck, Tom Lavell, Carl Thompson, Brian Sanders, Peter LaRose, Wayne Patterson, and Paul Arnold took advantage of the sunny weather to get some practice laps in during the day. For the East Coast Challenge racers this enabled them to get reacquainted with the track as they had not been to Mid-Ohio since 2010. Paul's son, Raife, logged some laps in Paul's car in TT before a broken rocker arm stud took the car out of commission for the remainder of Friday. John swapped cars with Wayne during the day and made some suggestions to improve the cars handling, while Paul took Jim's car out for a session to get a feeling for a different car. Factory Five builder Mark Daugherty and his son, Matt, were also in attendance. Lyle Riggen, Gregg Wellinghoff Sr. and Gregory Wellinghoff Jr. arrived in the late afternoon, bringing the total racer field to 11 cars. Todd Ayers also arrived Friday evening to HPDE his car and continue working the bugs out. The day was mostly uneventful and wrapped up with the Arnold clan heading to Jegs to source parts while the rest of the racers went to dinner at the Roadhouse. The Arnold's arrived back at the



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track around 10PM and began work on the car anew before finding another problem, a damaged lifter. They wrapped up work for the evening around 11:30 PM.

Saturday July 16, 2011

Morning saw Paul Arnold and his family on their way back to Jegs to get a replacement lifter for his car, this caused him to miss morning practice and qualifying. Practice was mostly uneventful, with the exception of Wellinghoff Jr. blowing 3<sup>rd</sup> gear out of his transmission as practice ground to a close. Fortunately for Wellinghoff Jr., his friend Greg Hall, and Matt Daugherty were able to get the transmission replaced in just under 90 minutes after the session. Saturday qualifying saw Jim Schenck flying with a 1:39.838 and John George in close pursuit just .101 behind him. Brian Sanders was in the 1:42's with Carl Thompson and Gregg Wellinghoff close behind in the 43's. Gregory Wellinghoff and Lyle Riggins (Team RT Tavi Racing) were in the 44's, Tom Lavell and Peter LaRose in the 45's, and Wayne Patterson close behind them. John and Jim were taken to the dyno as the fastest two qualifiers and Jim was found to have too much horsepower for his weight and his qualifying session was thrown out, putting him 11<sup>th</sup> on the race starting grid. Paul was finally able to get his car finished and race ready, although he would have to start 10<sup>th</sup>.





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Race time rolled around and the temperatures were hot, but far from unbearable. The race began with John jumping out to an early lead. Jim and Paul made their way through the back of the field quickly, while Gregory Jr. advanced one position per lap for each of the first 4 laps. Peter enjoyed a pucker moment as Tom spun in front of him, but some quick reaction on Peter's part saved both cars from what would have been a damaging impact. On lap 3 Gregg Sr., Gregory Jr., Carl, and Jim all arrived at the end of the backstretch and turn 3 side by side two deep. Unfortunately Jim ran out of room on the inside of Carl and side to side contact sent Carl spinning off track with damaged steering. Jim also retired with a vibration following this incident. As the field settled down it was John followed by Gregory Jr., Gregg Sr., Brian, Paul, Lyle, Wayne, Peter, and Tom. Gregory Jr. also enjoyed an anxious moment in turn 9 as he was on the outside of an overtaking SU car and an impatient AI car that lost it on the inside of the turn pushing the SU car gently into the side of Gregory Jr.'s car. Tom was then tagged in the left rear by a Viper with 3 to go resulting in a large chunk of fiberglass of the left rear to be in the middle of the track just before turn 2. A good battle between Gregg Sr. and Brian saw Gregg Sr. lock up his brakes going into turn 3 allowing Brian past in the closing laps. At the checkered flag, it was John, Gregory Jr., Brian, Gregg Sr., Paul, Lyle, Peter, Tom, Wayne, Carl. Jim was disqualified for at fault contact with Carl.







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As the racers returned to the paddock, it was obvious that the Factory Fives looked more like Spec Miatas than they did when they left. Mark, Matt and Jim spent the afternoon welding up Jim's damaged exhaust. Carl and Brian worked to replace Carl's steering rack. Tom and his crew Jason and Kent did body work on Tom's car. Gregory Jr. and his friend Greg worked on reattaching the loose sidepipe to the side of Greg's car where it impacted the SU car and then worked on a perceived rear end vibration. Paul and his clan worked on tuning his car for optimal horsepower. Finally after getting all of the cars buttoned up the racers enjoyed video projected on the side of Gregory Jr's trailer.

Sunday July 17, 2011

Sunday morning saw heavy fog at Mid-Ohio resulting in the cancellation of morning practice. The racers finally made it out for the qualifying session and John ran off the quickest time getting into the 39's – 1:39.875. Paul was just about a second behind at 40.803, Jim at 41.032, Brian at 42.876, Lyle at 43.911, and then Gregg and Carl in the 44's, Wayne, Gregory, and Tom in the 45's and Peter in the 46's. Carl found out the new rack had a VERY quick response time, so Mark helped play with the spring in the pump. After 3 iterations it went from too fast, to nothing at all, to "just about right". Peter worked on replacing his cracked front brake rotor. Gregory Jr. was still having vibration issues and troubleshooting isolated it to the replacement transmission making funny static noises inside of it.





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The race saw John and Paul battling for the lead. Gregory Jr. was able to move around Tom and Carl but spun in turn 7 falling to last. As the field came around to the keyhole for the first time Gregg Sr. tried to drive the car deep on the inside on cold brakes and tires and ended up locking up the brakes and sliding right through the keyhole to the sand trap but was able to keep going. Unfortunately Brian found himself between Gregg Sr. and the sand trap and after a little bumping and grinding ended up buried to the axles in the sand. After being extricated from the sand, Brian retired from the race with something bent in the front end. In a separate incident in the same corner Wayne spun in some oil exiting the keyhole. Gregory Jr. moved past Brian and Wayne and proceeded to chase down Tom and Peter. Up front John and Paul continued to swap positions while Jim remained in striking distance. Lyle and Carl also remained nose to tail for the entire race with a great battle going on. Paul spun on lap 10 allowing Jim by and was unable to catch back up to John and Jim. Jim was however able to catch up to John as he slowed for oil on track and they fought nose to tail up till the end. Gregory Jr. was able to close the gap on Gregg Sr. but not enough to matter as Gregg Sr. was later disqualified for his contact with Brian. At the checkered flag it was John followed by Jim, Paul, Carl, Lyle, Gregory Jr., Peter, Tom, Wayne. Gregg Sr. was DQ. Concerned with the noisy transmission, Gregory Jr. chose to put the car in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear and not shift during the entire race, amazingly enough without any shifting he ran his personal best lap around Mid-Ohio of 1:42.551.

After the race the problems didn't cease for some of the racers as Brian had a breakdown on the way back to Cincinnati. Gregory and Brian late in the evening were able to prove that Brian's truck would fit in the back of Gregory's trailer and the old Dodge workhorse got to be on the other end of the hitch for a change. Tom, who had a breakdown on the way up, did not arrive at home until Wednesday, but arrived in a new 2011 truck.

Next up for the racers is another Mid-Ohio race on August 13 and 14.

-Gregory Wellinghoff – Factory Five #77  
Pictures courtesy of Julie Rikken.