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Chicago, July 28, 2010, NASA Midwest, Inc.

A great weekend of GTS racing ended just last weekend. With a field of 24 GTS cars, we were just a couple shy of tying the Spec Miatas for the coveted (and non-existent) "Most Racers at the Track" award. Although the weekend was not without incident, the incidents were mostly minor and the racing was terrific.

Here's what happened:

GTS1

Even before the weekend started, GTS1 promised to have spectacular racing with eight cars registered and at least four of them--John Graber and Ed Baus with their latest rounds of tweaks, and Mike Mallais and Brant Giere both of whom have been doing very fast repairs on very badly-hit cars from BeaveRun--all seriously planning on at least one win. Everybody was here to race hard and they did not disappoint.

In Saturday's qualifying on the Mid-Ohio Club Course, Baus and Graber ran together and, according to Baus anyway, Graber pipped him for the pole thanks in part to a little luck with traffic. It was obvious even before the weekend started that Kevin Gibson's GTS1 record of 1:45.468 from April 09 was in jeopardy but Graber's 1:43.153 qualifying time--along with the fact that literally HALF the GTS1 field qualified beneath the old mark--made it a pretty sure thing the record was going to fall before the day was out.

Saturday's race was HOT with temperatures in the mid-90s, but that wasn't nearly as hot as the racing. From the drop of the flag, Graber, Baus, Mallais and Giere pulled away from the rest of the pack. Graber, fresh off a day of suspension tuning and driver coaching with Dave Royce, kept his head down and over the first several laps built up a pretty substantial margin on the others while Baus and Mallais fought it out with one another, Giere nipping at their heels. A few hard laps in, Mallais' motor let go (maybe a head gasket, maybe not), letting Baus and Giere concentrate on trying to run down the now-flying Graber.

John, however, team player that he is, decided not to make them take crazy chances in traffic and so, taking advice from Mr. Royce that he should be pushing it harder at the end of the back straight, managed to get



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all the way across the track in the right-hander at the end of the straight, put the left-side tires into the grass and then spun the car back across the track and up the hill. A group of us watching from the shade of the announcer's stand at Madness were pretty certain there was going to be a hard hit on the inside wall but Graber managed to get it all stopped with several inches to spare. He hurried back onto the track just as Baus and Giere flew past and then the race was on for real.

Racing in the Lightning group, GTS1 was running with a mix of classes plus the aforementioned Spec Miatas. Baus, Graber and Giere ran nose-to-tail through traffic as thick as flies in a cow pasture with Baus generally getting the best of it, eventually building a small amount of breathing room between himself and the boys. Ah, but his car was overheating and so for the last several laps he avoided drafting and was running a touch easier than normal, trying to keep the temperature in a range that was only problematic and not potentially catastrophic. When he heard over the radio there were still 10 minutes left in the race, Baus began to hope he'd be able to hold on for second behind the hard-charging Graber but the next time over the line, much to his surprise, the white flag was thrown earlier than expected. Throwing caution to the wind and with the bit in his teeth, Baus rang down to the engine room for full power as Graber pushed ever closer. Coming through Madness the last time, Graber took advantage of traffic and was literally inches from Baus' bumper and looking for a last-minute way past as they shot under the Honda bridge around the outside of yet another cluster of Miatas.

Ultimately, the two finished just 0.248 seconds apart with Baus maintaining his lead at the line. As a consolation prize, Graber set the new GTS1 Club Course track record with a 1:43.864. Giere finished a distant third, 12 seconds back, followed by Kevin Gibson, Greg Panik, Bill Edwards, Shannon McCue and Mike Mallais eight laps down and out of the race. There was cheering on the hill at Madness as they came back around for the cool-off lap. A great race to watch and, I'm sure, even better to have driven.

Sunday's qualifying on the Pro course was in the rain and Shannon McCue showed everybody how to drive on slippery surfaces by taking his first ever pole position in GTS1. Congratulations Shannon! The race, which was in the dry, was almost a carbon copy of the prior day's race with Baus,



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Graber and Giere making it to the first turn ahead of the rest of the field and basically running away and hiding. Giere--who has mightily resisted adding a wing to his 944 and runs a Lexan rear spoiler instead--was particularly impressive, never letting Graber more than a car's length or so away and at least once finding himself in front after an impressive outside pass at the end of the back straight. Alas, a bad trailing arm bushing and shifter issues kept Giere from making those passes stick but he was very much in the mix the entire way. Again, the three of them - Baus, Graber and Giere - tore through the never-ending stream of Miatas impressively.

Ultimately, Baus managed his second win of the weekend followed by Graber then Giere, with the three of them covered by just 5 seconds, followed a bit further back by Gibson, Panik, Edwards and McCue.

GREAT racing all the way, it was a blast to watch from the hill.

GTS2

Not to be outdone by the 1 cars, GTS2 started the weekend with nine. In Saturday's Club Course qualifying, and in spite of the heat, Scott Good managed to better the GTS2 field with a smoking 1:39.831, just over 2 seconds faster than Paul Milligan in second and slightly under his own Club Course record of 1:40.381. That joy was short-lived, however, as the post-qualifying weigh-in showed Good's car to be 20 lbs underweight, so off to the back of the GTS field he went. That left the GTS2 field in the order of Milligan, Brad Waite, Enzo Campagnolo, Mike Ward, Matt Markowicz, Jason Necedo (welcome!), Wellborn Jack, Breck Lewis and, finally, Good bringing up the rear.

