

# SN SPEED NEWS

MAGAZINE



# SPRINT VS ENDURO

**WHY YOU SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME ON THE RACETRACK**

**SEASON KICK OFF •**

**REGION AWARDS •**



- **NEW SPEC Z SERIES**
- **AND MUCH MORE**

WELCOME TO  
**SPEEDNEWS**



**Ryan Flaherty**  
 National Chairman

Time is an amazing thing and always seems to pass quickly when you are working hard. If you are lucky, a vision can become reality with enough focused effort along with time and a dose of good luck. The past twenty years for NASA has been a solid example of people working together to achieve great things with the passing of time and great collected effort. None of our classes grew overnight to be instant successes and we are very proud that our National Championship event happened only fifteen years after hosting our first event. However, it took time and the dedicated work of many people for our regions to spread and grow across the United States. We feel very fortunate to have members like you that enjoy our approach to motorsports and chose to spend your free time with NASA.

2011 marked a significant milestone in NASA history as it was NASA's 20th year in business. Jerry Kunzman and Ali Arsham founded NASA to provide all the great things people have come to expect from our regions like easily accessible track time and well-run events but only time and great effort has allowed those ideals to become reality. During NASA's first ten years, some people thought our model was a renegade approach that would never work. Today, however, is quite different and members, partners, and sponsors alike continue to validate our model as the gold standard of motorsport operations. When I look back through time, it is easy to recall key achievements that have built our solid reputation. At the ten year mark, myself and John Lindsey became partners in this company because we believed that motorsports events can appeal to a very diverse enthusiast base if events were offered in a more contemporary way. The desire and willingness to do things different is what attracted us to NASA and gives us the inspiration to create something great! In the year 2000 we created an online registration system that remains unrivaled today and makes it very easy for members to participate. During the last ten years we launched new and innovative classes like American Iron, Honda Challenge, 944Spec, along with others that have enticed thousands of new racecar builds across the country. 2011 brought us other significant events in our evolution. Some key items from 2011 worth mentioning are; hosting our 6th annual National Championship, adding three new regions, hosting over 80 teams at the NASA 25 Hours of Thunderhill, hiring Will Faules to manage our National Championship and Greg Gill as Vice President of Marketing, and finally the creation of our own digital magazine Speed News.

NASA's tremendous growth has now given rise to the need for a more comprehensive and member centric publication than our previous small section that was hosted in each issue of Grassroots Motorsports magazine. In response to this need,

we developed a plan, hired new people, and with this issue of Speed News we feel we have delivered a product which will serve our members' needs superbly for the next decade. You are reading the first issue of many more to come that will feature all things NASA and other stories relevant to your identity as a gearhead. You will see plenty of regional news, event reports, race class features, member spotlights, driving technique stories, and features that will focus on all the great things that happen across our regions and our shared passion for the sport. NASA has always employed cutting edge technology and our new digital format will allow us to produce Speed News in a more timely fashion in order to keep the content relevant while leveraging the most advanced trends in publishing with complete video integration and connection to social networking portals. In short, we feel this new approach to Speed News will better meet our members' demand to bring more focused coverage of the excitement and passion they experience at our events along with providing a platform that will enable us to deliver greater personal exposure for our members.

This new digital NASA-centric magazine is a huge undertaking and as such we have had to evaluate what if anything needed to be changed in order to meet our member's desires while not raising costs to you. Therefore, to satisfy this requirement, stay within budget, and not raise membership fees, we have made a change to one of our member benefits, which is to discontinue sending complimentary issues of Grassroots Motorsports. Therefore, the April issue of Grassroots Motorsports will be the last issue provided by NASA to you free of charge. We have enjoyed a wonderful relationship with GRM and we hope many if not all of you will continue with them as subscribers as they do a great job covering the wider world of amateur and professional motorsports.

We trust that you will enjoy this issue and I hope that we can perhaps feature your efforts and adventures on the pages of Speed News in the near future. Thank you for supporting NASA and I can assure you that many more great things are in store for the years ahead. Only time will tell what they will be but based on past results they should be impressive!

Regards,  
Ryan Flaherty  
National Chairman





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Yes, you can race an open wheel race car in NASA. Here's how.



# EVENTS

## MARCH

9-11	Road Atlanta, Braselton, GA
10-11	Infineon Raceway, Sonoma, CA
10-11	Homestead-Miami Speedway, Homestead, FL
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23-25	Virginia International Raceway, Alton, VA
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For upcoming events : visit <https://www.nasaproracing.com/event>

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How one racer turned his tinkering into a business.



# Texas Boasts 11 Racers For Teen Mazda Challenge

NASA Texas has reached a total of 11 racers who are signed up for the Teen Mazda Challenge for the 2012 season.

The Teen Mazda Challenge race program was created to allow young race car drivers between the ages of 13 and 22 to compete in nation-

ally sanctioned road race events. The series is a step in Mazda's ladder system by which a young driver can advance from go karts through a highly competitive "spec" series, Mazda's renowned Spec Miata series. The winner of each regional series is invited to participate in Mazda's

coveted "Driver Shootout" along with champions from other Mazda based series. Last year's West Teen Mazda Champion Elliot Skeer won the Shootout and was awarded a package worth \$75,000 to compete in the 2012 Playboy Mazda MX5 Challenge Cup.

The teens do not just race amongst themselves, but are also competing at the same time with the other thirty or so Spec Miatas. The first points event is March 17th and 18th at Motorsports Ranch Cresson in Northern Texas. The Texas series will consist of 3 weekends between then and June with the second and third rounds taking place at Texas World Speedway and Hallett Motor Racing Circuit. *SN*

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### 2012 TEXAS REGION DRIVERS

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Alec Udell - Age 17

Arthur Simondet - Age 17

Collin Haun - Age 16

CJ Cramm - Age 15

Deriann Taylor - Age 16

Eva Watson - Age 17

Jack Murray - Age 17

Nicholas Reger - Age 13

Steven Farrell - Age 20

Timothy Reger - Age 15

# Spec Z

NASA is pleased to announce the creation of the new Spec Z series that will feature the Nissan 350Z®. The Spec Z class will include all trim levels of the popular 2003-2008 Nissan 350Z in a single class focused on close competition, parity and cost containment that will showcase driving ability and car setup skills.

The NASA Spec Z class will offer a comprehensive contingency prize program that will reward both Regional and National Championship competitors. Nissan Motorsports will provide significant support for the series, and their contingency prize program provides cash rewards up to \$850 for the top 3 finishers at each regional competition weekend with only 3 starters being required for the program to take effect. Additionally, Nissan Motorsports will provide \$6,500 in cash support to the top Spec Z finishers at the 2012 NASA Championships.

The BFGoodrich R1 tire will be the control tire for the Spec Z class, and BFG has also created a generous contingency prize program for the series. More contingency prize programs for the Spec Z class are being finalized



for the series and will be announced shortly.

“We are very excited about Spec Z,” said Jeremy Croiset, NASA Director of Sponsorship. “We have been working closely with Nissan Motorsports on the creation of Spec Z, and it will be an excellent series for anyone looking to step into a spec vehicle that’s fast and relatively inexpensive to build, maintain and race. With the fantastic contingency prize programs that are being provided for Spec Z, you’ll be hard-pressed to find a more rewarding spec series to race in. We look forward to watching Spec Z grow and flourish in the coming years as more racers adopt this new formula.”

Ron Stukenberg, Senior Manager, Motorsports Marketing Communications, Nissan North America agrees, and adds, “NASA has a

proven track record of growing classes from the ground up, so we are excited to be working with NASA on the new Spec Z series. We have a number of competitors already expressing interest in the series, so the potential for this series is very strong indeed. With our Nissan Motorsports Competition Parts Program and comprehensive contingency prize programs, we are looking to make this a strong offering for those interested in stepping into a very competitive spec series racing the iconic Z car.”

For complete details on the new series rules, please visit <http://www.nasaproracing.com/rules>.

For details on the newly announced contingency programs for the Spec Z series, please visit <http://www.nasaproracing.com/contingency>. **SN**

# Grab Your Helmet And Hop In!

Like many other avid race fanatics, I grew up under the misconception that only the rich could afford to get serious about racing cars. I thought that surely you had to have an expensive car, great hand eye coordination, 20/20 vision, and a complete machine shop at home. Not to mention it wouldn't hurt if your father and his father before you were famous race car drivers. It was those same untruths and many more that kept me from setting foot on what would become the journey of a lifetime some 25 years later.

My racing journey began when a good friend noticed a new car of mine sitting in the driveway and said, "Come on out with us and learn how to drive that thing." I asked, "Who is us?" to which he replied with just one, four-letter word... "NASA." Now the last thing I was going to do was get out on some track with a bunch of wild and crazy wanna-be race car drivers and risk destroying my new car. Thankfully my friend didn't give persuading me to join him at the track. Each time I saw him he was telling me about vari-

ous cars he had driven during the last few events as well as some of the more exciting races he had competed in and so on. Each time we talked I would find myself becoming more intrigued. Finally my good friend Kurt and now life-long racing buddy sat me down and helped me fill out a single page entry form to register for my first ever weekend on a race track. This was the beginning of an introduction to racing that has taken me literally around the world. What I realized in short order was that NASA's and the instruction staff was going to do their best to keep me away from getting any compromising situations. NASA was well in control of our activities, regardless of how much we thought we knew or how much we thought we needed to know. NASA was there to show us the proper way to begin enjoying motorsports and the staff was there to provide guidance and answers.

Over the next few months I hope my column will help guide new people to begin their own road to adventure and get started in the National Auto Sport Associa-



**Gary Faules**  
NASA Director of Mentoring

tion. I will share my personal experience with the readers of SPEED NEWS how I learned just how affordable and easy it was to work my way up through the ranks. By starting out in groups that allowed me to stay within my own comfort level until I was ready to take the next step however long that may be. Then I will walk you through how I began earning my rookie status which led to a race license, season championships, and yes, even first place podium finishes in world class events such as the Mexican Gran Prix and the La Carrera Panamericana which is considered one of the most grueling and dangerous races in the world. Remember... NASA made this all possible for me and they can for you too! So grab your helmet and hop in. We'll get started in First Gear.

Gary Faules,  
NASA Director of Mentoring



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# Contingency Vault: More Benefits for NASA Members

In each issue of Speed News we will highlight a different benefit NASA members receive from our partners. This month we sat down with Jeremy Croiset, NASA's Director of Sponsorship to get some insight on Toyo's NASA program.

## SN: HAS THE TOYO CONTINGENCY PROGRAM CHANGED FOR 2012?

*JC: It certainly has, and changed for the better! The new 2012 program has more than doubled the contingency dollars available to finishers in each regional Spec Toyo class race: it now pays \$1075 vs. \$400 previously. Additionally Toyo added another level of contingency rewards for drivers finishing in the 10-14th positions. Classes with 9 or more starters will benefit greatly from the revised contingency program Toyo has made available to NASA competitors.*

## SN: WHY DID THE TOYO PROGRAM CHANGE?

*JC: Toyo and NASA sat down late last year to begin working on a new contingency program for 2012 that would not only provide larger payouts but also provide rewards to a wider variety of NASA competitors. The plan was to provide a different type of contingency program from what had been traditionally offered in the past while maximizing the available contingency rewards provided for the program.*

## SN: IS THERE A REASON 10TH-14TH POSITIONS GET PAID AND 6TH-9TH DO NOT?

*JC: Yes, and the reason is simple. The idea was to provide something for NASA drivers finishing farther back in the pack. We wanted to make two different races out of the Toyo contingency program. If you typically finish somewhere in the top 7, you will most likely win some Toyo bucks for your efforts finishing in the top 5. With the new program, folks that typically finish in the 8-16th finish positions can now expect to collect contingency where as*

*before, the chances of that happening would have been very slim. So the idea here was to reward the folks that continue to show up, race, and have fun. It is VERY important to remember that midpack and back of the field drivers are directly responsible for the top 5 getting a larger contingency reward. Without the additional entries for the class, the program doesn't qualify for the higher reward levels. So, the idea was to reward the drivers that show up and make the larger fields possible because they are equally important to the overall health of the class and should also have an opportunity to collect contingency as well.*

## SN: HOW LONG DO YOU EXPECT THESE CLASSES TO REMAIN ON TOYO?

*JC: The newly announced partnership extension with Toyo Tires names them the Official Tire of NASA through 2015. I would expect the current Toyo classes to remain on Toyo for the duration of that partnership.*

**SN: SOME HAVE CLAIMED A RACER THAT WINS TWO RACES COULD EARN \$600!! IS THAT REALLY TRUE?**

JC: Yes, it is true anyone that finishes 1st place in a class of 19 or more cars will win \$300 in Toyo Bucks for both the Saturday and Sunday races (providing of course that they finish 1st on both days). \$600 is not a myth, Toyo is committed to NASA racers.

