

Willow Springs Race Report

Posted by Sterling Doc - 21 Jun 2011 11:53

This is a bit old, but I found this on the SoCal site, and thought it should be posted here to spread the word about the fun you guys are having out there:

NASA Southern California 944 Spec

May 21-22, 2011 Willow Springs International Motorsports Park "The Fastest Road in the West"

Two of our regulars were sidelined on "injured reserve" and had to sit out this round 944 action. We expect to see Chris Allen and Tyler Palmer to return very soon after a brief tune-in the body shop!

Between the injuries and all those commitments associate with family only three of us made it to Willow Springs this past weekend. While small in number the Porsche 944 class put on a first class show for the crowd. Qualifying for Saturday had Tom Atteberry on the pole with Jim Richmond .049 seconds behind and Everett DeLano only 1.5 seconds behind Jim.

Given there were only three of us we were mixed in with the PT class for the grid. At the start Tom went

left and passed two cars on the green flag. Everett smartly tucked in right behind Tom and all looked good. Then Tom forgot where 4th gear was and by turn one the two passed cars were back ahead and Jim was in the lead. For the next 8 laps Jim build a small lead only to watch it vanish in the last 6 laps. His wide car was able to hold off Tom and Jim won by .23 seconds. Everett had difficulty shaking the PT cars and finished third. Between his battling with the PT cars and Tom and Jims battle the less than capacity crowd saw a very good race.

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Sunday was a day of adjustments. Everett asked about how to get more speed in turn 9 the decreasing radius high speed turn leading onto the front straight. He followed up that with a lead follow with Jim to get the right line. Tom on the other hand puttered around scrubbing new tires. Jim's car had a bad habit of the rear end hopping out in any high-speed turn. Willow Springs has three such turns. So after warm-up Jim decided that maybe if he raised the rear end up some that might cure the problem.

Tom qualified on pole for the second race. By the way unless there has been an inverted start Tom has never qualified on pole. The lead follow worked for Everett he qualified second .39 seconds behind Tom. Raising the rear end was a bad idea for Jim as he qualified 1.4 seconds behind Everett.

Well it was crowd-pleasing time again for the 944 racers. This time they went in three wide into turn one on the start. Jim on the inside Tom in the middle and Everett on the outside giving each other respectful room and in Tom's case praying to make it through unhurt. When it was all said and done Jim was in first, Tom was in second and Everett was in third. For the next twelve laps not more than a few seconds separated all three. With Jim and Tom in a heated battle for the whole race Everett kept dogging Tom tail for second. For the three of us the challenge was how to deal with a PTE Nissan that for some reason felt the need to try and play with us. From an entertainment factor he certainly made the race exciting. In the end Everett got the short end of the stick with the Nissan as it spun on the last lap in front of Everett at the brake point for turn nine and ended his challenge for second. The result was another victory for Jim by .82 seconds.

All three had a fantastic race with great stories to tell. Several spectators commented on the close racing among the 944's. Additionally we may have picked up a father and son racing team. After watching the three of us and seeing the smiles on our faces and the congratulations for each other they seemed to fully understand why we race in this class with each other.

We look forward to another great round at Buttonwillow in June
