

KRYDERACING NEWSLETTER

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“HELPING PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR RACING OBJECTIVES”

TRANSAM REPORTS

The 2014 TransAm season started with back-to-back Florida races. Sebring was scheduled March 2. One week later the team was at Homestead. Early in February we appeared to be in great shape regarding preparations. David's TA Corvette was basically ready to go and a test session was scheduled at Barber on the February 7-9 weekend. The purpose of the test was to check out the new Hoosier tires along with all the prep done to the car during the winter months. The TA2 Camaro was still being offered for sale and it was not scheduled to go to Florida. But it was basically ready to race in case a last minute buyer was found.

Things never seem to go as planned. As the Barber test date approached the availability of the new Hoosier tires started to look doubtful. Last year TA competitors ran Goodyear's and the switch to Hoosier meant a lot of questions had to be resolved regarding vehicle set-ups. A few days before Barber we were informed the rear tires were ready. However, the fronts would need to be shipped directly to Barber, providing they were done in time. If we went to Barber, could we test? The weather forecast (wet and a high of 40 degrees) helped us arrive at a final decision of not going.

During the week following the cancelled Barber test we received a serious inquiry regarding the TA2. Jeff Van Lierop flew from the Northwest, inspected the car, flew home, thought about it, and committed to buying the car. He also hired Kryderacing to finish prepping the car and supply trackside support, starting with the Florida races. The car prep was easy since it was basically ready to go. The biggest job was relocating the seat since Jeff was taller than the previous driver. This required some fabricating and welding. Sandi had been about to place orders for tires, gas, and nitrogen tanks for the TA car, so she simply upped the quantities. She also increased lodging reservations and helped Jeff with licensing and event registration.

One initial problem was manpower. We had planned on trackside support for a single car, now we needed extra personnel. Jeff would be bringing a personal mechanic (Chris Rhom) with him, so that was a start. Normally this would not have been a problem, but Jerry Palmer was already committed to another location on the Sebring weekend (he would be at Homestead) and Matt Carson had previously volunteered to help another TransAm competitor when it appeared we would not need him. The original crew included regulars Matt Miller, Bill Seibold, Reed and Sandi Kryder. Colton Kaisk was also being considered and was quickly confirmed for the trip. Next, Brent Walton managed to get away from the NAPA store he and his dad owned and operated. Brent has a great depth of knowledge about cars and is experienced both at race crew duties and fabricating. We thought we were set, but at the last moment Bill got sick and another substitute was needed. Backstreet Performance is a shop we have done work with many times in the past. It is owned and operated by another father and son team, Rick and Eric Johnson. Eric has a wealth of knowledge and experience. He quickly joined the team, but the last minute timing meant he would be flying to Florida while the rest of the crew took ground transportation.

Meanwhile, Sandi and Reed had left Ohio on February 21 for Destin, Florida. After an enjoyable visit with his Mom, they drove to Sebring on February 26 to meet the team and help set up the paddock area. The evening set-up was done in darkness while raindrops fell. When we finally left the track the only place we found for food was a drive-through McDonalds.

Thursdays test day weather was dry and we thought we were ready, but the TA2 window net assembly had been left back at the shop. It had been removed during the seat relocation. Replacement pieces were quickly obtained and installed, but Jeff missed the first test session. Jeff was on track for the three remaining sessions and looked impressive for someone who had never been to Sebring before and was also driving a new type of car. His lap times usually placed him in the middle of the large TA2 field of competitors. Meanwhile David was getting used to the Hoosier tires. The crew performed a transmission swap and made several minor adjustments. David's lap times were considerably improved over 2013. During the day the car also cracked an exhaust header. A carefully thought-out welding procedure worked, but

there was still enough warping from the welding heat to create a problem with sealing between the header and the cylinder head. A surface grinder was located and the header-to-cylinder head surface was made flat. There was some other work (wheel bearing adjustments, brake pad swaps, etc) which kept the crew at the track late into the evening and resulted in return trip to the same McDonalds.

Friday was a regular practice day consisting of two sessions. Most of the work was routine and it looked as if all would be ready for Saturday's qualifying sessions. The team avoided McDonald's, but it was still somewhat late when they left the track due to the final practice session ending around 5 PM. There is always a lot of regular vehicle checks to be done and working a few hours after the last time the car is on track is routine.

