

Special Ed: A Course in Autocross

For nine straight years, the Saturday of Labor Day weekend has meant autocrossing at Corning Community College for the Glen Region. This year the weather was perfect excepting showers just before the start, the course interesting, and the mood upbeat as 41 drivers celebrated the unofficial end of summer, by trying to avoid cones at one of our traditional and more popular sites. It turned out to be a long day by Glen Region standards, but I don't remember anyone being particularly upset by the time as it meant eight runs apiece.

There are many reasons that the Corning Community College site is a Glen Region favorite. It is well maintained and set in a lovely, bucolic residential section atop a hill with lovely views. The lot, itself, rolls down a hillside in two different directions offering different levels of adhesion and inclines on which to drive, a real challenge. This year the course designers chose to use two lots separated by one-lane crossovers, instead of just one lot as in past years. To keep things safe, walls of orange cones lined the crossovers, although only one driver, whose name shall remain a secret to prevent well-deserved embarrassment, seemed to be affected. He enjoyed a daily high 9 cones killed at the site. The course, itself, began with a slow-speed kink to the left emptying into the "Greg Pierce Memorial Crossover" to the second lot (Forget the secret part, Greg, you deserve the publicity!). From the crossover the course veered right, then left then right again to enter a counterclockwise pin turn surrounded closely by a box o' orange. Leaving the box in a tight, arcing left turn dumped the driver onto the second crossover, also lined with a palisade of orange. After the very brief trip through the crossover the course arced counterclockwise and off camber in a relatively fast, but challenging layout of cones. The downward extent of the course was marked by a turn/gate that had three cones on the starboard side (Don't ask how I remember) before running back up to the top of the lot to reenter the first crossover, repeating the course before exiting.

There were several sizeable classes present at the event, with two classes, H-Stock and F125 Shifter Kart, each having six drivers. Additionally, there were four entrants each in F-Stock, G-Stock, Street Touring S, and Street Touring X, while A-Stock and Street Modified 2 managed three competitors apiece. A nice grouping! In H-Stock it was a battle royal between Richard Ayers (Honda Civic Si) and Todd Sullivan (2008 Honda Civic) as the lead changed hands a few times before Rich put it away with an incredibly fast and final run to take the G-Stock trophy home. Behind Richard and Todd were Kyle Colbey (1991 Infiniti G20) for third place and first time driver, Gene Ritter (2007 Suzuki SX4), for fourth. In the

equally large but much louder and obnoxious F125 Shifter Kart Class was an equally incredible battle. Three teams driving three different karts fought for bragging rights, but in the end Casey Creamer (MW Chassis 100cc HPV) took the class trophy. More importantly, he also took FTD with an outstanding run and despite every effort by second place finisher, Rob Craig (1991 Techno Kart) to get by him. Ryan Jones (MW Chassis 100cc HPV) managed to nail down third place to give Team Creamer the Kart Team Honors over Teams Scopelliti and Coulombe (Eclipse Kart).

In F-Stock, the word was Bret Bauer (2000 Camaro SS) and the word was good. All of Bret's times fell within an approximate one-second range and any of his times were good enough to earn the coveted PAX award as well as the F-Stock trophy. In second place was David Hendrickson (1987 Camaro) and in third was David Hendrickson (1987 Camaro). Over in G-Stock Mark Lockhart (BMW Mini Cooper S) had a great day and easily took class honors with Cody Chambers (Subaru Impreza 2.5RS) taking second and Brian Balliet (2003 Nissan Altima) coming in third. Although I normally do not mention finishers outside of the top three slots, I make an exception when a driver shows incredible improvement and fourth place Jenn Follette (2004 Dodge Neon), a novice, did just that. Jenn showed a significant up-tick in her PAX results this event, suggesting that she could become a force with which to be reckoned in the future. Nice driving, Jenn.

Street Touring S saw 1/10 of a second separation between first place driver Peter Hirschey (2000 Impreza 2.5RS) and Allan Kintz (Scion TC), who took second. Now that's competition! Jake Gellis (1998 Pontiac Grand AM GT), a novice autocrosser, did well and managed a respectable third place on his first outing. Over in Street Touring X, less than 2/3 of a second (and about 9 cones) separated the first place from the fourth place driver. That's what you call an aggressive class! Still, someone has to win and Greg Pierce (1987 325is) did the honor, followed by car owner and uncle, John Pierce. Ken Moyer did the unthinkable by mooching a ride (2005 BMW Mini) then taking third place in Street Touring X from car owner Matt Lockhart. Ken, you have no pride.

A slick surface for the first couple of runs kept A-Stock drivers Skip Testut (2001 Honda S2000), Ben Heater (2004 Subaru WRX STi), and Eric Navestad (2000 Honda S2000) from realizing their potential, but as the day wore on the track dried and the times improved. Skip managed to edge out Ben and Eric by just enough. By the way, Ben is now accepting donations to buy new tires, if anyone is interested in becoming a sponsor, while Eric remains distracted by his "October Event."

Finally, in Street Modified 2 the Battle of the Raymond Clan (1992 Mazda Miata) continued with father Dave having an outstanding day and son, Colin, having to wait for another opportunity to get his revenge. If you haven't been paying attention to Street Modified 2, you should. With six events under their belts and possibly two events remaining, Dave leads Colin by 0.13 of a point, 592.32 to 592.19. The Family Raymond isn't the only interesting driving going on in Street Modified 2, as Nathan Walczyk (2001 Chevrolet Silverado), who may not have the ideal autocross vehicle, earned third place at Corning and overall for the season and has shown what "Keep on truckin'" really means. Not since 1996 and Paul Schelling has the Glen Region seen a pickup so consistently in the running.

There were several other single and two car classes at the event that are well worth checking out along with all of the official results online at <http://www.glen-scca.org/solo/schedule.asp>. Once again a special thanks to all the people who helped put together this event. Unfortunately, my emails were not completely answered so I don't know whom to thank specifically and for which tasks, but I do know that Ryan Jones came all the way from Buffalo to chair the event, that Richard and Cody worked registration, that Ken Moyer and Ben Heater served as Safety Stewards, and that Bret Bauer, Casey Creamer, Eric Navestad, and Ben Heater took extra time out of their schedule on the previous day to design and layout the course. Thanks to all of you.

The next event is scheduled for Sunday, September 28 at the Arnot Mall in Fisherville/Big Flats. Brett Bourdette, will be chairing. As usual, more information is available on our website at <http://www.glen-scca.org/solo/schedule.asp>.

We'll keep the timing lights on for you.