GTS2 ran in the Thunder race group but GTS started separately--behind all the big V8s, Factory Fives, American Iron and others, and ahead of the Honda Challenge cars who had a standing start on the front straight. The Hondas must have started a little early because they were into the back of the GTS field almost immediately. Not in the back of the GTS field for long was Good who slipped around both Lewis and Jack on the run down to the first turn and starting pushing forward.

While Campagnolo and Milligan ran away and hid, Good, Waite and Ward fought tooth and nail for several laps with Good and Ward exchanging positions several times before Good finally found a way around on the sixth



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lap and took off in pursuit of the leaders while Ward and Waite continued their fight to the end, battling uncooperative traffic all the way.

At the front, Milligan and Campagnolo were running very close to one another until Milligan dropped a valve on the front straight just as Good began lurking in his mirrors. Campagnolo lasted another lap in the lead but on lap 9 Good made it around for good, eventually pulling out for a win by 6.6 seconds over Campagnolo. Another 19 seconds back found Ward followed closely by newcomer Jason Necef in 4th, then Waite, Milligan, Markowicz, Lewis and Jack who'd dropped out after contact on the third lap.

Sunday's qualifying was both rainy and quick with a session shortened by a Mustang who went nose-first into the front straight wall, ending qualifying before the completion of the third flying lap. Good dominated the class with a rain-soaked 2:11.407, good enough for second overall in GTS and four and a half seconds clear of Markowicz's Audi, Waite's 944 and Ward's 968, all of which were in the 2:16s and all of whom were ahead of all of the GTS3, GTS4 and GTS5 cars save Korey Deason on the GTS pole. Campagnolo succumbed to family duties and skipped Sunday's race in order to pick up his children in Parkersburg, WV and help celebrate his father's 79th birthday.

In the race, Good managed to pull out a comfortable lead after several laps of worrying about Waite and Ward hard on his tail. However, halfway through the race, boiling brakes created more than a few questionable moments as Good was forced to pump the brakes three or four times at the ends of all the longer straights to get the thing stopped. This let Waite and Ward, fighting all the way like a married couple hanging wallpaper, close the gap worryingly.

Saved by the checkered flag, Good won with a margin of 4.8 seconds over Waite who was, in turn, just three-tenths of a second ahead of Ward. They were followed by Necef, Markowicz and Jack, in that order.

GTS3

GTS3 started the weekend with four cars but that quickly dropped to two during qualifying when Marty Lutsch's 944 had a mechanical problem and Joe Fawsitt's 911 hit the inside wall on the back straight after sliding on oil



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from Marc Ruhling's blown motor. A disappointing weekend for both of them, I'm sure.

Korey Deason was having no such problems, qualifying on the overall GTS pole with a 1:39.124. The other remaining GTS3 car, Jamie Frauenberg, qualified third overall but advanced to the front row when Good's underweight qualifying trim moved him to the back of the field.

The dearth of GTS3 runners did nothing to dampen the GTS3 racing as Deason and Frauenberg fought from start to finish, ending just 1.531 seconds apart with Deason in front.

In Sunday's rainy qualifying Deason proved that he has significantly improved his wet track game since May's Putnam Park event by qualifying again on the GTS pole, nearly 2-1/2 seconds clear of the next GTS contender with a very solid 2:09.060. Frauenberg found himself caught out by the conditions and vastly shortened session and ended up sixth overall in GTS behind Deason and four GTS2 cars.

Breck Lewis, in a gesture of sporting kindness, moved from GTS2 to GTS3 for Sunday to make the winner tire-eligible for the Hoosier contingency.

Frauenberg's disadvantageous starting position lasted about 100 yards. At the green flag he pulled to the left and simply drove around all the GTS2 cars in front of him, closing up on Deason's tail under braking for the first corner. Deason, for his part, was running like a scalded cat, flying on cold tires and the two of them disappeared almost immediately into the distance. They shot through slower traffic dicing for position until, on lap 10, Frauenberg finally found a way past and was able to make it stick.

At the end, it was Frauenberg by just 0.997 seconds over Deason. Lewis finished a distant but much-appreciated third.

GTS4 and GTS5

GTS4 started the weekend a two-car class but as noted above, during Saturday's qualifying Marc Ruhling's motor let go, putting what I've heard was a fist-sized hole in the block and leaving a scary trail of flames down the back straight. Unlike his wallet, Ruhling was okay after the scare.



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Ruhling's early departure left Jeff Amos and his pretty 911 to fight it out with, well, Jeff Amos and his pretty 911. Not surprisingly, he pulled off flag-to-flag GTS4 victories both days, as did newcomer Kurt Hissong in his fire-breathing GTS5 BMW, here all the way from Maine for the weekend in another one-car class.

All kidding aside, both these guys were fast and smooth, driving very hard and, from what we could see, having a great time, too.

Next event: Mid-Ohio AGAIN!

It's time to stop messing around. Just three weeks from now, August 13-15, will be your last chance to race Mid-Ohio this year with GTS. If you thought this past weekend was fun with close racing, just wait until August. That is traditionally our biggest event of the year and THE one you don't want to miss.

For complete results and lap records, please see www.nasagreatlakes.com.

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