

NASA 944 Spec Midwest Round 1 Recap -- Getting the (Snow!) Ball Rolling

Written by Neal Agran
Friday, 10 May 2013 00:00

NASA's Midwest Region 944 Spec season opened to frigid temperatures and the occasional flurry at Autobahn Country Club on April 19-21. As always, the racing was exceptional.

Race 1 – Saturday, April 20

Eric Kuhns took the pole for the first race of the season in his vintage Sunoco liveried car. Neal Agran earned the outside front row, followed by Sam Grant, Angel Blazquez, Sid Chhikara, and Dan Pina. At the start, Kuhns held the lead over Agran as Pina began a rapid surge to third. However, Pina ran wide at the exit of turn 5 in lap 3 while on Agran's bumper and after a long journey across the wet grass found himself trapped in the mud.

As the race progressed, Grant and Blazquez engaged in a tight battle for third amidst occasional snow flurries. Kuhns took the win at the flag with a new lap record of 1:39.0, followed closely by Agran, Grant, and Blazquez (separated by 0.4 seconds!). Chhikara retired midway through with a leaking oil cooler.

Action photos courtesy of Noah Kuehmichel – [check out the new liveries for 2013!](#)

Race 2 – Saturday, April 20

Agran earned the pole for Race 2 in a wild, two lap qualifying session, followed by Kuhns, Grant, Blazquez, and Pina. Kuhns assumed the lead at the start from the outside in the turn 1-2 complex, followed by Agran, Grant, Blazquez, and Pina through turn 3. While Agran and Kuhns stretched out a gap, an outstanding 3-way battle for 3rd raged throughout the race. When the dust cleared, Grant, Blazquez, and Pina had each held the position.

Kuhns took the win, followed by Agran, Grant, Blazquez, and Pina (nipped for 4th by 0.2 seconds). Pina was subsequently DQ'd for being underweight.

Outstanding morning warmup video of Agran & Kuhns sparring, taken from Kuhns' fender
{vimeo}65609702{/vimeo}

Enduro – Friday, April 19

Several 944 Spec drivers contested the first round of the 2013 Midwest Endurance Challenge in slippery conditions on Friday afternoon. Ray Freundt, Grant, and Blazquez each ran the event as a 90 minute test and tune, while Agran and Kuhns teamed up again in Kuhns' #80 car to make a run at a repeat E3 series championship.

The race opened to standing water and occasional flurries, switching over to wet conditions and steady sleet at the midpoint. Agran and Kuhns kept a steady pace and stayed out of trouble in the treacherous conditions, earning a surprise overall win. The Kaplan Racing E3 Miata gave chase throughout the event, but came up second overall, followed in third by the E0 Team

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Sarsfield Mustang. Sam Grant deserves special mention for capturing the fastest E3 lap of the race.

Epilogue

Besides having an outstanding time, Midwest 944 Spec drivers took home over \$1300 in TOYO, HAWK, and BFG contingency dollars this weekend. A special thanks is due to Jim and Kelby Hartman of Pine Tree Motorsports, who again offered technical support to all competitors during the event.

Round 2 will take place at Putnam Park Road Course on May 17-19. A field of 13 is already registered and should make for an epic weekend. If you've read this far and you're not racing with us... why not? We'd love to have you out to an event and give you a ride, let you take a test drive, and get you involved. We believe 944 Spec is the best way to get racing fast and to get faster. Take us up on the offer to try it and find out!!

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