



CALIFORNIA SPEEDWAY NATIONAL JANUARY 25-27, 2006

Friday, January 25th

Test Day, 8:00AM

I love test days at California Speedway: a day off of work, time with Lynn, close to home and a great speedway.

Lynn was kind enough to take the #65 beast to the track the previous night and find a convenient paddock space. Early Friday morning we were able to make a quick run to the track to register and get ready for the first test session of the day. It's a little cool at 8:00am with 50 degrees. Our test group hits the track and I notice that Bill Hagerty's Mini Cooper is taking a high line on the oval to pass some of the slower cars. There's a huge cloud of brown dust behind his car. Obviously, the track is fairly dirty because of the gusty winds we've had the previous week. Our group will be cleaning the track.

On the back section near NASCAR Turn 4, there are puddles of water. This is always a tricky section that is marked with cones and tire barriers and we make the transition from the infield road course back onto the oval. With the dirt and puddles the course isn't optimum and caution is in order.

During our second test session, the in-car timer is acting up. It seems that someone has placed a beacon in a remote location and is causing split times on the reader. The numbers are meaningless in the car. After the session, we noticed that if we add the splits correctly; we can piece together some lap times. It appears that a couple of my laps may have bested last year's fast lap. This isn't a surprise; since our race last year was in July with 100 degree temperatures.



The #65 Evil Beast waiting its turn to play!

The surface at California Speedway actually polishes the rubber on the tires. There is little rubber built-up and the tires are wearing evenly. The Speedway's smooth surface is very easy on tires. As numerous road races have taken place on the Speedway, I noticed that in the middle of the back straight the track is somewhat bumpy in the braking section. The car jumps and hops a bit during hard braking. This is comforting because there is a concrete wall right up against the track. I elect to keep the car a few feet from the wall in case the back end starts to step out.

We get a short third session, but I'm not able to turn a faster time. We are sharing the track with a variety of cars. There are GT-1 fiberglass cars, Corvettes, Porsche 944s and some Miatas. It's difficult to get clean laps with all the traffic. I'm thankful that Lynn is calling out the up-coming passes on the radio. When the Honda is in the oval turns; it is difficult to see very far in the rear view mirrors. The radio is essential to know who is coming up and how fast.

Practice Session, 1:30PM

This is the official start of the race weekend. Our practice, qualifying and race sessions will have fewer cars and the cars are closer in speed. Testing with the GT-1 cars always makes me nervous.

Early in the week, I volunteered to help Richard James, the editor of SportsCar magazine, test some data acquisition systems. These systems are now legal for our class. Richard was doing research for an upcoming article and had selected 6 cars to try out various systems. Richard and his assistant Phil installed a TraqMate GPS system in the Honda. There was a GPS receiver mounted on the roof and the software mounted in the floor behind the driver's seat. Everything was held in place with ample amounts of racer tape.

Richard and Phil would review the results that night and report back. The system can read up to eight satellites to triangulate its position.



In their latest attempt to slow down the Mini-Cooper, the SCCA has removed all weight restrictions and will allow the car to run a blown top fuel V-8 engine!



The TraqMate Data Acquisition System!

Saturday, January 26th

Qualifying Session, 10:15AM

Dan and Lynne are able to join us today and help out. Lynne contributes some incredible hot coffee cake to our cause.

Richard comes by to reinstall the TraqMate data system for a second test. It appears that the data from the previous day is somewhat flawed. It is showing that while I'm in the oval banking, my speeds are fluctuating quite a bit. This is suspicious; since this is one of the more stable parts of the track. My speeds are very consistent at 120-121mph on the banked oval. An abrupt change of speed could cause a spin. So something is wrong and we need to try again.



SportsCar editor, Richard James, installing the data acquisition system.

My qualifying session goes well. My lap times are extremely consistent and the in-car lap timer is working well. Just about all my laps are faster than my best laps in July.

Our competition for this weekend includes the Mini Coopers of Bill Hagerty and Jeff Gerken, Wiley Timbrook has brought out his Mazda 3 and Dono Soeharto will be joining us in his Nissan.

As I mentioned in my last diary, the Mini Coopers are to run with a weight reduction and a restrictor plate over the throttle body to reduce the air going into the car with the goal of reducing horsepower. At the last race, the cars went faster. Phoenix International Raceway is a shorter track. We thought that the restrictor plate would allow the cars to still accelerate quickly, but perhaps their top speed would be reduced. Hopefully, at California Speedway I would be able to get closer. Unfortunately, this isn't the case. The Minis are still extremely quick, at least 3 seconds a lap faster than my Honda.