**SN: OUR RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THESE NEW BENEFITS ARE ONLY AVAILABLE TO NASA RACERS WHICH IS DIFFERENT THAN PAST YEARS. WHY THE CHANGE?**

JC: The idea with this new exclusive program is to proudly offer NASA competitors the best available contingency package in amateur road racing. The

newly announced Toyo contingency program follows that line of thinking to the letter and we are confident it provides NASA competitors with fantastic opportunities they will not find anywhere else. **SN**

## **NASA Announces Another New Addition to Leadership Team - Napa, CA**



Ryan Flaherty, NASA National Chairman, recently announced that NASA has hired well known automotive industry executive Greg Gill. “We have hired Greg as our new VP of Marketing” Flaherty stated, “I met Greg via a panel he was moderating on the future of Motorsports in Southern Cali-

fornia. I was impressed with his passion for motorsports and his history of innovative marketing solutions.” Gill added that he had been a long time admirer of the NASA organization and in particular its ability to turn so many drivers into racers. “I have been fortunate to work with many industry leading companies in the last decade but none of them have the combination of passionate members and great regions like I have seen in the NASA family.”

Flaherty noted that with the recent addition of Royal Purple as official lubricant of

NASA, plus the renewed and expanded relationship with Toyo tires NASA was gearing up for their best season ever. “We offer the best racing experience and the finest events in the country. Our hiring of Greg and the depth he brings to our management team allows us to grow NASA to the next level. Greg has been tasked with growing our membership base, enhancing our Speed News Magazine, and building our National Sponsorship Partners relationships.”

**SN**

# SCOTT GOOD NAMED AS NEW GTS DIRECTOR

NASA is pleased to introduce Scott Good as the new German Touring Series (GTS) National Director. Mr. Good, a two-time NASA GTS National Champion, hopes to expand the work he has done for the last three years as NASA's Great Lakes Region's GTS Series Director, a position in which he will continue.

"GTS is one of our marquee classes," Flaherty said. "Featuring all makes and models of German cars including Porsche, BMW, Audi, Volkswagen, and others, it is a favorite of both our racers and our fans. Scott's passion for racing in general and German cars in particular make him an ideal leader for this important and growing racing series.

**..at my very first (NASA) event I knew I'd found the place that was right for me.**

He has been instrumental in fostering class growth in his region and I expect the same great things across the country."

A life-long gear-head, Good got his first taste of competition at the age of 16 in local autocross events behind the wheel of his father's Porsche 911. "Autocross was a fantastic way to safely learn about driving a car on the limit," he says.

Fast-forward a few years to 2007 when Good joined NASA with his GTS2 Porsche 944 S2. "I'd raced with several other organizations prior to joining NASA but at my very first event I knew I'd found the place that was right for me. It was refreshingly laid back and yet carefully and thoughtfully organized. The perfect combination of fun and operational precision... I loved it."

A year later, in 2008, Good began a four-year domination of the GTS2 class, logging 36 wins, 10 track records, and two National Championships out of just 41 starts.

In 2009, he took on responsibility for GTS in NASA's Great Lakes Region and made it his mission to not



only spread the word about GTS but also to help elevate the skills of the drivers in his group. "I suppose I've always been a bit of a teacher," Good explains, "and so it was natural for me to want to help others learn what I'd already figured out. While there are lots of GTS racers that I should be learning from, there are also plenty who are relatively new to racing whom I've always felt I could help make both better and safer drivers."

Good looks forward to the challenge of his new National position. "I strongly believe that NASA's GTS series is the perfect combination of cars and rules for amateur racing and I hope to be able to prove that by building an even bigger and better national GTS contingent." **SN**

# NEW SHERIFF FOR SO CAL REGION HONDA CHALLENGE

NASA is pleased to announce that Benoit Pecqueur will take over the responsibilities of Southern California HPD Honda Challenge Series Leader from Jeremy Croiset. Mr. Pecqueur, a long time NASA racer and Honda challenge participant will now utilize the experience he's gained competing in the HPD Honda Challenge series over the past 6 years, including 5 visits to the National Championships in the HPD

Honda Challenge class to focus his attention and passion toward rules enforcement as well as increasing participation. Jeremy Croiset said "Mr. Pecqueur's passion for racing and "Joe de vivre" at each track event should provide a positive influence on the series." Mr. Croiset will remain the National Series director for the HPD Honda Challenge series. **SN**



**Benoit Pecqueur** - National Series Director HPD Honda Challenge Series

## NEW NASA SOUTH REGION?



NASA SE Regional Director Jim Pantas sent Speed News this image from NASA member James Ray. James e-mailed the following note with his picture.

"I don't think anyone can beat this as a unique place for a NASA sticker to be displayed! Please save me an XL shirt.

This picture was taken at McMurado Station, Antarctica. NASA Rules!

-James Ray  
#68 NASA-South pole!

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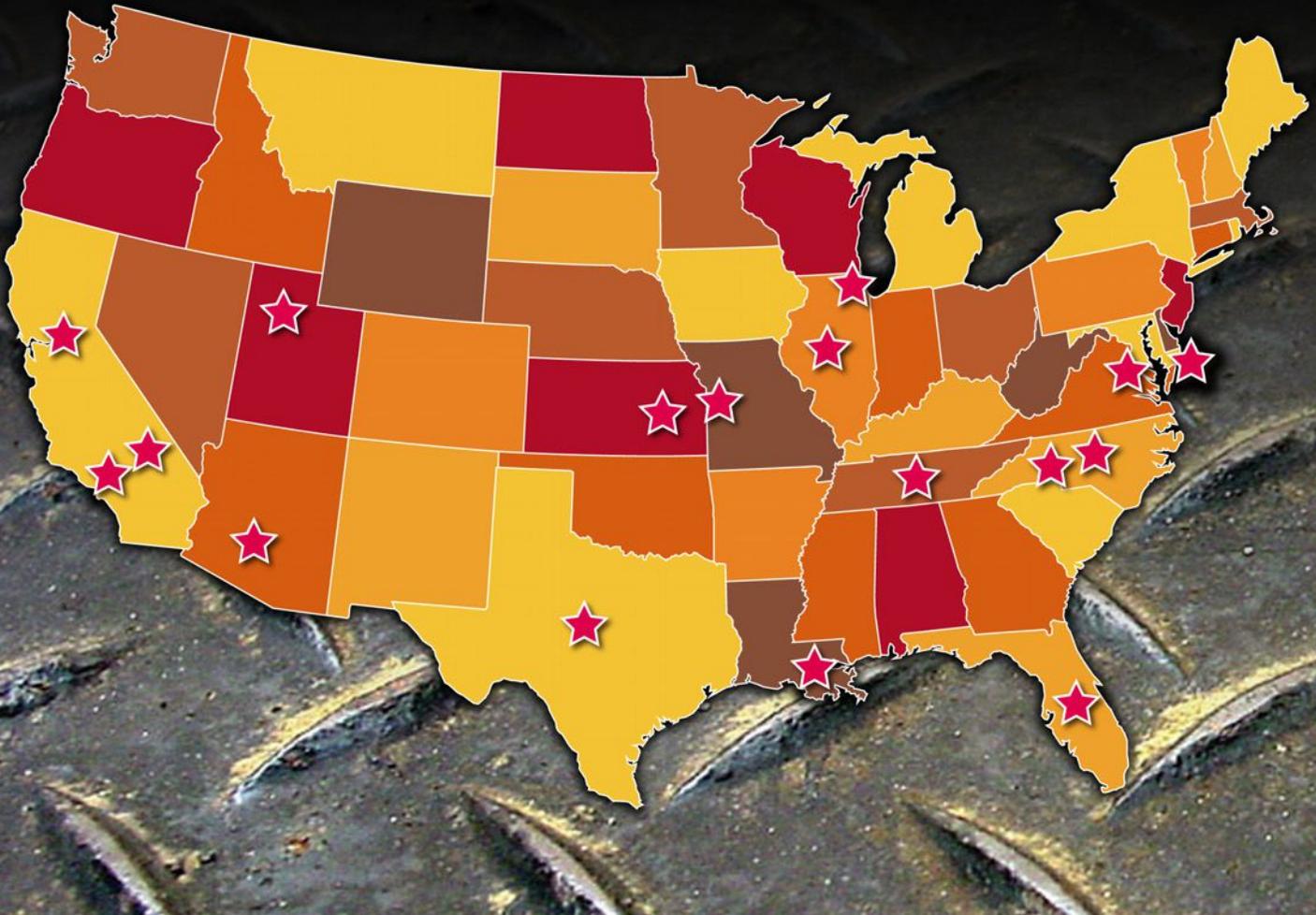
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Mt Pleasant, NC 28124  
Ph 704-436-8211  
jimpantas@nasa-southeast.com  
www.nasa-southeast.com

#### RALLY SPORT - EAST

Amy Feistel  
217 Caniff Lane  
Cary, NC 27519  
Ph 919-434-3267  
amy@nasarallysport.com  
www.nasarallysport.com

#### MID SOUTH

Shawn Taylor  
3760 Beaver Road  
Munford, TN 38058  
Ph 901-837-0659  
http://midsouth.drivenasa.com  
staylor@drivenasa.com

#### NEW ORLEANS

Kelly Warrick  
Ph 504-273-4572  
nasa@nolamotor.com

#### NASA

CHAMPIONSHIPS  
presented by Toyo Tires  
September 7-9.  
Mid Ohio Race Track,  
Lexington Ohio  
www.midohio.com



Director of  
Sponsorship:  
Jeremy Croiset



Business Ops.  
Manager:  
Dave Ho



National Event  
Manager:  
Will Faules



Medical Director:  
Greg Greenbaum

# New Comp Schools in Florida!

New for 2012 NASA Florida will be offering Competition Evaluation Schools at each event. This is how you get your license and go racing NASA style! Please click here (<http://www.nasaforums.com/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=52951>) for details and email your driving history to Jon Felton for consideration. [jfelton@drivenasa.com](mailto:jfelton@drivenasa.com)

## NEW PARTICIPANT SPECIAL:

We have a limited number of “\$75 off” coupon codes for new participants! You must be entirely new to NASA, although you don’t need to be a novice - the discount is good for any run group, but is only good for \$75 off a full weekend registration and a NASA membership when purchased simultaneously. Please contact Jon Felton ASAP to get your coupon code, supplies are limited.

