

George & Thompson win 3 Hour Enduro at NJMP – George wins Saturday and Sunday races

The 3rd event in the East Coast Championship had the usual Test & Tune the Friday before, with a late afternoon 3 hour Enduro, and races on Saturday and Sunday. This is the closest track for Carl and Wayne – a little over an hour, and John took the longer run down from NH. Here is the “Cliff Notes” version from Friday. The fastest lap of the day, and weekend for our cars, was done by John George in Carl’s car for the qualifying for the Enduro – 1:34.159. This set off a great deal of “checking” on John’s car – his HP #s are higher than Carl’s – so WHY. Mark & Brendan Dougherty were there helping Wayne, and investigations and changes ensued. Front springs were changed, and a “creeping” distributor was secured in the “correct” spot – back to the dyno HP again

The Enduro started at 3pm with Carl’s car grided 2nd – thanks to John’s great qualifying lap. Carl started the race and was to do 1 ½ hours or until the car sputtered getting low on gas. On the start Carl was passed by a few cars and that set the stage for the claw back – averaging around 1:37/lap – and as the gas ran out after an hour & 28 minutes, Carl headed for the pits in 1st place. There was a mandatory 5 minute pit stop for gas and driver change – disqualification if the full 5 minutes wasn’t taken. The driver change and refueling by the crack team of Mark, Brendan, Wayne, and Carl had us ready to go quickly – TOO quickly and John exited the pits 15 seconds too soon. Well, after a lot of math to determine our potential margin, discussions to compare notes with the gang in timing and scoring, realizing we would be DQed if we didn’t do another 5 minute pit stop, and realizing that we would require another splash of gas before the end, we madly waved down John to come into the pits. Wayne stood in front of the car not allowing any movement until we were sure of the timing. One of the Timing & Scoring guys who we consulted stood on the top of the tower making sure we didn’t leave too early. The one opponent – a Corvette – would have to come in for more gas. Well, they did and took their “good old time” and exited the pits before John could leave, but he was almost two laps ahead of him. When five minutes was up, John took to the track to chase the Corvette and maintain the margin. John took the checker and the team went wild – Rolex’s around for the drivers and crew – they said they would send them – I can’t wait. We all had a ball!!! There was a “tick, tick” from the engine and the thought was bent push rod, lose rocker arm, or something like that. Since we didn’t go on track until 11am the next morning, we all decided to get a good night’s sleep and attack in the morning. We all headed for the motel, John crawled under the car to make some spring changes.

We all arrived back at the track early Saturday morning to find John doing more work. We attacked Carl’s car to find the problem. It turned out to be a damaged lifter (in the attached pictures), and after fantastic work by Mark and Brendan, it was back together and ready for the 11am practice session. We all had a fair amount of track time on Friday, but the times on Saturday were not quite as good. Qualifying saw John with a 1:36.369, Carl at 1:40.400 and Wayne at 1:44.725. The grid was set and we waited around until 4pm for the start of the race. It was a large Thunder group and we were really split up. John ran away and turned a best time of 1:36.276 for the win, Carl had a 1:40.809 – but was DQed for passing under a yellow. Wayne finished second with a time of 1:44.046. So, we put the cars away and all headed out for dinner and then to bed to get ready for another HOT day on Sunday.

John decided to break in a new set of tires during the Sunday practice session and came in “singing the praises” of how good real traction feels. He turned a 1:34.239, Carl a 1:40.238, and Wayne at 1:41.657. We then had a few hours to check over the cars before qualifying. Because of the carnage during Saturday’s race, and folks leaving early, they decided to combine Lightning and Thunder into one race. Our qualifying saw John still fastest at 1:35.850, (the new track record for FFC on the Pro circuit with the chicane), Carl at 1:39.833, and Wayne at 1:42.004. But Wayne had an “OFF” and touched the wall, “skewing” the front end. So, it was a mad rush to remove the front of the car, get the sledge hammer out and move a few things around before buttoning it up before the race. We got it done just in time to head for the grid. They didn’t grid us up as a group, so we were spread out amongst all the cars. Because the pace car did a better job of keeping the initial lap slow enough to get everyone in place, we had a good start. John took off again and won with a time of 1:36.193, Carl was second at 1:39.331 and Wayne 3rd with a 1:40.660.

We all had a great time in the blistering HOT weather and were able to get plenty of “TUNE” time at NJMP. Those of you that missed NJMP may want to make an effort to come here next year. The track is challenging, and since the folks that put NJMP together are the same as VIR, the amenities and facilities are QUITE nice.

<http://www.johngeorgeracing.com/gallery/njmp2012>

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