Saturday's only on-track session was qualifying. It was held late in the morning. The team was ready. Assuming everything went well, we were also hoping to get away from the track before nightfall. David's group was first out of the pits with him near the front. Early in the session he spun the car in the first turn, and unfortunately flat-spotted the tires. This might have slowed some people, but he still managed the seventh best time of eighteen TA cars.

Jeff probably wishes flat-spotting of tires had been his problem. On his first flying lap he moved over to let another car by as they approached the last turn (#17). There had been a variety of vintage cars on the track all weekend and they had left a massive amount of "balled up" rubber off of the normal racing line. Jeff got into this mess and discovered he had little in the way of brakes or steering. He ended up going UNDER the tire barrier. The heavy rubber conveyor belt used to hold the tire wall together destroyed the nose area, then continued sliding over the car where it took out the windshield, did considerable damage to the roof, and destroyed the wing. The Camaro ended up sitting behind the tire barrier looking as if it had rolled over several times. Fortunately, Jeff was okay.

Because the car never actually rolled over there seemed to be very little damage to the suspension and drive-train. The radiator was broken and the front toe-in meant something was bent, but otherwise the rest of the undercarriage appeared to have no damage. Numerous teams offered body parts, other items, and help in order to get the Camaro repaired in time for Sunday's race. The TransAm community is always referring to themselves as "family" and it sure felt like it. We might have tried to make repairs for the next day had we been at Sebring for the 12-Hour, or if it had been in the middle of the season and Jeff was chasing points. But the damage was extensive, we hadn't yet done a thorough inspection of the undercarriage, getting it properly repaired would be a crapshoot with us crossing our fingers the next day, the majority of any repair work would be a "band-aid" and probably need replacing after the race weekend, and it was Jeff's first TransAm race. If ever there was a time to set aside the "never give up" attitude Kryderacing adopted during our IMSA years, this was it. While no one was happy, we all agreed on the final decision. Jeff dropped out of the Sebring event and cancelled his Homestead entry. His car will undergo a chassis/drivetrain inspection back at our shop before heading to Howe for a complete body rebuild. The crew loaded the Camaro into the trailer and went about prepping the Corvette for Sunday's race. Jeff will be back in the future, but it may be later than originally planned.

There was one additional work-list item to normal pre-race prep with the TA Corvette. David had hired a person to help with analyzing computer data and making recommendations on chassis setup. Doug came highly recommended since he performed the same services for last year's TA Champion. After reviewing all the sessions through qualifying, Doug determined the car needed to be scaled, a rear anti-sway bar change needed to be made, the car was to be lowered, and shock settings would need adjustments. The first step was to properly set up the scales and get some good readings. Leveling the scales takes some time and we had not set them up earlier. After scaling, the car was put on jack-stands and the rear anti-sway bar and shocks were removed. The plan to change the rear anti-sway bar had been on the list from the beginning of the day. Doug said he knew where he could borrow the one he wanted used. Unfortunately, after removing the unit on the car, we found out the other team did not pack the desired bar. This meant Doug's calculations for shock and spring set-ups needed to be redone. That took some time on his laptop. Meanwhile, the crew was standing around looking for small things to do. The TA2 had already been packed away for the weekend and Doug had told them not to touch the TA. It was starting to look like another McDonald's night. Things got worse when it was determined replacement shock units were required. We found the desired shocks, but the mounting method to the frame was different and would need to be fabricated. The next problem was the equipment needed to fabricate these parts was locked up in another competitor's rig. They had already left for the evening. But every cloud has a silver lining. In this case, since work could not continue late into Saturday evening, McDonald's was avoided. After several long and tiring days, the crew actually found some liquid refreshment and enjoyed a decent dinner.

A short warm-up was scheduled for 11 AM on race-day. There was still the issue of making shock mount pieces, recalibrating the new shocks, determining spring perch locations for ride height reasons, attaching the shocks/springs to the car, rescaling, and checking alignment. Everyone was busy. David stayed with the car for scaling purposes while Reed attended the Driver's Meeting. (Did we ever tell you there is a photo of Reed driving our old IMSA GTU car amongst the Sebring Hall of Fame photos? This was in the room where the driver's meeting was held and it was the first time Reed actually saw the photo.) After all the changes to the Corvette's set-up it performed flawlessly during warm-up.