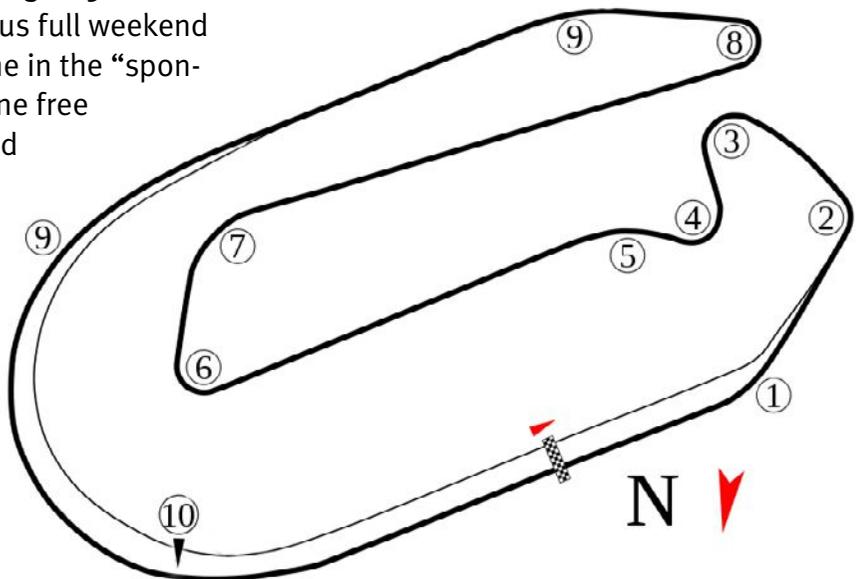
## REFERRAL SPECIAL:

Bring 5 new participants to NASA FL, get a free weekend entry! For current members/participants in any group, bring us 5 new participants (membership plus full weekend registration, listing your name in the “sponsor” field) and you will get one free HPDE/TT/roadracing weekend in the future (up to a \$429 value!) We will also have a competition to see who can bring the most new participants this season, with a nice prize TBA. Please contact Jon Felton for more information.



NASA Florida will tentatively utilize the “Pro Course” configuration at Homestead on March 10-11! This is the same layout Grand-Am will be using for their race weekend later this spring. The T3/T4 NASCAR banking promises to deliver a new challenge, as well as new opportunities for lap records. Please join us, details and registration are at <http://www.drivenasafl.com>

NASA Florida is proud to host the BMW Car Club of America’s first Club Race of the season at Sebring on March 31-April 1! We are looking forward to sharing good times both on the track and in the paddock with a fine group of BMW racers. Please join us, details and registration are at <http://www.drivenasafl.com> **SN**



# Kansas City - NASA Central Winter Gathering: A Huge Success!

NASA Central Region's Winter Gathering on February 4 at The Peanut in Kansas City was a huge success with 45 people from 4 different states attending. Friends new and old came together for good food and great conversation. The best part of the event was the large number of new NASA enthusiasts that came out to learn what we have to offer. Great things are ahead for NASA Central in 2012!



**" I could not be happier with the new enthusiasts and old friends and their excitement about what we have in store for 2012."**

Also in attendance were three owners of NASA Central Tech Shops, Greg Smith and David Long of Santa Fe Garage in Independence, MO,

Doug Low of Service Automotive in Wichita, KS and Jesse Prather of Jesse Prather Motorsports in Topeka KS. They were able to meet with drivers, discuss what they have to offer and enjoy some serious bench racing.

Region Director Todd Smith said, "I could not be happier with the new enthusiasts and old friends and their excitement about what we have in store for 2012. We continue to grow and bring new drivers into the sport, which is what NASA is all about."

NASA Central Region's 2012 season kicks off with a crossover event with the NASA Mid South Region at the newly reopened Gateway Motorsports Park on April

14-15. Event sign up can be found at <http://www.nasaproracing.com/event/1426>. Contact us at [www.DriveNASACentral.com](http://www.DriveNASACentral.com). **SN**

## REGION DIRECTORS

**Matt Rivard**  
Region Director

**Todd Smith**  
Region Director

**CONTACT:**  
**Bryan Cohn**  
Chief of Driver Operations

NASA Central  
[bryancohn@drivenasacentral.com](mailto:bryancohn@drivenasacentral.com)  
316 440 2955

# NASA Texas-2011 Special Awards and 2011 Champions

The 2011 Awards Party was held on Saturday evening during the MSR Houston season opening event. NASA Texas took a gamble on the weather and had an outside dinner and party. Due to clear skies and tolerable temperatures, the crowd of 250 or so enjoyed a catered dinner under the stars. In addition to the trophies presented to the 2011 series podium finishers, NASA Texas was proud to present three special awards.

Rookie of the Year was awarded to SpecMiata racer Steven Farrell. Steven's first rookie race wasn't until April, but his consistent top finishes resulted in a season end position of 6th place in a field of nearly 70 SpecMiata racers. Being that Steven is still in college, he has a long career in front of him and will be challenging for those top championship spots for many years to come.

NASA Texas Staff Member of the Year went to Ken Brewer, the region's Assistant Time Trial Director. Ken is a staple of any NASA event and can usually be found running from Driver Info to grid and then back to a provi-

sional Time Trial participant's passenger seat for an evaluation ride. As time permits, he still manages to jump into his own car to compete in the TTD and TTE categories. Ken's dedication at track and between events helping our competitors have the best experience they can possibly have is a perfect example of what we value in our staff.

The base and supporting structure of any NASA regional organization is an excellent HPDE program. The NASA HPDE Instructor is one of the folks out on the front line and are arguably one of the most visible faces of NASA. Being brand new in an HPDE program can sometimes be overwhelming and the HPDE Instructor has a huge effect in the experience someone comes away with. The ideal NASA Instructor is friendly, outgoing, helpful and has great feedback from their students. While there were so many to choose from in 2011 making it a very hard decision, NASA Texas Regional Directors felt that Joe Woodhead rose to the top of the list. Joe was named Instructor of the Year **SN**

## 2011 NASA TEXAS SEASON CHAMPIONS

944Spec - Kevin Webb

American Iron -  
Marshall Mosty

American Iron Extreme -  
Casey Holdway

CMC - Nicholas Runyon

CMC2 - Michael Mosty

GTS2 - Jake Hennig

GTS3 - Kevin Mixon

GTS4 - Jay Matus

GTS5 - Buck Floyd

GTSU - Michael Mills

Legends - James Spann

PTB - Mike Ledinski

PTD - Wyatt Brennan

PTF - Tony Lee

SSM - Mike Bell

SpecMiata - Brett Gabriel

Super Touring 1 -  
Jose Carreras

Super Touring 2 -  
Rene Molina

Super Unlimited -  
Eric Purcell

# Sportscar Performance to Provide Tire Service and Sales at NASA Texas Events

NASA Texas is pleased to announce that Sportscar Performance of Arlington, TX will be providing tire service for the major NASA Texas events in 2012. The 40 foot transporter of Sportscar Performance will be a welcome sight at NASA events.

The owner of Sportscar Performance is Mike Sauce, a long time racer in the Texas area. His 25 year background of supplying and servicing race tires combined with his own racing successes makes him a valuable resource at

any event. "My understanding of chassis dynamics allows me to help my customers get the most performance from their tire choices. I am really looking forward to offering our service at NASA events in 2012", says Sauce.

Sportscar Performance is the appointed Hoosier and Goodyear racing tire sales and service dealer for Texas. In addition to supporting the many cars running these brand of tires in NASA's Super Touring, GTS and Time Trials classifications, they want

to remind everyone that they are there for all participants. Dave Balingit, Regional Director for NASA Texas added, "Regardless of the tire brand you are running and whether you are a new HPDE driver or an experienced racer or TT competitor, Mike will be there for all your tire service needs." **SN**

Sportscar Performance  
317 West Division Street  
Arlington, TX 76011  
817-860-1985  
saucmik@aol.com

## NASA Northeast has their 2011 Awards Banquet

145 guests had a great time catching up and sharing the racing stories from the past season at the Avenue A club in Newark NJ. Awards were presented to all class winners and door prizes were donated by: Hawk Brakes, Stable Energies, VAC Motor-

sports, Turner Motorsports, Monticello Motor Club, and On Track Insurance.

In addition to the race trophies Joe Casella was presented a special honor from Dave Hary of SMAX Intercoolers in recognition for his dedication to the race com-

munity. Dave said "without his hard work, guidance and perseverance this organization wouldn't be where it is today". The trophy was made from one of Dave's H.R.E. wheels from his winning Nissan Silvia. **SN**



# NASA SoCal 2011 Champions

Over 165 NASA SoCal drivers, friends, and family celebrated the 2011 season champions at Santa Anita Raceway in Arcadia, CA. The picturesque clear winter day with horse racing served as a fitting backdrop to look back at the previous season and recognize individual achievements. Our 2011 Season Champions can be found here: <http://socal.drivenasa.com/points/> but special mention should go to those that do not always grace the racing charts. These are people that focus on making sure people have an excellent experience at a NASA event. Regional Director Ryan Flaherty honored the following people for making special contributions to the region. **SN**



## SPECIAL AWARDS



**TC McNett**  
Memo Gomez Role Model

**Shawn Meze**  
Official of the Year

**Corey Weber**  
Director's Choice

**Joshua Allan**  
Instructor of the Year

# NASA Mid-Atlantic

At their first race of 2012 NASA Mid-Atlantic celebrated their 2011 Champions along with special awards in the categories of Spirit, Rookie, Worker, Dedication, Good Samaritan, Purist, and Director **SN**

## 2011 NASA MID-ATLANTIC CLASS CHAMPIONS AND FINAL POINTS:

<i>AI</i>		<i>SPEC 3</i>	
<i>Chris Cobetto</i>	<i>1183</i>	<i>Anders Skandsen</i>	<i>1085</i>
<i>Beau Dunnivant</i>	<i>916</i>	<i>Michael D'Abreu</i>	<i>1030</i>
<i>Robert Korzen</i>	<i>872</i>	<i>Jon McAvoy</i>	<i>1015</i>
<i>CMC2</i>		<i>E 30</i>	
<i>Team Odie's</i>	<i>1162</i>	<i>Robert Grace</i>	<i>1185</i>
<i>Al Wheatley</i>	<i>1133</i>	<i>Robert Gagliardo</i>	<i>1030</i>
<i>Bill Purdy</i>	<i>1108</i>	<i>Andrew Zimmerman</i>	<i>891</i>
<i>GTS1</i>		<i>SM</i>	
<i>David Gibson</i>	<i>980</i>	<i>Adam Molaver</i>	<i>945</i>
<i>Madison Whittle</i>	<i>913</i>	<i>Brian Coates</i>	<i>762</i>
<i>Willian Repass</i>	<i>865</i>	<i>Alan Olson</i>	<i>758</i>
<i>GTS2</i>		<i>SSM</i>	
<i>Donald Weymer</i>	<i>935</i>	<i>Timmy Tyrrell</i>	<i>1155</i>
<i>Jim Khoury</i>	<i>785</i>	<i>Glenn Evans</i>	<i>1025</i>
<i>Jason Crist</i>	<i>733</i>	<i>Joe Pattarozzi</i>	<i>796</i>
<i>GTS3</i>		<i>PTE</i>	
<i>Joshua Smith</i>	<i>1100</i>	<i>Stephen Harpe</i>	<i>1125</i>
<i>Jeffrey Curtis</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>Wade Jackson</i>	<i>985</i>
<i>Kyle Bacon</i>	<i>750</i>	<i>Xavier Calderon</i>	<i>924</i>

## SPECIAL AWARDS

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic , Rookie of the Year  
Anders Skandsen

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic, Spirit of NASA  
Justin and Casey Gallamore

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic, Worker of the Year  
Sacha Elliott

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic , Dedication Award  
James "JJ" Johnson

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic , Directors Award  
James and Elyse Politi

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic, Good Samaritan Award  
Mike Tharpe

2011 NASA Mid-Atlantic , Purist Award  
Jon Felton

# NorCal 2012 Annual Banquet



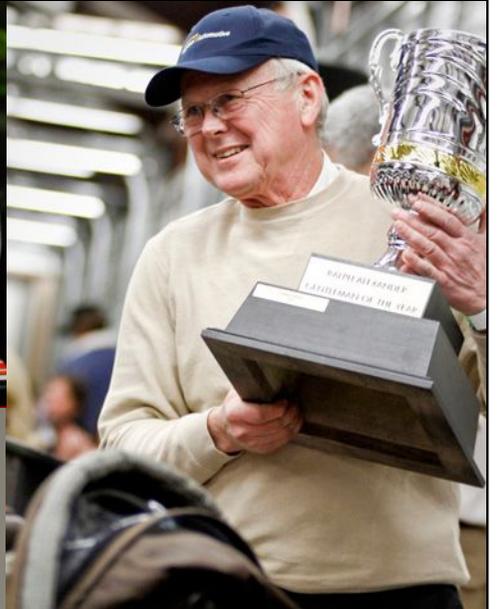
It was that time of year again, a start of a new racing season and time for Nor Cal Region to celebrate 2011 and kick off 2012 with their annual Banquet, which took place February 11th at Infineon Raceway. The Nor Cal Region knows how to celebrate, and did so with a fantastic showcase of food paired with beverage service of all sorts.

