



RACER UPDATE

TODAY IS MONDAY, JULY 10, 2017

ISSUE NUMBER 85

The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix Edition

Rick sez:

FANTASTIC! That's all I can say about the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix this past week end. The very best part was all three Corvairs finished Sunday's feature race. Up to that time there were some issues especially with the Dernoshek team. They were fighting flying fan belts and a seriously leaking driver side valve cover which drips on the header causing the officials to think he was blowing an engine and was black flagged once. I believe they also have the record for number of times coming in on the rope but in spite of it all Logan was the fastest Corvair as expected.

Dave Edsinger had no issues to speak of and flew around the track as usual. Dave has more than a few laps at this track especially on the new extended portion.

I on the other hand was on the learning curve since the last time I was here was in 2011. The new extension called the South Track was not finished as only the initial grading was done. The new track is now a nineteen turn 2.78 miles for the full version which includes the North Track short version or old Beaverun part which is 1.2 miles. There are several elevation changes and is somewhat technical. The facilities have been and are constantly upgraded. Paved paddock areas are my favorite part! They are currently working on a new timing tower to replace the two story trailer. This place has come a long way from the old Beaverun where I took my first driver schooling with one of the original owners. I'll always have a place in my heart for the Beve.

Corvair Alley's racing team had a few trials not the least of which was the driver trying to figure out the track. During my first practice and qualify runs I spun in turn 3 due to the oil and speedy dry. There were several instances of a car oiling down the whole track and for more than a lap! This caused a few long delays to get it all cleaned up. I knew that crap was on the track but I was concentrating on the line when I realized the line was also the oil trail!

When it got loose I just put both feet in and waited until it stopped spinning. Corvairs most always do a 180 then go backwards. I did get the wheels off so I went to the pit lane as we were told. They had no idea why I was there until I told them. The guy did a walk around and gave the signal to go back on track. I must have been the only one that did that. There were more than a few that came in on the roll back.

During the Saturday Sprint race the engine was running a bit funky then I heard one of those sounds you think is a blown engine. I pulled off at a flag station and cut the ignition then had to sit there until the session was over while watching Dave whiz by on his merry way. I did have company as Logan pulled off ahead of me with the belt off again. As I sat there I had plenty of time to drag up all the worst case scenarios concerning the engine and the possibility of plugging in the backup engine. Finally it was over so I stepped out to see what may have happened. There it was number 5 spark plug was completely out of the engine hanging on the end of the wire! I've never had that experience before but the good part was I managed to thread it back in enough by hand so I could drive back to the paddock. Nobody likes to come in on the rope! Also Logan replaced the belt and drove back too. He was getting a lot of experience doing that.

Back in the paddock Jeff Grahovic, my new Pit Monkey extraordinaire and I were figuring out what happened and how do we fix it. Well, I was hoping the plug would tighten back up but the thread insert was stripped. Damn! Of course I did not have a spark plug repair kit and apparently neither did anyone else we asked. That initiated a trip to the local FLAPS for said kit. My real concern was can I cut the larger threads in the aluminum insert without destroying it. Luck was on our side as the new insert went in fine and we were back in business. I checked the other plugs and they were all loose but torqued up fine. I am blaming myself for this as I did not tighten the plugs down enough to properly crush the gasket and maintain the torque. That will not happen again! I still do not know how the number 5 plug insert was stripped. These heads will go back to my main man Tom Knoblauch for a proper weld and rethread with no damn inserts!

Sunday's Feature Race was supposed to happen for Group 4 at 11:50 but due to another of the three oiling down the track incidents it was delayed until 1:15. I had all that time to doubt my engine! Again the luck of the Irish was with me and the engine ran well. I didn't start at the back of the pack as the starting positions for Sunday's feature was based on your best time during Saturday's Sprint race. That put me starting the Sunday race 19th out of 45 cars.

The Feature Race was possibly one of the best I have ever had. It was one of those times when all the trials, tribulations and expenditures were validated. After passing some other cars I got behind a 72 Lotus Europa driven by Thomas Upsur who was behind a MGB driven by Michael Zappa. The three of us were kind of even except I was catching them in some corners. The Lotus and I passed each other back and forth a few times and he was trying to get around the MGB. I was trying to get them both. I was making his mirrors full of big red Corvair and I finally got a point by as he later said I was wearing him out. Now it was the

MGB's turn. I was all over him, dodging back and forth trying to rattle him. I knew I could out drag him if I had enough straight track but I needed to get a run on him. As we were coming out of turn 6 which is a slow tight uphill right hander I managed to get second gear where I have good torque and raced him down the short chute into turn 7 where I got inside which put him off line and I was gone! By the time I got back to the paddock I was grinning like a Cheshire cat, sweating like a pig and out of breath but vibrating with excitement!

I finished 17th out of 45 cars. Group 4 had the largest number of entries with 51 drivers not all of which made the grid. During my on track dice I turned my best lap at a 2:10.323. Still not up there with Dave and Logan but not bad for an old fat bald guy!

Again I say thanks to all the folks that make the PVGP the fun event it is. Also my Pit Monkey team of Jeff Grahovic and Corvair Kady aka Darlene. It was great having them in our paddock. Jeff is an automotive tech by trade and is an eager and fast learner.

All the Corvair Racers were not able to paddock together but Warren and Logan Dernoshek were only two spots away while Dave and Judy Edsinger who arrived late Thursday night was up by the timing stand in a very good spot.

One really great thing about this event in spite of the issues is all three Corvairs finished the feature race and Friday was my birthday. No better way to spend it than at the track.

Logan finished 13th with a fast lap of 2:08.339.

Dave finished right behind Logan in 14th with a fast lap of 2:08.839.

I finished 17th with a fast lap of 2:10.323.

Damn good I say!

Last but not least was Russ Rosenberg who dragged an old BMW four holer up from Texas. It was great to meet face to face and share a few beers. He also has a Corvair race car but brought the Beemer because it fits Schenley Park better where he will race it next week end. Even though he was in Group 4 and the car has a mostly stock four cylinder engine it was fun blowing his doors off! Big Grin!





Russ Rosenberg, Logan Dernoshchek, Warren Dernoshchek, Rick Norris



Father and son, Logan and Warren Dernoshek



No mosquitos were harmed



Janet got her press credentials



Judy Edsinger and her putt putt



Some Pennsylvania crude, oil that is



Logan Dernoshhek



Dave Edsinger



Rick Norris, yes it's down hill

There will be a full album on the Racers Facebook page.

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