Qualifying results place me in fourth position with Dono starting from the rear.



The SCCA continues to try and slow down the Mini-Cooper by eliminating all the passenger seats!

Sunday, January 27th

Race, 8:00AM

Our group was going to be the first race group of the day. We received an alarming phone call at 6:00am in the morning mentioning that the race may be starting at 7:30 instead of 8:00. We hustled to the track and asked around, but we were not able to get any clear information. Later it was confirmed that we were to have our cars in Pre-Grid at 7:30, but the race was going to be run at 8:00 on schedule.

Dad was able to come out today and he would be taking video at the infield turns.

After two long pace laps, we took the green flag. The column of cars that I was in made a leap forward and we gained some ground on the surrounding cars. Everything was sane when the group entered the transition into the infield road car. Jeff's Mini was in the lead for our class with Hagerty close behind.

The track was perfect and so was the temperature. My car was going faster than ever and I'm posting times over a second faster than yesterday. Life is good. It took me a while to realize that with the increased speed I need to slow down a little sooner. Early on I kept locking up my rear brakes.



Laura Olson tears up the track at Pole Position!

During the morning, we were visited by Art and Ginger Ragazzi, who raced in SSC several years ago. Paul Bonaccorsi also came out to the track.

After qualifying was over, several of us went out to Pole Position Raceway in Corona to run on the indoor go-kart track. This gave Paul (and his son Forrest), Art and Ginger a chance to put helmets on and get on the track to recapture some glory. Laura Olson and her friend Erik also came out to bang karts with the best.

As I mentioned earlier, the transition to NASCAR Turn 4 is marked with cones, tire barriers and a 40 gallon plastic drum. Naturally, during the race, the cones are knocked over. During one lap, I saw the red/ white strip flag indicating that something was on the track: oil, cones or whatever. Since this is the transition to the straight; it's crucial to not slow down too much. However, oil on the track is very difficult to see at speed and the consequences are dire. I back off a bit to notice that the big blue 40 gallon drum has been knocked over and out of the way. This is quite a relief as I had been passing within a few inches of it at full throttle all weekend.

At another lap, I notice that the second place Viper is parked on the outside of the infield right hander. I later notice that the left wheel was broken. Possible contact with another car.

My race ends with Jeff's Mini in first, followed by Bill and Wiley. I take fourth spot and Dono fifth. The race was pretty uneventful but it was exciting that the car went faster than before.

Lynn and I pack up the trailer and the car. Outside the track, there was a drag meet going on. California Speedway has created 'California Dragway', a 1/8 mile drag strip in the speedway's parking lot. We went and walked the paddock with Dad and watched some of the qualifying rounds of the dragsters and street rods.

Personal Comments

After our last race in Phoenix, we chose to test drive some of the other cars that are classified in SSC. We drove the Mini, the Mazda 3 and the Cobalt just to see their potential. We're going to continue with the Honda for now with hopes that the SCCA will make another attempt to slow down the Mini. Then we might be able to close the gap.



The SCCA's new slower version of the Mini-Cooper.

We received several requests for Lynne Wiegandt's cookie recipe from the race at Phoenix International Raceway. Well, here it is:

The Ultimate Peanut Butter and Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe

(According to Brian Husting)

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sifted Flour
1 teaspoon Baking Soda
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Peanut Butter
1 Egg
2 Tablespoons Milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 package of Milk Chocolate Chips
Small amount of extra sugar for rolling

Cream sugars, butters, egg, milk and vanilla well. Add Flour and soda and mix until dough firms. Add the chocolate chips. Roll into balls about one inch and roll the balls into the extra sugar until coated. Place on ungreased cookie sheet and bake at 375 for 10-12 minutes.
Enjoy---Lynne

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to:

- My wife, Lynn, great job on the radio calling out traffic and for taking the car to the track on Thursday.
- Dan for his help on Saturday.
- Lynne for helping out and for her coffee cake creation.
- Richard James for his attempt at the data acquisition system.
- Art and Ginger Ragazzi for coming out to visit.
- Paul and Forrest Bonaccorsi for coming out to play on the go-karts.
- Dad for the awesome dvd of the race that included the drag and kart racing.
- Laura Olson for the Sunday morning telephone call.

**NEXT RACE
WILLOW SPRINGS
FEBRUARY 26**