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Blackhawk Farms Raceway/August 8-9, 2009/NASA Midwest

944 Spec at Blackhawk Farms – Shaking it Up!

Blackhawk Farms saw new racers, new winners, extreme weather, and a lot of great, clean racing on its second visit from the NASA 944 Spec racers this year. Andrew Cox joined the gang with the first 924S in the Midwest. In only his third race overall, Andrew was deep into racing right away. Here's a snippet of his weekend in his own words:

Race #2 on Saturday was the most exciting. About 4 laps in, I finally passed Mike [Dalton] and hoped to keep climbing ahead, though I soon saw his rear bumper again. We were back and forth a few times. During the last lap, he pulled ahead when I got the bad end of the traffic stick. In turn 7, I made a final pass as we raced side by side down the straight to the checkered flag. I finished a hair ahead, winning the race [with Mike] by only 0.336 seconds!

Saturday started with rain in qualifying, where Ray Freundt used his dirt track experience to good use. He made his first front row start, foreshadowing a breakout weekend for him. At the start of the race, heavy traffic forced season points leader Andy Berberich into a spin. No contact ensued, and Beberich moved his way through the pack to finish in third place. Kuhns and Freundt swapped the lead a couple of times before finishing first and second, respectively. Angel Blasquez held off newer racers Michael Palmer, Andrew Cox, and Michael Dalton, who finished in that order.

Saturday's second race grid was set by fastest lap times from the first, with Kuhns in front of Berberich & Freundt. The three drivers all led during the race – Berberich on lap one. Kuhns & Freundt got by in traffic, with Kuhns taking the lead on lap two, only to have Freundt grab the lead by lap three! Lots of tight racing happened early! Using a BMW M3 as a pick, Kuhns got by Freundt for good shortly thereafter, leaving Berberich & Freundt to pass & repass each other in traffic, working around the same M3! Andrew Cox moved up impressively, with a photo finish for fourth, as he recounts above.

Sunday started with the same front of grid order as the last race. This time it was Berberich who picked his way through the Spec Miatas to establish a clear early lead. Kuhns & Freundt went nose to tail and gradually reeled Berberich in. Coming into turn 7, Freundt out-braked Berberich. Kuhns used the opportunity to get inside the two of them, and the three cars went down the front straight in tight formation, jockeying for position into Turn one. Freundt stayed out ahead, Kuhns slotted into second, and Berberich was moved back to third after corner one. Kuhns' elation lasted all of 100 feet, when he went to shift to fourth and found... nothing. A loose c-clip in the transmission linkage left him in third gear, for good, and he retired the next lap. Freundt & Berberich had an epic battle for the duration of the race, sometimes side by side in fast sections of the track. Freundt was flawless, earning him his first win of the year, with Berberich earning a second. Michael Palmer got himself on the podium for the second race weekend in a row, with a third in the Bennington Motorsports/944Raceworks rental car, continuing that car's streak



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of podium finishes with several drivers. This time, Michael Dalton was able to finish ahead of Andrew Cox, to finish their weekend of close racing.

With the season coming into it's final stretch, early season stand-out Berberich remains the points leader and Kuhns keeps his hopes alive with a strong weekend, notching two first place finishes. Freundt also closes up in the points with his first and second place finishes. With 7 cars this weekend, and 5 or more each weekend this year, 944 Spec now qualifies for regional championship Toyo bucks making the season total Toyo bucks for this year, totalling \$6,000! Andrew Cox won the "A Part Above" contingency to help him replace the oil pan he cracked on his über low 924S this weekend. Hawk pads again paid out it's contingency to the first and second place cars as well. Series sponsor Bennington Motorsports kept all the cars running to start Sunday's race, with many hours of expert trackside support and parts supply. Nick of Bennington has helped Spec cars make over 80 race starts this year, with only one car/driver unable to start each race of the weekend this year – a testament to his ability, and the durability of the 944 Spec cars! More fun more often by more people – that's 944 Spec!

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