



Chicago, July 15, 2009, NASA Midwest, Inc.

Mid Ohio Sports Car Course/July 10-12, 2009/NASA Great Lakes

## Great Lakes and East Coast FFR's Battle at Mid-Ohio

Wow, 12 FFR Challenge series cars at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course felt like the Nationals (almost) – and we had the opportunity to race together with a rolling start. Almost like being in FFR heaven! Brian Sanders did a SUPERB job in getting the gang together for some REALLY close racing in beautiful weather – we dodged the bullet on Saturday with a “gully washer” in-between qualifying and the race. Andrew Switlyk came up from Florida, Jim Schenck, John George, Wayne Patterson and Carl Thompson came West, and Brian Sanders, Lyle Rikken, Gregory and Gregg Wellinghoff, Peter LaRose and Mike Dziurgalski (locals) made up the rest of the field. Wes Holiday ran his Challenge Car in HPDE 4.

The Great Lakes Region introduced a new procedure and used the practice times to grid people up for the qualifying session – it really worked well and they decided to make it a standard procedure. It sure encourages everyone to get out for practice and in qualifying everyone is close to folks with equivalent times.

Saturdays qualifying saw Jim Schenck with the best time of 1:42.013. Andrew Switlyk and John George were right behind him in the 1:42's. Carl and Brian were next in the 1:43's, Lyle in the 1:44's, Peter and Mike in the 46's, with Wayne, Gregg, and Gregory in the 1:47's. So the stage was set and it was supposed to RAIN for the race. Well, the storm blew through with a couple of inches of water and it actually dried before the race. We did get a scare as there were “sprinkles” during the warm up lap, but it stayed dry.



When the Green Flag dropped on the rolling start on the back straight it was a mad dash for turn 3. For the next 4-5 laps there were multiple lead changes with Andrew, John, Jim, and Carl swapping back and forth – boy was it close- and the competition was fierce. Eventually Andrew ended up sideways after the fast left hander past “madness” right in front of Jim. Jim then broke away from the rest of us and established a lead over John and then a gap to Carl. Each of us tried to catch the one in front, but threading through traffic didn't allow it to happen. At the end, Jim was about 5 seconds ahead of John and then another 7 seconds back to Carl. Jim turned a best time of 1:42.485. Brian



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came in 4<sup>th</sup>, Lyle 5<sup>th</sup> and Gregg and Peter were next, separate by only .35 seconds. Then it was Wayne, Gregory, Mike and Andrew.

After the Saturday race – it started at 1:25, Carl fired up the grille and it was time for some BBQ Chicken, veggies, crackers, cheese – and some fantastic home-made pies (apple and peach) made by Julie Rikken – they were yummy. Oh, and maybe some liquid refreshment too. Then it was time to take care of the cars. Brian had a major brake issue and no spares. However, John offered up a set of rotors and pads. Brake issues also plagued Peter as he replaced everything. Lyle had a spring change. Others tinkered and made sure everything was in order. Wrapping up repairs the drivers headed over for the NASA dinner and awards.



Sunday dawned bright and sunny and the gang was back for more practice and qualifying. The times got faster and Jim turned a 1:41.000, Carl a 1:41.537, Brian, Andrew, and John turned in the 1:42s, Gregory and Lyle in the 1:43s, Gregg and Wayne in the 1:44, and Peter in the 1:45s. After qualifying it was grill time with fried egg and bacon sandwiches – everyone had to keep their strength up! As John went to change wheels he found a stud that simply spun in the rotor.



Another rolling start had a dash for the corner again and essentially Jim, John, and Carl ran away from the rest of the folks. John had a fuse problem with his injectors that took him out. Carl tried to chase down Jim, but his was just too fast. Jim turned a best lap of 1:41.756, Carl at 1:41.869, and Brian at 1:41.903. Brian, Andrew, and Lyle swapped position a number of times and finished in that order. Then it was Gregory, Gregg, Peter, Wayne, Mike and John out early. Once again it was fantastic racing and everyone had tons of fun, lots to eat, and a great time. Let's do it again soon!



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Photos Courtesy of Julie Riggen

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