It wasn't necessarily any faster, but David seemed happy with it. A few last minute tweaks were made and we were ready to race.

David had to start at the back of the 18-car TA field since we had swapped the flat-spotted qualifying tires for something rounder. He started moving through the field, but the top qualifiers were pulling away. A full course caution several laps into the race found David up to tenth and back in site of the leaders. When the race restarted the top five pulled away as a pack. By the time David worked his way into sixth he was over twenty seconds behind them. With the race half over there was little hope of improving his position without someone up front having a problem or a second full course caution. Neither happened, and with two laps to go David and the seventh place car were nose to tail. Eighth place was far behind.

But the race wasn't over. The lowering of the car was creating damage. The Sebring bumps are legendary and cause a lot of headaches, even when the car is not bottoming out. The oil cooler loosened itself from its carriage and managed to make contact with the crank pulley bolt. A small pin-hole leak started spraying oil on the engine with a little more than a lap to go. The Corvette started laying down a terrific amount of oil smoke. David didn't know what was happening but he still had oil pressure and didn't want to stop. It took most of the final lap for the car behind him to make the pass. David still held seventh and he managed to finish there. We talked with some of the track crew following the race and they said there was no evidence of David ever dropping oil on the track, just lots of smoke. Looking at the car back in the paddock it was evident all the oil which had not been turned into smoke was coating the entire undercarriage of the Corvette.

Considering all of the late nights at Sebring we were relieved to have had at least the TA Corvette finish in the points. The TA2 Camaro will live to see better days and from what we saw of Jeff's driving, he will easily run in the front half of the class. We do question all the changes we made to the Corvette just prior to the race. Not the changes themselves, but the timing of them. If we had needed to put the set-up back to what it had been before qualifying, there would not have been sufficient time to complete the work. And the potential impact of the lowered ride height and damage caused by the rough track was an unknown prior to the race. David was the "2013 TA Rookie of the Year" and he is definitely faster this year. But if he is to improve in the points standing we need to concentrate on both lap times and reliability. Reliability can be impacted by many things, including the procedures used during a race weekend. See the end of this newsletter for additional comments on this subject.

Sunday night after Sebring David and Jeff were on flights back to their homes, Reed and Sandi headed for Naples to visit more relatives, and the crew was headed to the same area with a very long list of work items to complete before heading to Homestead on Wednesday. Sandi and Reed did not attend the Homestead race due to obligations which had them in Charlotte for the SCCA National Convention.

The crew arrived in Homestead after hours of work cleaning and prepping the car. Things went relatively good and David looked like he was in the top four as far as lap times were concerned. This time the guys made massive changes prior to qualifying (instead of the race). This was fortunate because the changes did not work as expected. The Corvette qualified ninth on the grid, but there was time to change back to its previous set-up. David advanced early in the race before being caught up in another car's incident. The resulting stop to replace a flattened tire dropped him to the back. He steadily worked his way forward again before problems with rear brake wear caused him to retire near the end of the event. The cause of the brake problem is under investigation. Was it mechanical problems, chassis set-up related, wrong compound choice, or something else? Initial investigation suggests a harder brake pad compound may have been required, but we will continue to look at other possibilities.

Everyone has returned home and the cars are in the shop. Next on the schedule are Road Atlanta and Mosport in May.

2014 KRYDERACING REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

The dates and locations have been finalized.

April 27	Steel Cities Regional at Pittsburgh International Race Complex
June 14-15	Steel Cities Regional at Pittsburgh International Race Complex
June 21-22	Finger Lakes Regional at Nelson Ledges Road Course
July 26-27	Mahoning Valley Regional at Nelson Ledges Road Course
Sept 13-14	Finger Lakes Regional ("The Fun One") at Watkins Glen Road Course
Sept 27-28	Mahoning Valley Regional at Nelson Ledges Road Course
Nov 22	Awards Banquet

Information regarding point structure, rules, etc should be on the www.kryderacing.com website around the time you receive this newsletter. Rules remain basically unchanged from previous years. We did not include whether each weekend was a single, double, or other type of event because recent rule changes on the national level have some of the Regions evaluating their weekend event structures. Each weekend, regardless of its structure, will contain the same amount of Kryderacing Series points.

