

Greetings!

NASA's Midwest and Great Lakes Regions hosted Round 2 of the 944 Spec season at Putnam Park Road Course on May 17-19. This track is a favorite of many drivers, featuring beautiful scenery and a fast, flowing rhythm that is well suited to the Porsche 944's balance and stability. Excellent weather and a deep field of talent this weekend made for exceptional racing.

Race 1 – Saturday, May 18

Man, oh man. Just... wow. Eric Kuhns took the pole for Race 1, followed by Dan Pina, Angel Blazquez, Ray Freundt, Sudhir Chhikara, Ward Herst, Brad Raum, Steve Brewster, Shannon McCue, and Rick Briggs. Kuhns held the lead over Pina through the opening turns, followed closely by Blazquez. The racing for 4th-10th was intense from the get go, as Chhikara slipped by Freundt for 4th at the start and Raum displaced Herst for 6th. One corner later Herst found himself in the grips of a surging McCue and Brewster fighting for 7th. This was lap one!

As the race settled, three major battles emerged: Pina and Kuhns nose to tail exchanging the lead; Chhikara and Freundt nose to tail for 4th, with Raum only two car lengths behind; and new comer Herst, a Putnam rookie, quickly coming up to speed and stalking McCue for 7th. After several attempts, Pina made his move around Kuhns in lap 7. Five laps later, Kuhns took the lead back in traffic. Pina wasn't having it. After testing Kuhns in turns 7 and 8 multiple times, Pina used traffic to his advantage to take back the lead for keeps six laps later. At the flag, Pina had drawn out a 2.7 second lead, but was piped by Kuhns for the lap record by 0.02 seconds.

While Blazquez cruised drama free to 3rd, the battle for 4th absolutely raged, making the Kuhns/Pina exchange look like a Von Trapp family picnic. Chhikara held his own in 4th for 13 laps under a withering assault from Freundt, who was never more than a car length off his rear bumper. Chhikara simply would not make a mistake, and absent that, Freundt didn't have a window to pass. Raum kept the heat on immediately behind. After 13 laps of intense study, Freundt made a masterful pass around the inside of the turn 8 carousel with just enough momentum to make it stick in turn 9. Chhikara hounded Freundt for several laps, but eventually a gap opened up as he focused his attention on fending off Raum to the flag, ultimately taking 5th by a 0.6 second margin. Herst, a veritable learning machine, finished 7th only 1.5 seconds behind Raum and Chhikara while closing the gap rapidly. He dispatched McCue with four laps remaining, quickly stretching a 12 second gap as he learned the track. Brewster and Briggs rounded out the order close behind.

In car video of the battle for 1st from Dan Pina

Written by Neal Agran
Tuesday, 04 June 2013 00:00

{youtube}sSuuhV9ggmk{/youtube}

Supremely entertaining footage from Rick Briggs

{vimeo}67617797{/vimeo}

Race 2 – Saturday, May 19

Qualifying times were ripping for Race 2. Kuhns earned the pole with a sub-lap record 1:21.6, followed closely by Agran and Pina. Chhikara, Blazquez, and Freundt qualified within 0.5 seconds, followed by McCue and Raum (within 0.2 seconds) and Brewster and Briggs. Following qualifying, Pine Tree Motorsports and McCann Racing jumped in to make a quick transmission switch for Brewster and to address a linkage issue for Raum so both could make the afternoon race in perfect form.

At the start, Kuhns' hopes came to fruition as he gleefully watched Agran and Pina engage in a nose to tail battle for 2nd while he opened up a small gap. Behind the dueling pair, Blazquez moved inside Chhikara in the opening turns to take 4th, igniting yet another race long nose to tail battle. While neither of these battles produced a pass, the racing was ferocious – no mistakes, no opportunities, just endless nose to tail running through traffic at full speed.

At the flag, Kuhns took the victory with a 3 second lead, while Agran held off a charging Pina at the line by 0.1 second. Blazquez took 4th over Chhikara by a second, followed by McCue, Brewster, and Briggs within sight. Raum retired with a flat tire due to a leaking valve stem in lap 4 and Freundt retired with play developing in his front suspension in lap 3.

More outstanding in car video of the race for 2nd from Dan Pina ->
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_TOKDWGfp4

Enduro – Friday, May 17

Several 944 Spec drivers contested round 2 of the 2013 Midwest Endurance Challenge on Friday afternoon. Agran teamed with Kuhns in his #80 car for the three hour event, while Herst teamed with Sam Grant in his #51 car. Chhikara, Brewster, Blazquez, and Briggs ran the 90 minute enduro as a test and tune session. The race was immediately preceded by an hour thunderstorm, leaving the track slippery and covered with significant areas of standing water and runoff.

NASA 944 Spec MW/GL Round 2 Recap -- Back Home in Indiana

Written by Neal Agran
Tuesday, 04 June 2013 00:00

Herst, never having seen the course, started in 5th, with Agran beside him in 6th. The pair worked their way through traffic in the early laps, eventually rising to 4th and 2nd, respectively. Agran and Kuhns were sidelined by an unplanned stop on lap 50 to inspect the car after minor contact with a spinning backmarker (fortunately, no damage to that beautiful paint job!), followed by a 5 minute fuel spill penalty. Herst and Grant climbed to 3rd, only to be felled by falling oil pressure at hour 2. Kuhns assumed 3rd from Grant and held it to the checker.

Epilogue

Besides having an outstanding time, Midwest and Great Lakes 944 Spec drivers took home over \$1500 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.

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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