



Chicago, July 28, 2009, NASA Midwest, Inc.

Autobahn Country Club/July 17-19, 2009/NASA Midwest

944 Spec at Autobahn – Racing with family, and for Charity

NASA Midwest 944 Spec had an action packed weekend at Autobahn Country Club in Joliet, IL. The weekend resulted in getting family & friends out for NASA's annual family day, raising money for children's charities, and enjoying great racing with some fun twists thrown in.

One weekend a year, NASA Midwest hosts a family day in order to get everyone involved in the racing excitement. Several racers brought their families, who enjoyed a bounce house, pedal car races, several other fun activities. It was a toss up who had more fun; the big kids (aka drivers) or the little kids.

Meanwhile, the morning race started with some excitement of it's own, as the front-runners picked their way through the Spec Miata hordes. Andy Berberich managed traffic well, and pulled out to a lead from pole. Eric Kuhns and Ray Freundt changed places three times in the early laps, before slower traffic held up Freundt and gave Kuhns some breathing room to come in second behind Berberich. Freundt held onto third. Joel Karns, Michael Palmer and Mike Dalton rounded out the field respectively. New to 944 Spec racing, Palmer drove the Bennington Motorsports/944 Raceworks rental car for the weekend. Palmer's car is in the process of being completed and he took this opportunity to get some valuable seat time.

There is a racing adage "to finish first, you must first finish." To this should be added: "legally." In the second race Saturday, a series of miscues on weight and some racing infractions affected much of the field. Dalton was the only driver to stay out of trouble, which earned him his first 944 Spec win! The only other finisher was Berberich who rounded out the field in second place and with a new track record of 1:42.6.

Thanks to the efforts of Bennington Motorsports and the Hartman family, all 944's were ready to race again on Sunday. In fact, of the 28 944 Spec race entries this year, only one 944 Spec car has been unable to complete the entire weekend due to a mechanical issue. This success is due in part to thorough, affordable, and friendly trackside support by series sponsor Bennington Motorworks.

Sunday brought yet another twist into the racing: a pursuit race for 944 Spec. Handicapped by their fastest times from the previous days races, each driver was staged and released from pit lane according to their calculated finish time. Theoretically, all cars would cross the finish line at the same time. In the end it was close, with 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the field within ¼ lap at the finish. This made for some



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exciting racing, with Palmer and Dalton battling through the last lap, and Kuhns using their sparring to his advantage, passing them both just before the white flag. Berberich put on a heady charge from the back after being released into the middle of the rest of the field and racing door to door with Freundt for an entire lap. Series Rookie Palmer drove consistently to finish second. Berberich, Freundt, Karns, & Dalton raced cleanly to finish out the weekend for the six car field.

Adding to the excitement is the continual growth of the class. Nick Miller of Bennington Motorsports took delivery of a 944 to transform into a Spec Racer, and took orders on two more. Sudhir Chhikara also ran HPDE in his beautiful 911, while his 944 Spec car awaits a windshield to be able to come out and play! Four more racecars on the way!

Much fun was had by all and almost \$1,000 was raised for charity throughout the weekend. Many thanks to NASA, for donating an HPDE day to the cause, and the CGH Health Foundation for donating many of the kid's prizes. Special mention to Berberich and Co-op Racing as well. Andy and his wife Shawn are matching their contingency winnings with donations to The Children's Hospital of Illinois. Details of their ongoing contributions and how others can contribute can be found at [www.co-opracing.com](http://www.co-opracing.com).

Thanks also to our sponsors:

- Bennington Motorsports – 944 Spec preparation & service specialist
- A Part Above – Used Porsche parts source
- Toyo Tires – Spec tire source
- Hawk Pads and Andrew Racing – superior stopping power

Thanks to those who volunteer in support of our passion:

- The wives, especially the “real” series director Linda Kuhns
- The entire Hartman family – Jim, Dawn, Kelby & Celine
- The many NASA volunteers

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