

East Coast Race 1

2012 brings big changes to the rules book, over the off-season FFR#48 got upgrades in front suspension, 3.27 rear end gears, and a whopping 110HP bump in power from the Trickflow engine upgrades. Needless to say the first race of the 2012 season at VIR March 23-25 will be a learning experience.

Friday test/tune Jim Schenck, Wayne Patterson (Mark and Brendan Dougherty tagged along to crew for Wayne), Marty Howard and I were greeted by beautiful weather. #48 ran great the first 2 sessions me getting acclimated to the changes and once again the water temperature started creeping up past 210deg! Mark Dougherty, Jim and I put our heads together and came to the conclusion that the tiny single-core radiator I've always run was not big enough to cool this engine, so we proceeded to change it out with Wayne's spare 2-core radiator. This fixed my overheating!! car ran 180-185 the rest of the weekend. Paul Kaiser arrived late Friday night at the track ready to race Sat and Sun.

Saturday the rain came in and only Marty ventured out for qualifying. The track was very green, and all of us started the race on wet tires as it was threatening for the skies to open up any second, and it didn't of course. Marty started up i think 3rd overall with the rest of the FFR clan 12-15 (Paul, me, Jim, and Wayne), green flag dropped with me between shifts giving both Paul and Jim a great run but Jim got blocked by traffic allowing Paul and I to pull away passing Marty in turn 1. I tucked behind Paul and we stayed nose to tail for a bunch of laps me trying to get around. Towards the end of the race my clutch cable was messed up causing me to mess up loosing time on Paul. With a drying track on wets Paul managed a 2:11.797, followed by me with a 2:12.055, and Jim with a 2:12.374. Marty ended in front of Wayne due to an early spin by Wayne. One thing to note about the times, the overall winner George Winkler and Chris Cobetto usually run in the 2:03's managed only 2:07's today.

Sunday qualifying was dry!! And the ffr's were on dry tires! I ran a 2:08.1 putting me on 2nd on grid, Jim right behind me with a 2:08.8. Marty, Wayne and Paul start 10-12 (Wayne forgot to tighten his radiator cap and came in right away, and Paul overslept.) For the race I will start 2nd overall, with Jim in 3rd! My qualifying time was .2 second off pole, not bad for the first time out with all the new bits on the car.

Sunday's race greeted us with rain!! Jim, Marty and I were on dry weather tires, with the rest on wets. Paul got a huge start and was on my bumper after turn 1, passed me going into the esses and never looked back. I decided to pull it in after a while to assure my car be in one piece for Sebring next weekend. Jim ran the whole race on drys finishing 2nd, Wayne 3rd, me then Marty who had a couple of spins and called it quits before me.

My next race will be at Sebring March 31-April 1. The next FFR East Coast Series race is at Summit Point end of April.

Factory Five Forum thread:

<http://thefactoryfiveforum.com/showthread.php?5377-ECS-1-March-23-25-2012-Virginia-International-Raceway>

Pictures from the weekend:

<http://www.johngeorgeracing.com/gallery/virmarch2012>

In-car videos:

Test/Tune Friday couple of laps, side view: <http://vimeo.com/39236072>

Saturday race (me chasing Paul for most of the race): <http://vimeo.com/39233326>

Sunday qualifying fastlap 2:08.138: <http://vimeo.com/39232439>

Sunday race: <http://vimeo.com/39234476>

Paul Kaiser's start Sunday from my rear camera.. nice save Paul! <http://vimeo.com/39235795>

-- John George