Nor Cal Region is very much like a giant family. To great misfortune they lost one of their closest, Ralph Alexander in the latter part of 2011. His son, Jon Alexander, took time to share stories about his father, great memories they had together and how Ralph would forever be remembered in the region as a generous contributor of his own time, his heartfelt dedication, and his friendship.

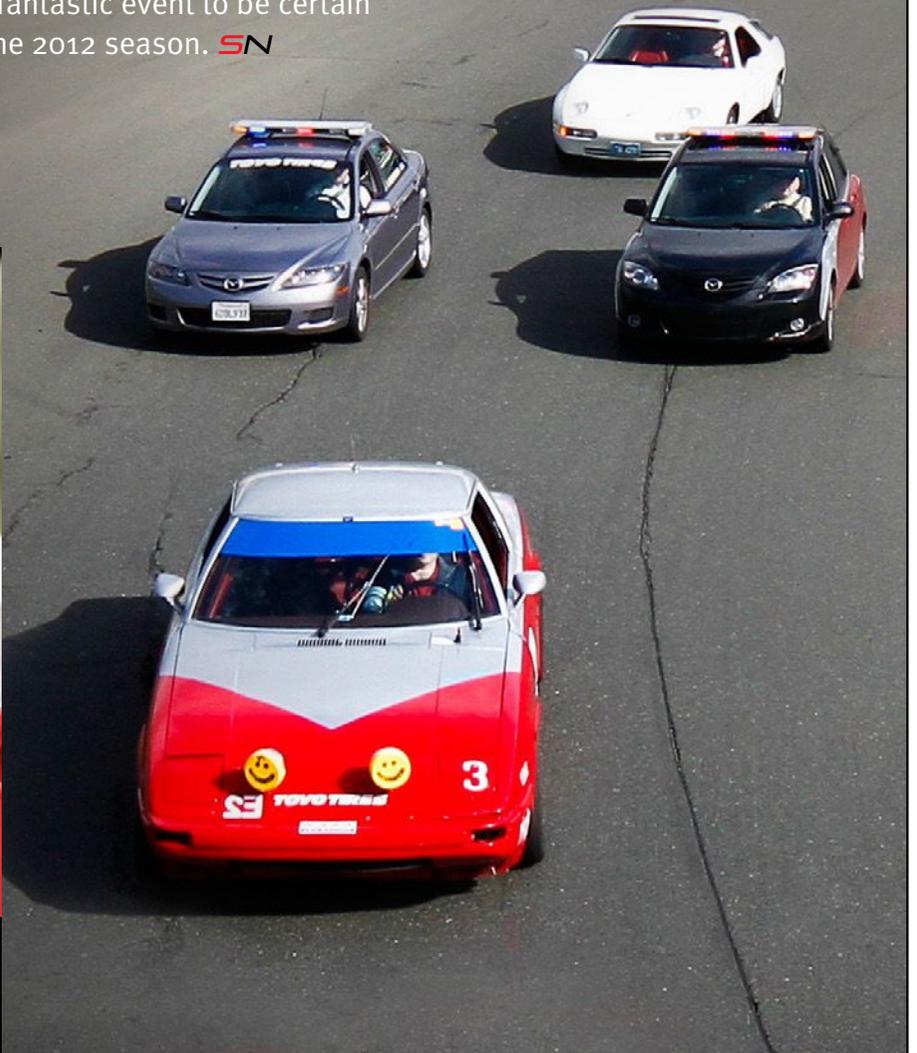
Earlier in the day Nor Cal took time to run several memorial laps dedicated to Ralph, with his son Jon leading the group in his father's RX-7 race car.

In addition to 2011 Championship awards, Nor Cal





presented a number of handcrafted awards to officials and volunteers of special achievement. While Jerry Kunzman did much of the speaking, he too was presented with a generous gift signed by everyone in the Nor Cal family. Much of the banquet was not only to present awards, recognize achievement and dedication of service, but also to bring drivers and officials together in a casual setting (without the roar of race engines.) It was a fantastic event to be certain and a great way to kick start the 2012 season. **SN**



Jerry gives Safety Worker Christine Cooley a hug.



# REBIRTH OF A SERIES

By Michael Dearstyne -  
NASA-SE 944 Spec Series Director

Getting started in NASA was the beginning of a great adventure. It was also becoming apparent that by choosing a 944 it would be the start of a very lonely adventure. 944 Spec in the Southeast was for all practical purposes dead. However as my progression was made through the ranks

of HPDE, friendships were made with likeminded people who also enjoyed driving a 944. As our track group grew to 5 by the end of November, 2011 we began to plan our rebuilding of the 944 Spec series in the NASA-SE region. As the only licensed driver with a legal car I was made our unofficial leader.

Knowing we could not do

anything without the blessings of the local and national directors, the plan was set in action. I approached NASA-SE Regional Director Jim Pantas with our proposal to make 944 Spec viable again and he was all for it. Jim put me in touch with the 944 Spec national Director Eric Kuhns. Eric was excited to see the renewed interest in the Southeast. I was

**“The main focus was, as always, our singular purpose - grow our series..”**



officially named the NASA-SE 944 Spec series Director in December of 2011.

The next step was to get more people interested in our series again. We felt if people could see us as a group that was enthusiastic and supportive then maybe they would want to join the fun. Having followed the [944spec.org](http://944spec.org) forums we liked how some of the other regions would hold build parties to help get a racer ready. So what better way to launch the new series then to hold a build party. We purchased a project car and even installed a lift in our club house (a converted chicken house we call The Chicken Shack) to further help us pull people together and establish a foundation.

The Friday night before the big day our small group planned out the next day's

events and what we wanted to accomplish. While the initial purpose was to rebuild a motor and gut the donor car, that became secondary. The main focus was, as always, our singular purpose - grow our series.

Saturday morning came early and we all headed to the Chicken Shack not really knowing how many would show up and if there were any really interested. By the end of the build day, we were all excited that the day turned out to be so productive. We did pull the engine out, rebuild it and reinstall within the same day and also gutted the interior. New friendships were formed and new potential racers joined our group aided by the bevy of giveaways supplied by Jim & Julie Pantas. NASA-SE had graciously given us hats, decals, schedule magnets and even

\$100 discount coupons to first time racers.

Throughout the day, stories were told as we worked on parts of the car. At the end of the day, we opened some beers and celebrated the success. We had succeeded in promoting our series and by all accounts have increased our numbers by at least 3 that day. Our group now has the potential of reaching 10+ licensed drivers and cars by 2013.

While it is a great start, we are not resting. A new build party is in the works for our project car as well as another member's car the weekend of Feb. 25-26. We also have some track promotions planned for the March Road Atlanta race. If you are interested in the 944 Spec series please feel free to get ahold of me at [944Spec@nasa-se.com](http://944Spec@nasa-se.com). **SN**

# SPRINT VS ENDURO

## Why you should try to spend more time on the racetrack. — by Rob Krider

If you're a NASA road racer, over time you've probably refined your qualifying methods and your rolling/standing start skills. You know exactly how much gas to put into your tank to finish a 25-minute sprint race. You enjoy going out, laying down some quick aggressive laps, making a few passes and seeing the checkered

flag wave. It feels good to cross the finish line and put a race behind you. But once the adrenaline leaves your veins, you realize it's over. You towed for three hours to get to the track, worked on the car for a week, and after 25 minutes it's done. An episode of *Modern Family* lasts longer than that. What if there was a way for you to get more seat time, more bang for your buck, and more moments drifting around corners with a smile on your face? Good news, there is, it's called endurance racing and NASA already has a class that your car will fit in.

Endurance races give drivers from 3-hours up to 25-hours of seat time. Just one 3-hour enduro is more green flag race time than six sprint races combined.

Besides the obvious benefit of tons of seat time, endurance racing also brings other advantages, like car sharing, cost sharing, teamwork, driver skill evaluation, new racing experiences and camaraderie with the endurance racing community. If you've seen those cars cruising around in the paddock with the insane headlamp setups and always wondered what it would be



like to run an endurance event here are a few reasons why you should give it a try.

### Sharing Costs:

Running a racecar is expensive and nobody is trying to convince you otherwise. If you liked cheap hobbies you would play Frisbee golf. But you like the smell of race gas over patchouli oil, so it's off to the racetrack for you. But just getting to an event is pricey. And it isn't just the renewable items like tires, brake pads, rotors and race fuel. It is expensive to just make it to the track with car trailers, motorhomes, and bologna sandwiches. Endurance racing, as opposed to sprint racing, takes multiple drivers and multiple drivers equal multiple wallets. I have found I could make it to a lot more events while sharing the costs with a few friends. Plus, we also shared the workload on a single car. It is a lot easier to complete all of the tasks a racecar needs and balance a personal and professional life when there are two to six guys are working on the car, as opposed to staying up all night wrenching in the freezing cold garage by yourself.

### Driving Technique:

Stop spending all of your tax refund on a bigger sway bar, a lighter battery or a hotter ECU tune. Sure, these things

can make your car marginally faster, but I have found that the cheapest part to make faster in a racecar is the driver. Inherently, racecar drivers are egomaniacs that think that nobody can drive their car faster than they can. Wanna bet? One of the best things I ever got from endurance racing was sharing a car on the same day, in the same conditions, on the same track with other drivers on my team. What did I learn? Well, it turns out I'm not the fastest thing that ever happened to the automobile like I had previously thought. But once I came to the earth shattering conclusion that I wasn't "the greatest," I started to communicate with my team and ask questions like: "What gear are you in at the end of the straight?" "What line are you taking for Turn 3?" "Can you tell me why I suck?"

Ken Myers, from I/O Port Racing Supplies, installed a TraqMate in our car at the 25 Hours of Thunderhill and then there was no debate about who was faster and where. We looked at the data and I made the adjustments necessary so that during the race I was able to improve. Without the experience of driving on an endurance team I never would have gleaned the knowledge that I needed to improve. I didn't get that insight until I compared my driving style (foot down, eyes closed) to that of better drivers (smooth,

eyes open) that I have had the pleasure of racing endurance events with.

### New Racing Experiences:

Endurance racing gives drivers the opportunity to experience things that are generally unavailable to sprint racers like dynamic pit stops and night racing. Even as a road racer doing sprint races I didn't know what it was like to pull into a pit stall for a tire change like a NASCAR driver or race at night like the teams at the 24 Hours of Daytona. After one NASA endurance event I had the chance to do both and I had a whole new respect for each discipline. It would take two novels to explain what night racing is like. Some people love it, some people hate it. Most endurance races have a daylight and nighttime stint so different drivers on a team can decide who hates racing at night the least. Pit stops are fun and bring a whole new competitive component to the race. I have found it's easier to bring friends to a race to "help" during a weekend if they get to go over the wall and really be a part of something. It is exciting for them and they get to go home and talk about how they pit crewed for a racing team. Driver swaps, fueling, and adding lights are hectic and dramatic moments in racing. This is something that sprint racers just don't get a chance

» To go endurance racing you need to have friends. I'm not talking about your Facebook friends, real friends, ones who are willing to jump over the wall and smell like gasoline.



ROB KRIDER

Glowing brake rotors and bright headlights are a staple of night racing. From this photo we learned our back brakes were cold, which means they DON'T DO JACK! 🙄



GOTBLUEMILK

« NASA classes like Honda Challenge and Spec E30 are perfect candidates to roll into NASA endurance racing class E3. Just add lights.



VANHAP PHOTOGRAPHY

to try. The only catch here is you need to have friends. It helps if those friends are as crazy as you are about cars and racing. Good news, there are a hundred of them running HPDE during the day. A lot of our crew were HPDE guys who stayed after their sessions and worked on the pit crew with us. They were stoked to be part of a “real” race team and we were glad to have the help.