SAFETY TRAINING DAY

On Saturday, April 19 the award winning Nelson Ledges Safety Team will hold their annual training sessions at the track. If you were ever interested in being part of a team which gets very close to the action on a race track and actually saves people's lives, this is your chance. Additional information can be found at www.nelsonledges.com or by calling Denny Freeman at 440-344-6734.

There are a couple of other activities planned for the day. Driver physicals and annual vehicle techs will be performed. Check www.nelsonledges.com for contact information.

There is also the possibility of a SCCA PDX being held that day. The idea is to offer it in conjunction with the safety training, but you do not need to take part with the safety stuff. The PDX is like a Funday but will include in-car instruction. Email reedkryder@aol.com if you want to be kept informed.

TIRERACK STREET SURVIVAL

It is scheduled for April 27 and will be held at Boardman Park (near Youngstown). This is a great opportunity to get teenagers some "hands-on" training dealing with real-life emergency situations experienced while driving. This will be the third event held by the Mahoning Valley Region of the SCCA. The previous two ended with big smiles on the faces of the participants and instructors. Contact akghs64@aol.com for information. This is a nationwide, not-for-profit program. The cost is \$75, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Parents are encouraged to attend (they can even enter and participate).

QUOTES TO LIVE BY

"The high-minded person must care more for the truth than what people think."

"The biggest challenge frequently is getting the job done while remaining calm."

"Win-win should always be the goal for contracts and agreements."

"A hero is someone who gets the job done."

SHOP STATUS

There has been an increase in our workload, mainly at the shop. Matt Miller, Colton Kask, Jerry Palmer, Larry Ritz, Matt Carson, and others can be found at the shop working full- or part-time. Several of them work full-time at other jobs and bring their skills in specific areas as needed. Others have full-time jobs, but are weekend warriors when we go to a race track. They are all experienced and skilled. But that doesn't mean we aren't always looking for additional help.

HISTORY

A couple of recent events have made us realize just how long we have been around. The Sebring Hall of Fame photo was taken during an early 1990's IMSA race. That photo is over twenty years old! Reed occasionally meets for lunch with friends he worked with while designing race tires for Goodyear. That time period spans 1976-1984. They are all retired, so he keeps them informed on news regarding some old acquaintances from the racing world. And while attending a session at the recent SCCA National Convention entitled "Tall Tales with SCCA Legends and 70 Year Retrospective with Pete Hylton" Reed was spotted in the audience and asked to contribute. There were many others contributing and it was nice to be included with people such as Jim Downing and Bob Bondurant. And about a month ago we received an email from someone living in Texas who had spotted an old photo of one of our IMSA cars and was wondering if we were the same people he auto-crossed with in the early seventies. The answer was "yes".

CLOSING COMMENT (Reed)

This is my fortieth year racing cars. There were several prior years spent auto-crossing. Along the way I have been involved with many sports car racing efforts, both amateur and professional. I have driven, crewed, coached, managed, designed race tires for Goodyear, developed the designs and built our own tube-frame and "tub" race cars. There is very little I (and Sandi) have not experienced or had to deal with during those years. Some people reading this newsletter might be asking how we could let things spin out of control regarding the last minute suspension changes done at Sebring. Good question.

In hindsight, it was a combination of "timing" and "team chemistry" issues. The "timing" of the additional Saturday night work items at Sebring was not what most of us desired. We all tried to accommodate Doug, but the "team chemistry" was severely stressed. Matt Miller made some changes at Homestead which helped. David is aware of the problem. More adjustments are planned for future races.

Recently I have watched a couple of shows and read some articles regarding champions, racing and otherwise. One common thread was they never stopped trying to learn. Sticking to old, proven, and even successful ways of doing things was not their path towards improvement. Sometimes they stumbled, but they learned. I fully expect what happened during the Florida TransAm races will improve the Kryderacing Team.

The forgotten window net was also something I was not happy about when the problem was discovered. However, I was proud of a couple of team members who volunteered part of the blame by saying they should have noticed it earlier. I like that attitude a lot better than "it was his/her fault".

Check www.kryderacing.com for weekly updates.