### Camaraderie:

One of my favorite endurance race memories was a NASA WERC series night event at Buttonwillow where I had an epic night battle while driving a Nissan Sentra SE-R against Shawn Sampson

from Sampson Racing Communication in his Mazda Miata. I think we were both gunning for something really important like fifth place out of six cars in class. Regardless, we were dicing through the darkness, passing each other, running off the race surface and dusting each other. This went on for over an hour and it was epic. My team was on my radio (coincidentally purchased from Sampson) screaming at me, “Stop racing this guy so hard. Don’t wreck the car!” Somehow Shawn and I (as well as our cars) survived the event and we each took the checker. Shortly after, I was strolling through the paddock with a cold beer

in my hand and Shawn began to quickly walk toward me. For a second I was nervous, I had committed some questionable passing maneuvers out in the dark and I wasn’t sure how he took to that sort of stupid driving. Were we going to be besties or was he going to start shouting at me? He approached me with a big smile and said, “That was awesome!” I knew right then and there we’d be friends for a long time and that NASA endurance racing had a great group of folks to play with. If you’ve been on the fence on trying an endurance race, don’t hesitate, it’s a blast and the people are fantastic.

» Troy Lindstrom enjoys a victory shot with his crew after winning overall at a 3-hour enduro at Buttonwillow Raceway. Smiles are abundant after finishing a hard night race.



VANHAP PHOTOGRAPHY

“ Endurance racing gives drivers the opportunity to experience things that are generally unavailable to sprint racers . ”

« It's not all Spec Miatas and Spec E30s, prototypes come out and play too in the ESR class. Historically they are wicked fast but struggle with making it to the finish of a long race.



VANHAP PHOTOGRAPHY

## VIDEO SPOTLIGHT WESTERN ENDURANCE RACING CHAMPIONSHIP AT BUTTONWILLIOW RACEWAY PARK JUNE 25, 2011



# National Auto Sport Association (NASA) Western Endurance Racing Championship (WERC):

NASA runs an endurance racing points championship on the West Coast with the season finishing at the longest closed course road race in existence, The 25 Hours of Thunderhill presented by the United States Air Force. For the 2012 season the WERC series will have 7 events at 3 different challenging courses (Thunderhill, Buttonwillow and the world

famous Infineon) with 6 different classes: ESR, ES, EO, E1, E2, and E3. Most cars running NASA sprint races fall right into the endurance classes and need little to no modification to run an endurance race other than lights for night events. If you don't want to invest in lights, try a daytime enduro and see what you think. My money says you will love it. *SN*

NASA WERC SERIES		
March 11, 2012	Infineon Raceway	4-hour enduro (day)
April 21, 2012	Buttonwillow Raceway Park	3-hour enduro (day/night)
May 20, 2012	Thunderhill Raceway Park	4-hour enduro (day)
June 23, 2012	Buttonwillow Raceway Park	3-hour enduro (day/night)
September 30, 2012	Infineon Raceway	3-hour enduro (day)
October 13, 2012	Buttonwillow Raceway Park	3-hour enduro (day/night)
December 7-9, 2012	Thunderhill Raceway Park	25-Hours of Thunderhill (day/night)





## Endurance Racing across the NASA Regions

### WESTERN ENDURANCE RACE CHAMPIONSHIP

- March 11, 2012, 4hr day, Infineon Raceway
- April 21, 2012, 3hr day/night, Buttonwillow Raceway
- May 20, 2012, 4hr day, Thunderhill Raceway
- June 23, 2012, 3hr day/night, Buttonwillow Raceway
- September 30, 2012, 3hr day, Infineon Raceway
- October 13, 2012, 3hr day/night Buttonwillow Raceway

### USAF 25 HOURS OF THUNDERHILL RACEWAY

- December 7-9, 2012

### SOUTHEAST ENDURANCE

- Friday March 9, 2012 - 3 hrs - Road Atlanta
- Friday June 15, 2012 - 3 hrs - Road Atlanta
- Friday Nov 30, 2012 - 8 hrs - Road Atlanta

### ARIZONA ENDURANCE

- December 1, 2012 3hr - Chuckwalla Valley Raceway

### GREAT LAKES / MIDWEST ENDURANCE

- April 20, 2012 - Autobahn CC, 3 hr
- May 11, 2012 - Putnam Park, 3 hr
- July 13, 2012- Autobahn CC 3 hr
- September 14, 2012 - Autobahn CC 4.5 hr into the night
- October 26, 2012 - Autobahn CC TBD hr (6-8)

### TEXAS ENDURANCE

- April 27, 2012 3hr Texas World Speedway
- October 7, 2012 2hr ERC
- November 9, 2012 4hr NOLA

### NORTHEAST

- May 25 2hr at Thunderbolt, NJMP
- Friday October 26 ta NJMP

### UTAH

- March 31st: 3 hour enduro (MMP Outer Course)
- October 27th: 3 hour enduro (MMP Outer Course)

# OPEN OPPORTUNITY

## How To: Getting Started in Open Wheel Competition

### BUT FIRST!

**CAN I GO OPEN WHEEL RACING WITH NASA?** Yes you can...

The Formula Car Challenge presented by Goodyear is a multiple-region series with an annual NASA sanctioned national championship. The series features a multi-class format. All classes are powered by Mazda and equipped with Goodyear Racing tires.

The Formula Car Challenge presented by Goodyear is a stepping stone series for up-and-coming racers as well as a race series for serious enthusiasts. Graduates have won the Sebring 12 Hour, the Star Mazda Championship, and competed in Indy Lights.

### MY BIASED OPINION: GRAIN OF SALT REQUIRED

The company I work for owns a professional race team ([www.worldspeed.com](http://www.worldspeed.com)), manufactures a spec open wheel

racecar ([www.formulaspeed.us](http://www.formulaspeed.us)), and promotes an open wheel racing series. ([www.FormulaCarChallenge.com](http://www.FormulaCarChallenge.com))

As such, I am a big proponent of our products as they were developed specifically because our company sees the value in their underlying philosophies. Your mileage may vary...

### SELECTING A RACECAR: SPEC OR OPEN?

There are many types and classes of open wheel race-



BRETT CROWLEY-CRAWFORD

cars on the market and a variety of sanctioning bodies that handle them. You should ask yourself, is my goal to race in competitive equipment or do I enjoy tinkering even more than the actual racing?

If you enjoy tinkering even more than racing you will want to investigate some classes that allow for tinkering. The Formula 1000 class and Formula Atlantic classes are fairly open and you can invent all kinds of things to make them faster. The thing you should be aware of is that your competitors also have that opportunity and soon you are either in an uncompetitive car or you are buying the engine or aero kit of the week. If you always want to be in competitive equipment, you should consider a spec car. What is a 'spec car'? It is a car that allows for adjustments and tuning but very few if any changes to the stock parts that the car was delivered with. Being spec does not mean the car is slow. As a matter of fact, some of the fastest cars in racing are spec cars. The Indy Lights series utilizes spec cars and those cars are faster than most of us are comfortable going!

"Spec cars are ideal for both driver development and racing as the nature of the cars helps keep costs down and reliabil-



Mark Milazzo - Operations Manager World Speed Inc.

ity up," notes Standing Start Driver Coach Scott Bradley. "Seat time is critical to both the developing driver and the driver looking to have fun on the weekend. With reliable engines and proper preparation the drivers are spending their time on the track and not in the garage area waiting for their car to be repaired."

### WORK WITH A TEAM? OR DO IT YOURSELF?

A professional open wheel team will certainly make your life easier and let you focus on driving. Another benefit of working with a team is their knowledge base of the cars, tracks, and logistics. If possible, it would be best to work with a team your first season so that you can at least get a first hand view on how things

should be done.

If you decide to do it on your own you can save a reasonable amount of money once you get past the capital expenses of tools and an appropriate transport rig. Some drivers really enjoy doing all of their own work. If this is you, then you should consider a car that is simple to work on, as you will be both the mechanic and driver on the weekends. While it may be fun to work on your racecar at home in preparation for the weekend, it will be highly stressful to be wrenching on your car in between sessions if the work required is time consuming and the time between sessions is short. We have all seen or been these guys; they are the drivers that are buttoning up the car and their driver's suit at the last second on the grid.

If you are considering doing it all yourself due to budgetary constraints, you could consider a hybrid program. Is there a professional team that can do the car preparation and transport for you and you can handle the at track work? Or maybe a professional can be hired to assist you on the

weekends and you can handle all the work at home. Ask around, talk to drivers and teams and see if you can find an appropriate deal for your goals and budget.



## SELECTING A SERIES: REGIONAL OR NATIONAL?

Drivers looking to make a career in motorsports can participate in a series like the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and race in front of the IndyCar Series crowds every single weekend. The series travels all over North America and a typical budget for the season is about \$400k. An open wheel minded driver would eventually want to be at this level, but should consider developing their skills in a regional series that will get them more track time at a considerable

savings. A typical open wheel racer who does it all themselves in a spec class will spend around \$25k per season and approximately \$50k if they have a team take care of everything. If they really want to spend \$400k in their development seasons they can race in a regional series AND do over 100 test days. Do you think that would be a good investment in improving their open wheel skills?

## SPONSOR PROCUREMENT — YOU CAN DO THIS!

This is important to work on if you are ANY type of racer. Most racers start looking for

a full season sponsor and start shotgunning information packets out to every big company they've heard of. I have never seen a deal like this turn into anything. It does usually make the local print shop owner happy though.

Use your current contacts to your advantage: We all know people that are either working at a business or own a business. I make a list of these people and put them into a priority order based on my current relationship with them. Then I rate them based on where they are in the company. The last rating is how big of a company the target is.

## VIDEO SPOTLIGHT

GOPRO FORMULA CAR CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY GOODYEAR GRAND PRIX AS THEY RACE IN FRONT OF THE IZOD INDYCAR SERIES DURING THE 2011 GRAND PRIX OF SONOMA.



Ask yourself, “what does this company need, and how could I help them?”

Now what do WE need to go racing?

## START SMALL AND BUILD MOMENTUM:

Let’s start with a low cost need and work up from there. I know for a race weekend I need coffee (secret is that I need it when it isn’t a race weekend too.) Could I get the local insurance guy that I spend THOUSANDS of dollars with every year to commit to a \$100 Starbucks Gift Certificate every month? I’m sure I could and I know you can too. We’ll that just put \$1200 in our pocket for the season! Ask him for a handful of his business cards and see if you can’t get 2 or 3 of your other contacts to switch over to his company. Maybe you could come up with an additional commission for any new business. Once you do 2 or 3 of these smaller deals, you will find it addicting and you will

be fine tuning your networking and salesmanship skills. Move up your contact ladder, and see what you can come up with. Be creative and keep in mind that every deal should be great for you AND your sponsor.

By the way, I only used the word sponsor for this section to get your attention. When you are looking for financial help with your racing program you should refer to it as and treat it as a PARTNERSHIP.

## MARKETING PARTNERSHIP CARE — DON’T TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN!

Here is what you should do for your sponsors in addition to what is in the contract. Firstly, keep them informed during the season. A quick update 3 or 4 times per season that lets them know what you are doing to promote their products or services goes a long way. Invite them to events, and maybe do a feature article or ad on your

**SPONSORSHIP:**  
Be creative and keep in mind that every deal should be great for you AND your sponsor.

website/newsletter/blog to give them additional exposure. Check in with them to see if they would like you to bring the racecar out to their business for a special event or sale. Even if they don’t take you up on any of your offers they will appreciate that you are WORKING to get them more exposure.

I have seen many lucrative sponsor deals die in year two as the driver took the funds and went racing. Twelve months later they called the sponsor to request money again. The sponsor is not your personal bank, they are your business partner. Treat them as such. **SN**

For more information about the World Speed Motorsports visit:  
[www.WorldSpeed.com](http://www.WorldSpeed.com)

The screenshot shows the website 'The Official World Speed Motorsports Website - Winning: it's what we do'. The URL is 'http://worldspeed.com/iwanttorace.htm'. The page features a navigation menu on the left with links: HOME, TEAM, CORE VALUES, RACING, SERVICES, PORSCHE, CAR SPECIFICATIONS, CARS FOR SALE, NEWS, SOCIAL MEDIA, MULTIMEDIA, ALUMNI, SHOPPING, I WANT TO RACE, FAQ, and LINKS. The main content area includes a photo of a man in a white shirt and sunglasses talking to a driver in a red and white open-wheel race car. Below the photo is the heading 'GETTING STARTED IN RACING' followed by text: 'Everybody wants to feel like a Formula One or Indy 500 pilot, and this is the way to live that dream. A great place to get started is by working with a school. You can use their cars and get some very good instruction on the basics and there are formula car racing schools within a days drive from almost anywhere in the country. Once you are comfortable it is time to consider where you really want to compete. Some drivers stay at the school racing level as it is usually a much smaller budget than moving into an upper level racing series. Serious career minded racers will look to a series that offers TV coverage and big year end career enhancement bonuses such as the Star Mazda Series. For drivers looking to have an enjoyable yet professional level weekend a series like the Formula Car Challenge presented by Goodyear is more appropriate.' To the right of the photo is a yellow box titled 'I Want To Race' with text: 'If you are a karter looking to win a pro level championship we can help. If you have never even seen a racing car, but want to get started we can help. World Speed can develop a program that will allow you to attain your goals. WSM has been helping pros and hobbyists win races and championships since 1991.' At the bottom right, there is a Facebook widget titled 'Find us on Facebook' showing the 'World Speed Motorsports' page with a 'Like' button and a 'World Speed Motorsports BUSY ALERT: Our the' notification.



**DR. KAREN  
SALVAGGIO**

**Owner/Driver:**

Team Thunder Valley Racing

**Race Series:** Western

Endurance Racing  
Challenge (WERC);  
Factory Five

Challenge Series (NASA FFR)

**Editor in Chief:**

Thunder Valley Racing

**Day Job:** School District

Superintendent.

**Personal Motto:**

Dream big, Work hard.

Dr. Karen Salvaggio is an amazing combination of passionate racer, devoted educator and student of life. When she spoke to Speed News she answered the normal how did you get started in racing, and when did you join NASA questions before asking her own questions about Speed News and the author. She embodies the expression “a questioning mind is an intelligent mind”.

Karen applied her mind first to a career in the U.S. Air Force working on B-52s and KC-135 aircraft. Her service took her to Japan and the Philippines. Upon completion of 8 years in the Air Force she used the GI Bill to secure her college education. She holds a Bachelor degree, a Masters degree in education and earned a Doctorate degree in organizational leadership. Today she serves as Superintendent of the Wright School District in Santa Rosa, CA.

Concurrent with her educational career and ongoing studies she began racing in racing in 1985 at NASCAR dirt track events in California, she excelled earning a Most improved Driver award, and top five finishes before crossing over to road racing. She campaigned a 59' Corvette in endurance and night races. Her passion and performance lead her to racing late model Corvettes in high and low speed club events. Her racing resume even includes the American Le Mans and National Hot Rod Association series. In the late 1990s Karen joined NASA. She was attracted to the ease of entrance, the quality of the racing and the spirit behind the organization.

Her teaching skills were quickly recognized and she became a NASA driving instructor in addition to regular racing and campaigning. As an educator and racer she loves developing drivers' confidence.

Karen has amassed over 200 first place finishes. This past year in 2011 she exceeded her 2010 multiple championship-winning season, driving her Factory Five Racing Type-65 Coupe in 2, 3, and 6 hour endurance races. She and her Thunder Valley Racing team secured the 2011 NASA Western Endurance Racing Championship. She also races in the NASA Time Trial series, competing in TTA, TTS and TTU.

Karen received the NASA Driver Instructor of the year in 2009. She is the four-time recipient of the West Coast Regional Championship for the National Council of Corvette Clubs (NCCC), winner of the Gardei Memorial Overall Competitor Award (Firebird Raceway), and secured





Top Eliminator honors at the Pomona Drags in 1999. She holds track records at Infineon Raceway and Buttonwillow Raceway Park, She received the prestigious the 2011 Factory Five Racing Legacy Award as well as the 2011 Robert Fedderson Memorial Award for her contributions within the Factory Five Racing Community.

In addition to her driving duties Karen is owner and Editor-in-Chief of Thunder Valley Racing, and travels nationally to support women in racing efforts. Her long term goals include raising the awareness of endurance racing across the country, serving her teammates at Thunder Valley Racing, and teaching her daughter's two children early racing skills. Granted the kids haven't

started school, but Karen knows you never stop learning and a great teacher never stops teaching.

Karen is grateful for the support of her loving family, professional colleagues, and many racing friends who believed in her and have helped her follow her dreams.

Racing website: [www.thundervalleyracing.com](http://www.thundervalleyracing.com) **SN**



# SANDBLAST RALLY

Cheraw, SC 2/4/2012

By Anders Green



**R**ally. The very name conjures up the idea of amazing cars in exotic locales and then those same cars get destroyed, and yet somehow, manage to keep racing, as the drivers hurl the machines down insane forest roads, over blind crests, threading through tight gates, with a level of commitment that seems unbelievable.

From all accounts, that's pretty much exactly what happened at the Sandblast Rally early in February. A full day of racing started with the first racer leaving at 8:31 am from Chesterfield, South Carolina

and the day wound up around 6:30 pm in Cheraw, South Carolina. The nature of rally, with one racer leaving each minute, means that while there are hundreds of people and vehicles involved in the event, each team experiences a different story, and no one is in the same place at the same time. NASA Rally Sport runs both cars and motorcycles, just like Dakar does, so the experience can vary wildly. Let's take a look at some of the amazing stories from the weekend.

Check out the former Carl Merrill WRC-style all-wheel-drive Ford Escort which stole national championships back

in the day. Piloted this go around by Mainiax Motorsports **Michael Reilly** with navigator **Joshua Benthien** and sporting the #14, the car came away with the win this time too. This beast, whose magnesium A-arms reportedly weigh about as much as a golf club, is now finally out of retirement. It has been carefully maintained in a museum style garage for nearly a decade by WeeGee Smith, waiting for the day when someone would commit to getting it back on stage all in one piece. Navigator Josh added "This race was our first race, and in reality our first sustained seat time in the car and there were a

number of 'getting to know you' moments. The most frustrating for Mike was getting to know the new 7 speed dog leg gear box with a reverse shift pattern. Being our first time at Sandblast, we learned the hard way that sand doesn't mix well with a radiator and intercooler. The last two stages, we were forced to shut down anti-lag early in the stage and the ECU was limiting power by the end of both stages. At the finish Parc Ferme, we realized that the overheating was worse than we realized and if there had been an 8th stage, I am not sure we could have finished." Go out on top, that's the sure story. They won the Open AWD Heavy class for all-wheel-drive driver cars with turbos.

**Joseph Burke** brought **Brendan McCabe** over from Ireland to navigate for him. Their weapon: the #80 Mitsubish Evo that had taken a podium just a week earlier. Fitted with a new sequential gearbox, it was one of the earliest casualties. The shifting mechanism, just installed, had an adapter that was off by just a few millimeters. Driver Burke had this to say: "Sandblast was our first event with some new parts on the car. If you want to test the strength of a part, run it through a rally with some deep sand. Unfortunately we didn't make it very far into the event before

**While there are hundreds of people and vehicles involved in the event, each team experiences a different story.**

we discovered some teething problems with the new parts. The first five miles of the first stage was very enjoyable at full speed... while it lasted. Cruising the last two miles of the stage at ten miles an hour with the hazard lights on is never a fun way to go through a stage. We called the service crew to the end of the stage, took the DNF and fixed the problem back at service in order to still get some seat time. Unfortunately, it was just not our weekend and something in the bottom end of the engine decided to let go just four miles into the third stage. It was definitely over a good bit over a minute before the next car, the eventual stage winner, came so I know we would have had a good time on the stage. Looking forward to coming back next year with some proven parts to finish on top of the podium.

"For #73 **Sebastian Gomez Abero** and **James Clark**, their Mazda Protege became

a LOT louder during Stage 4. Abrero said "All of the sudden it sounded like we had lost the exhaust entirely. It broke clean right below the exhaust manifold when we bottomed out with the broken piece just resting on the skid plate. Since we had no service team and no way to fix it, we decided to just keep going and see what would happen. We managed to finish our first rally, although the broken exhaust threw off the oxygen sensor and created significant hesitation on acceleration."

**Joe Warner**, Motorcycle # 106, tells this story: "Picture an empty beach, and the zone of sand right between the crashing waves and the soft, pillowy area where everyone sets up their beach towels and umbrellas. The firm, compact sand, constantly wiped smooth by the ebbing tide leaves behind perhaps the ultimate consistency for speed and control of a motorcycle. In that zone, there's little need for long travel suspension to combat energy sapping ruts and bumps. Instead, the tires bite and hold, yet sink just enough to allow you to bend the bike into a corner and hold it in a glorious, throttle controlled power slide. Sandblast 2012 delivered those conditions this year. On the very fastest stages, long, arcing sweepers allowed for 80 - 90 mph drifts, this meant

holding the throttle open “forever” through the apex only to reveal the opposite arc of the next bend. Simply altering weight on the foot pegs and staying hard on the throttle gracefully shifted the powerslide to the other direction and the joy continued. The wide open straights were faster than ever before - triple digits easily attained and held... and held... and held... long enough for your brain to process the speed, acclimate and ask for more! It was an unforgettable experience. Sure we had the “ruts and bumps” sections, even a couple of mudholes and slippery clay, but every rally needs an element of endurance. Add in that the Rally stayed close to schedule, volunteers were as

enthusiastic and capable as competitors, and it was one fantastic event.”

Rally is so addictive. Can you imagine prepping your machine for months, driving 1000 miles to get to the race, making it only a few miles in, and still be stoked about your adventure? That’s what frames motorcycle #137 Tom Bergh’s story.

“It was a thousand mile drive down from Maine to the sandy, friendly warmth of South Carolina. The Sandblast Rally has again attracted the Max BMW team which showed up a dozen strong. Many were going to ride big bad burly twins that spit out way too much torque for me to try on my first Sandblast. On the track we worship that tire tearing power to rocket off a turn. Down here in the sand, there’s only a few crazy men who want to turn up the wick on a big twin in deep sand at 100 miles an hour. Luckily I’m aboard a single cylinder

450cc, a light, responsive, quick little ride, that’s more my speed for this 180 mile 7 stage craziness.

Friday preparation puts us into a several hour newcomer course attended by a number of seasoned riders and drivers. Then its off to tech inspection, termed ‘scrutineering’... where the most fun was viewing other pilots wrenching their various forms of rolling hardware into operational racers. Late afternoon its out to the tree covered sands. We unload again for a ‘shake-down’, a short 2 mile sprint that gets more fun with each run. Maybe this will be ok.

Rally day, we head to downtown Chesterfield for an o815 riders meeting and start at one minute intervals. The first transit section is a 14 mile navigation around the countryside, which settles the nerves before beginning the first special stage a go-as-fast-as-you-dare over closed back roads with deep sand



turns lined with tall pines.

Despite all the best prep, my bike encounters fueling problems after a couple of miles. Oh no, will it clear? Full on, full off, it'll only run at idle or near redline. A solid launch at the start in the loss stuff is fun, but 30+ times on one section is more like work. Running this event on time requires a precision timed orchestration of hundreds of moving vehicles, marshals, stewards and spectators. I'm starting to get nervous about the cars that are soon to start as clearly they'll be solidly into three digits. Slowly, finally, the finish. Bike dies a couple more times. I push the darn thing over the finish, just as another biker rolls in from getting lost. I'm 20 minutes off the standard. So I withdraw, happy that I didn't delay that stage any longer.

Guess I might need to drive back down next February to continue this brand of Southern hospitality!"

**Dan Spalinger** is sporting #54 on the side of his beautiful Nissan truck. He recalls a particularly deep and soft stage, the infamous "Hamburger Hill" section of a stage named Sand Trap Reverse. "On the Sand Trap stage we were going along quite nicely and really in a good rhythm... that is until we got to the hill where the deep sand would eventually trap so many competitors. There in the middle



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of the hill, buried up to its frame was the #22 Mitsubishi Mighty Max of Michael Hall. Darting to my right I thought I should have just enough room to get by without hitting the other vehicle, that is until I noticed the driver of the #22 was out of his truck and furiously digging away like a mad badger on the passenger side of his truck, trying to unearth it.” Spalinger narrowly avoided the hazard himself and the prerunner style truck did marvelously the rest of the day. His codriver, David Dennis, certainly got a trial by fire “Sandblast was my first ever stage rally. After reading the rules about all these confusing check-in and check-out times, and finding out that Dan Spalinger’s Nissan Titan rally truck I would be co-driving did not have an odometer, I was a little nervous (the fact that the tow vehicle carrying the truck broke down on the way didn’t help, either). But the group of people who race with NASA Rally Sport are a great bunch, and all of my questions were answered, and it didn’t seem too scary. Then on Saturday, I had an awe-

some time! We didn’t get lost, I didn’t get us any penalties, and we placed very well.”

**Jason Adams**, motorcycle #102 has many rallies under his belt but knows that doesn’t mean anything to the rally gods. “Every rally something memorable happens. This time everything looked like it was going to go smoothly until somewhere during the first stage, it felt like the shifter pedal had gone soft. I kept riding normally until the finish when I tried to shift into neutral and idle to get my time card. That’s when I noticed that I couldn’t shift. Turns out I had broken the classic ten cent part, or for want of the nail, the kingdom was lost. A shift return pawl spring, a simple spring had come undone, and there was no fixing it without a gearbox teardown. Since the bike was still able to start from a stop, I decided to press on, and I ended up finishing the rally- I did the entire day in third gear.”

**Brad Morris** in the #36 Mitsubishi was back after a year hiatus, teamed up again with

his trusty codriver. Fortunately, no mechanical problems or crashing problems showed up during the day. “After being out of the car since Sandblast 2011, I started off a little hesitant. Having rusty driving skills on fast fun roads gets my undivided attention. We spent the day locked in battle with the other two wheel drive cars keeping all of us focused and on the gas. We had a great day of racing with Andrew Frick, with Andrew ultimately prevailing. Upon returning to the pits my crew chief commented ‘All the bumpers are still on the car, clearly you aren’t trying hard enough!’”

**Brandon Childers** had never put race numbers on his bike before. He got several “136” on yellow ovals at registration and the madness began. Here’s his story. “RallyMoto isn’t for everybody but I think it could be for you! When it comes to racing there are more spectators than competitors that’s for sure. It’s just human nature. But the time may come for you to test yourself in a way you never



JOHN BARNES



JOHN BARNES

## VIDEO SPOTLIGHT

### SARAH ROTH RULES THE ROOST AS THE MOST BAD-ASS CHICK IN RALLYMOTO.

Here's some chest-cam video of her getting tossed off her bike and thrown forty feet down the road on Stage 2. Watch the slow-mo replay and you'll catch 48 mph on the speedo! Without missing a beat she runs back to bike and takes off! Even so, entirely unrelated mechanical problems lay ahead: "At the end of SS2 I hit a washout going 48 mph and went over the handlebars, immediately getting back up and running to my bike to finish out the stage with lost time being my only

concern. Throughout SS1 and SS2 I had my small bore 250 screaming at 13,000 rpms. In transit to SS3 my bike's power was cutting out. I thought my bike was running out of gas so

I turned on reserve with no difference. Less than a mile from time control for SS3 the big end bearing in my engine self destructs, effectively ending my run for Sandblast 2012."



STOLE THE SHOT



STOLE THE SHOT

have before. I've ridden motorcycles since I was 7 years old (22 years) but SandBlast 2012 was my first official moto race so up until now I've always been a spectator and recreational rider. I've been in competition in the boxing ring and on the baseball and football fields but not on my bike. As I come to enjoy riding more and more I think it's only natural to want to get better. My advice to those who want to ride more and ride better: RACE.

Even though this was my first event I became friends with riders from areas I never ride and now have invites to ride race tracks, private land, and group outings all across North America. You don't have to be the fastest guy out there to have a GREAT time and when the starting flag drops you get the chance to test

yourself and live in the moment in a way that many will never experience. It's hard to put a price on this opportunity and all the great stories and relationships that follow but rest assured that it's less than the cost of admission to just one RallyMoto event.

Should you go racing? Yes.

Should you bring friends? Yes.

If they don't get it and decide not to come should you show up anyway? Yes.

You'll get all the support you need to get through the race and you'll meet some like-minded people that have ridden at the highest level of motorsports and in the process you'll learn from the best. Closed roads. Flat out racing. And you! (and me too)"

**Mike Bradway** was the 2007 East Coast enduro champion. For the car crowd, that means the "threading your bike through tight trees and through streams" kind of racing. So he has a serious racing pedigree, but had never tackled this kind of terrain before. After the rally, he said "I could never have predicted my feeling of elation from being able to just unleash on the open course like that and go wide open as fast as the bike could go. To quickly tap out my KTM 690 enduro was a surprise as I thought it had more than enough top speed and horsepower. I think I blew a head gasket or something, but made it back OK. It was my first trip to the Sandblast Rally and I never expected it to be so unbelievably fun!" Strong words from a man who is a champion back on his

#### RALLY CUP RESULTS

Place	#	Entrant	Class	Vehicle	Total
1	14	Michael Reilly	AWD	Ford Escort Cosworth	1:08:15
2	4	Charles Sherrill	AWD	Mitsubishi EVO IV	1:09:32
3	2	Eric Wages	AWD	Subaru Impreza WRX	1:16:47
4	9	Andrew Frick	2WD	Ford Focus ZX3	1:18:24
5	36	Bradley Morris	2WD	Mitsubishi Lancer	1:19:38
6	3	Simon Wright	2WD	Ford Focus ZX3	1:26:24

#### RALLY MOTO CUP RESULTS

Place	#	Entrant	Class	Vehicle	Total
1	122	Bill Conger	Motorcycle Dakar	Husqvarna TE 449	1:10:03
2	108	Aaron Gibson	Motorcycle Heavy	KTM Super Enduro	1:11:21
3	133	Robert Wooldridge	Motorcycle Dakar	BMW G450X	1:12:11

native turf. Not only that, but Bradway managed to have the highest average speed of the rally, even besting the cars by several miles per hour!

**Andrew Phillips** on the #128 bike knows the feeling of standing in the shadow of giants. One amazing aspect of rally is being able to compete against amazing talent on the very same day on the same course. “I had a great Sandblast Rally experience this year. Everything went really well from the drive to and from Cheraw from and to New Hampshire-the stages, the people, the operation of the rally. All went well. Even the weather more or less cooperated. My bike had a couple minor issues. Stage 5, it stalled and would not restart just as the starter was counting me down to begin the stage. Two riders started past me as I tried to get the bike going. It was resolved by releasing the fuel filler cap, and then the bike started up and I took off on stage. I lost over 2 minutes there. That’s the way it goes. There was a great atmosphere around the rally and everyone enjoyed it. There was one rider new to Sandblast that said it was the most fun he had ever had on a bike. As for me, my goal is always to finish safely within a speed that is right for me. The faster guys do some amazing things that I will never quite achieve, nor do I need to. I always have



STOLE THE SHOT



JOHN BARNES

a great time at RallyMoto events and will continue to participate.”

**Paulo Ferreira** drove the #58 Honda Civic, but wasn’t able to pull out a finish. Ozgur Simsek, his codriver, tells the tale. “On first stage we made up a minute on Simon, passed him and finished I believe a minute thirty seconds faster. After having an issue with the engine cutting out we pulled over with intense fuel smell to realize the fuel rail popped off. Paul put it back together and we lost 8-9mins and got right back in the car. At service we decided

to not continue and save the engine if we couldn’t sort it out. We ended realizing the #1 spark plug melted away (no ceramic on it to be found!) and took a plug out of Paul’s mothers Yaris. On Stage 3 we passed Simon again. I do have to admit Simon and Kieran were true sportsman as they let us pass by without losing much time on stage and we swapped in a time control at start of Stage 4. On Stage 5 we snapped both axles only to realize the passenger side was broken after we fixed the driver side (which Paul felt snap) leaving service. That ended our day!”

**Nicholas Martinez** had trials as well. They came to a head on the Sand Trap stage, the same one that caught out Mike Hall and others. “On the third stage there were a couple cars that became stuck on a deep sand uphill section. The road was completely blocked so now we became the third car to be stuck. After thinking that was it for the day somebody said “lets push all the cars down the hill and try again”. Light bulb went on and we went into action. I was first, then another, and the first car we actually pushed up over the hill. We were able to

gain momentum and make it up the section with ease and lost about 14 minutes. We lost a bunch of time but we made it past a big hurdle so I was happy. The same kind of thing happened on stage 4 but Sebastien with his Subaru kindly pulled us and 2 other cars out of the bad section. He really didn't need to do that and I'm extremely grateful. Again we lost more time but I have no regrets!”

It would be remiss to end our story and not mention the winners: Michael Reilly, Charles Sherrill, and Eric Wages in AWD; Andrew Frick,

Brad Morris, and Simon Wright in 2WD; and Bill Conger, Aaron Gibson, and Bobby Wooldridge on the bikes. Their stories have a common thread of unending speed, near perfect execution, and mile after mile of machinery besting environment. We congratulate the winners and celebrate all of the adventurers who didn't make the podium!

And that's just a third of the stories. The other racers have more and even the volunteers themselves make up half of the adventure! **SN**



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— Story and Photos by Rob Krider

# The Secret

## Behind Japanese Domestic Market (JDM) Engines

In life, they say the only two things you can't avoid are death and taxes. In racing, the only two things you can't avoid is having to buy a new helmet every five years and the inevitable replacement of your racecar's engine. I say "inevitable" because if you spend any amount of time with your lead foot planted on top of the happy pedal, sooner or later (hopefully later) the inside of your engine will end up on the outside. This is a bad thing. First and foremost, when this goes down, do your racing compatriots a favor and get off of the racing line. Your day is over, I hate to tell you but... you aren't going to win the race. But in order to stay in the good graces of the people you are going to want to borrow a cherry picker from later, don't oil down the entire length of the racecourse. It's just bad manners.

After you get towed in with disappointment and rage swelling in your competitive heart, you will probably have a small, but public, hissy fit in the paddock. Maybe you will

throw a 14 millimeter wrench into your toolbox like it's a fastball, or kick the dog or maybe blame your girlfriend (as if she is the one that ran the motor up to eight thousand RPMs). Eventually you

**"In racing, the only two things you can't avoid is having to buy a new helmet every five years and the inevitable replacement of your racecar's engine..."**

will calm down and make peace with the fact that your racecar, without an engine, could fetch maybe \$500 on Craig's List. You have more than that invested in your PS3 Gran Turismo driving simulator package proudly taking up

too much space in your living room.

Quitting is not an option, especially if you're in the middle of a season and you are chasing championship points. Your last name isn't Andretti, so you don't have a wheel barrow filled with cash as a racing budget. You don't look good in a bikini, so you haven't scored a GoDaddy.com sponsorship. You need a new engine, but you can't spend a ton of money at a machine shop or wait for them to "get around" to fixing your engine. What now?

If you drive a Japanese manufactured car you are in luck! Chances are there is a very low mileage engine sitting in a warehouse just waiting for you to toss it into the back of your your pickup or the trunk of your Mom's Buick to get you back out on the track. Don't forget to bring your credit card, of course, but the price of these turn-key motors is less than you probably think. You have probably heard the term JDM, which is the acronym for Japanese Domestic Market. The reason

we here in the United States have access to engines pulled from low mileage Japanese cars is due to the stringent vehicle inspection regulations and taxes levied on Japanese car owners.

It breaks down like this. After someone buys a car in Japan from a dealer, for the first three years of the car's life the dealer warranties everything on the car and pays the taxes and inspection fees on the car. After that the owner is on his or her own for maintenance and inspection and registration fees. Unlike in the United States, where the older a car gets, the less it costs to register the vehicle, the Japanese registration costs are the opposite. It costs more to keep an older vehicle. If the car owner does decide to keep his or her three-year-old car, before the car can get back onto the road in Japan it needs to have an inspection sticker. In order to earn this inspection sticker the owner has to get the car through a very stringent inspection process at a government run center. Just the inspection alone, if they don't find any issues, will cost approximately \$2,500. A lot of owners choose to "recycle" the car, so the motor and transaxle are pulled and exported while the rest of the vehicle is shredded with the leftover material recycled to make a new

Yup, that is a connecting rod on the "outside" of the block. There isn't enough JB Weld on the planet to fix this problem. Game over for the race and the engine block.



When a hood is up on a racecar and there is a large group standing around and nobody has a wrench in their hand, this is a bad sign.

A cornucopia of engines await you at All Engine Distributing. With a portable gas tank and a battery, some engines can actually be test started right on the floor.



car. This process keeps the roadways of Japan filled with nearly brand new cars and in turn stimulates their economy since everyone who is driving is essentially buying a new car every three years. The ironic part about all of this is that the Japanese build the most reliable cars on the planet. In America we commonly drive Japanese cars beyond 200,000 miles without even changing the oil –well, my

wife does anyway. So in the country where they build cars capable of lasting hundreds of thousands of miles, they rip the “perfectly good” engines out of them and send the cars through a shredder before they would even be considered a “used car” here in the United States. The government regulations that take a perfectly good commuter car off the road in Japan is the gain of a NASA road racer

looking to score a quick fix to the hole in his or her engine.

I recently found myself owning a car with a destroyed power plant after grenading an engine in my Nissan Sentra SE-R. Someone told me that the SR20DE engines in these cars are “bullet proof.” I took that as a dare of sorts and promptly went out and lunched my motor at Mazda Laguna Seca. No, I didn’t win the race, but I did prove

It's not just engines; transaxles are stacked to the sky. It helps to know which ones have LSD and the best gear ratios. Bring your nerdy friend who remembers that kind of stuff.



The motors are shipped on crates for ease of transport. Labels on the engines certify compression ratios and engine codes. Bring photos of your “blown” engine and make sure your accessories will bolt up.

**“ Quitting is not an option, especially if you’re in the middle of a season and you are chasing championship points.”**

that these things aren’t bullet proof. In fact my engine looked like someone shot it with a tank. Searching for a solution to the “hole in the engine block” problem I had, I realized I needed a whole new engine. I went to All Engine Distributing ([www.allengine.com](http://www.allengine.com)) centrally located in Fresno, California and asked if they had any SR20DE engines. The response I got was, “We have ten of them, which one do you want?” My response, of course, was, “I want the fast one.” One of the advantages of the JDM engines is oftentimes they have more horsepower out of the box than their smogged down American cousins. The engines for sale have the compression ratios labeled on the valve cover so you can choose which engine would be the best for your car.

Once I bought my turn-key JDM engine for less than it costs to have a valve job done, I decided to go through it just to make sure everything was perfect. I let T.E.M. Machine Shop in Napa, California, tear it down. A few days later, I got a phone call that asked, “Why did you want me to take this motor apart? There’s nothing wrong with it.” My response was a stupid, “Uh, okay... good to know. Put it back together please.”

Besides engines, transaxles are also exported from Japan. The trick to picking the right transaxle or transmission is to have a good idea what can be swapped with what. As model years progress, changes are made and usually there is the “sweet” year where a gear ratio is optimal for racing or an LSD system is tougher than another. Doing your homework will certainly help because the engines and transaxles are just sitting in a warehouse and many times you won’t know what car the components originally came out of. You may have to hope you are getting the “R” version, unless you know what to look for specifically. A nice trick to avoid buying the wrong engine or transaxle is to bring detailed digital photos of your blown up parts and make sure important bolt holes are in the correct places so your accessories, clutch cables, and other items will

bolt on with ease.

Prices on these components vary from different distributors and recently the decline of the American dollar in comparison to the yen has hit us racers in the wallet a bit. Engines that used to cost \$500 are now \$800. However, regardless of the spike in pricing, it is still a great deal to get you back out on track, and you might even pick up a few horsepower in the process, which is something we are all looking for. Once you have your “new” used JDM engine, all that’s left to do is the all night thrash on the car to get it back to the track. Don’t forget to tighten those oil lines or you will be making another trip to All Engine Distributing and doing this job all over again. **SN**

**“ Once you have your “new” used JDM engine, all that’s left to do is the all night thrash on the car to get it back to the track.”**

# Car Off Turn 9, Clear Right

## Industry Profile Sampson Racing Communications

Story: By Rob Krider  
Photo: VanHap Photography

Eventually every racecar driver will have a moment on the track where they find themselves in a “predicament.” This predicament will cause their adrenaline to spike and their backsides to suck up the seat cushion. Some racers refer to that moment as “Seeing Elvis” (for those not familiar with the term, Elvis is dead, and you aren’t, so you shouldn’t be seeing each other, yet). For me, when I finally had my “I saw Elvis” moment at around 110 miles per hour, it went something like this: “Whoops!” COUNTER-STEER, nope, OVER-STEER, crap, BOTH FEET IN (clutch-brake), stop breathing, ELBOWS AND HANDS FLYING MADLY AT THE STEERING WHEEL,

off the track, DUST FLYING, brace for impact, and then... nothing. “Whew!” Somehow I missed everything and came to a stop in the infield. What could have been a totaled racecar turned out to be nothing more than a story to tell the boys that night in the pits over some beers. I put the car into gear and started heading back onto the paved portion of the racecourse. I wanted to let the crew know I was okay so I started to talk over the in-car radio. The only problem was the spotter wasn’t acknowledging me. That was when I realized I didn’t get out of my “Elvis moment” completely unscathed. Somewhere along the line of me grabbing at the steering wheel like a lunatic, I caught the electrical cord

to the push-to-talk button and wrapped it around the steering column six or seven times until it broke. My team had a three hour endurance race that was about to start in just a couple of hours and my radio wires had “gone to see the King.” There was certainly no time to get online, order a replacement part, and then wait four to five business days for the part to ship. I was screwed. I was slowly driving through the paddock, with a car covered in dust, holding on to the frayed ends of a busted wire. I was thinking about how the team was going to kill me, when I saw something that made me smile: Sampson Racing Communication’s portable retail shop sitting in the paddock. Score!



Luckily for me, Shawn Sampson, owner of Sampson Racing Communications, had towed his trailer full of racing radio goodies all the way from Ventura, California, up to Buttonwillow Raceway Park for the NASA event. He traveled all that distance just in case a racer like me did something stupid like I did, and needed a random part like a push-to-talk cord ABSOLUTELY IMMEDIATELY. I pulled my car up to his trailer, showed Shawn what a mess I had made, swiped my credit card, and I was back in action within ten minutes. What could have been disastrous for my team (racing in a three hour night race with no spotter and no communication with the pits) turned out to be nothing. I thanked Shawn profusely for being there at the track for us racers and his reply was, “This is why I’m here, I’m a racer too, and I know what it’s like to need something right away.” It was good to know Shawn was around and importantly it was also good to know that my credit card still worked.

After the race I had the chance to talk with Shawn and ask him how he transitioned from competing on the track to supplying communication gear for race teams. We sat down, shared a few Mexican beers, and he laid it out for me. Shawn grew up in a racing family, with Dad racing Formula Fords at the tracks

of yesteryear, like Riverside Raceway. Shawn eventually started racing himself and he and his wife were running NASA’s Pro 7 series in the late ‘90s. Because they were both driving their own Mazda RX-7s, they needed a way to talk with each other, to make sure the other one was okay, and warn each other of something on the track while they were racing together. Shawn began the process of putting together a radio system for him and his wife to use. He didn’t have any real background in electronics (his college degree is in Geology and Natural Resources), but like a lot of club racers he was a “do it yourself” kind of guy and he figured it out. His system worked. In fact it worked so well his friends wanted a version. Then their friends asked him to build them a set. Eventually he started selling a few radio systems here and there out of his garage. Because of his experience road racing with NASA, he understood what teams needed and

customers appreciated his real-life experience input for the product.

There was a moment where Shawn realized that being at the track and supporting club racers could be a viable business. Shawn’s Dad was a salesman who handled road racing and off-road racing products for Pennzoil/Gumout, so as the son of a salesman, Shawn picked up a few tricks of the trade and began to sell radios. In 1998 Sampson Racing Communications began and filled a void in the market to provide solid racing communications to the racing community at a price racers could handle. “Back then a system from other suppliers started at around \$2,000,” said Shawn. “I was able to put together a great system that worked for less than half of that.”

Shawn has a lot of pride in what he has created. “My company is a business that happens to know the quality of the product that’s used because I use the product myself



and I know how it's supposed to work. I think that racers like that type of technical support. They are getting advice from a guy who has done it."

Sampson Racing Communications (SRC) has been the main communications supplier for NASA since 2001. Each NASA region uses SRC radios to communicate all information that is needed at a race track from "yellow flag in Turn Two" and real important stuff like "The lunch truck is heading out to the corner workers." Running SRC, Shawn has had the opportunity to go to the 24 Hours of Daytona and work for professional racing teams. He has helped NASCAR teams, worked with Boris Said, and supplied radios to off-road teams at the Baja 1000. "Regardless of whether a team is racing NASCAR or a club race, their radios absolutely have to work. That's my job to make sure they do," said Shawn. But out of all of the different types of motorsport venues his business has taken him too, his favorite event is NASA's 25 Hours of Thunderhill which he won the Eo class driving a second generation Mazda RX-7 in 2005. "I just like spending the end of the year at Thunderhill, where all the teams get together from professional drivers to amateur club drivers and I get to see everybody in one place. One of my favorite parts about working in the racing commu-

nity is the friendships I have made over the years."

When he first started SRC Shawn tried to have his cake and eat it too. He would go to a track to race and in-between sessions he would sell and install radios. Shawn talked about the challenges of being at a racetrack and having to do all the things a racer needs to do to prepare a car and coincidentally work his real job by providing trackside racing communication equipment. "That was just too hard. I realized quickly that when I travel to the track it's to do radio stuff and not to race. Over the years I have hired employees to come to the track to help me out. Now, I only do a few endurance races with NASA, but I still travel to a lot of events to support the teams, especially the Nationals and the enduros. When I'm at the track, I'm there to concentrate on work. Even if I'm not racing, the track is a great place to spend your work day."

Shawn Sampson's name is on every radio he sells and he works hard to protect that name. "I don't want a bunch of racers sitting around talking about how my system didn't work. I know what racers need and I know that getting a part from me on Monday is too late for a race on the previous Sunday. Because I have been there and I know what it's like to need a part, I know that time is key for race teams.

I work hard to ensure that my products arrive before the event when they need to."

As of February 2012, Sampson Racing Communications has a retail store and an installation center in Ventura, CA. Vertex is Shawn's biggest supplier and his most often sold radio system. Beside club road racing teams, SRC supplies all of the radios for Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and numerous circle track teams. Additionally, some stores are dealers for SRC. However, Shawn is very picky about which companies can sell his product and added that "I want to make sure anyone selling my radio system is of good character. I don't want a situation where a race team is unhappy with the service they get and my radios are a part of a bad transaction."

Currently in road racing, ninety percent of teams are using communication systems. When asked what the number one tech issue is for teams using radios, Shawn answered without hesitation "Plug in your roof antenna!"

So the next time you're at the NASA Nationals or the 25 Hours of Thunderhill come by the Sampson Racing Communications trailer and say hi to Shawn. After you see Elvis and destroy a radio wire, chances are he has that very special part you need to get you back in action. **SN**

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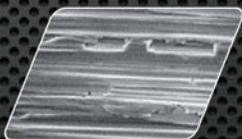
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