

944 Spec Race Report

Posted by Sterling Doc - 12 Jul 2011 18:25

Into the Frying Pan at Autobahn

The July event at Autobahn was dry for a nice change, but also a scorcher, with temps well into the 90's. Fortunately, there were no driver casualties, but the heat did claim a couple of head gaskets before the weekend was over, shaking up the points battle in the 944 Spec Midwest region.

In the Friday enduro, 944 Spec teams entered both the E2, and E3 classes. Team Rx Racing of Eric Kuhns and Neal Agran survived some bizarre failures, such as a spontaneous fracturing hood pin while on track to outlast the others in class, and finish P1 in E2. The E3 entry of Sudhir Chhikara and Joel Karns, fared generally better, but did suffer vapor lock during a pit stop from the heat. In the much larger (and apparently more reliable), E3 class, they claimed a top half finish. The issues in both teams were quickly dealt with by the Bennington Motorsports crew, greatly aiding the cause.

Saturday's qualifying saw times only a few tenths apart between Eric Kuhns, Neal Agran, and Ray Freundt, in that order. Joel Karns, Angel Blazquez, and Ken Frey were about one second back each, respectively. Saturday's race was exciting, featuring 4 passes for the lead. At the start, Kuhns & Freundt read the starter's shoulder twitch well, and pulled into an early lead. A hard charging Freundt got by Kuhns in the second lap, followed quickly by Agran. To add insult to injury, Kuhns soon broke a CV joint hopping the inner curb in turn 6, and was forced to retire. Freundt held off Agran for 4 laps, before Agran got by. Agran had established a seemingly comfortable lead, only to succumb to a split radiator in the 95-degree heat. Freundt and his car proved to be invincible that day, and took the win, his third of the year. While Karns posted a slightly faster lap time, Blazquez used traffic well to finish 4 seconds ahead of Karns, and claim his best finish of the season. Karns finished on the other side of the podium in third. Frey also had some cooling issues that slowed him down a bit, finishing just off the podium in 4th.

Sunday, Ken Frey, and his wife Pat treated the class to a delicious round of Pizza from his restaurant "Pizza for U" in Wilmington, IL. Great stuff – we all enjoyed eating far too much of this great tasting food! Thanks Ken!

Sunday was yet another scorcher, well into the 90's. Times were coming down, despite the heat, with Blazquez, and Agran posting times one-thousandth apart in the warm-up, and the top three less than two tenths apart! Chhikara & Kuhns swapped cars to help chase down some setup issues, which Chhikara used to good effect, going nearly as fast in the race, as he had in Kuhns' well setup car in warm-up. Kuhns had a better time of it this time, with Agran & Freundt sidelined early, and went on to a comfortable win, tying Agran and Freundt with three wins on the season. This time, Karns was able to tie up second place ahead of Blazquez, notching his best finish of the season.

These finishes have tighten up the points race up and down the field, with first through seventh place being separated by one weekend's worth of points, and 2nd through seventh separated by one DNF. This should make the end of the season exciting for 944 Spec, as we travel with NASA to some of the nation's premiere tracks, such as Mid-Ohio and Road America, to finish the season.

The 944 Spec group remembered their fellow racer Tom Stein who recently died in a tragic non-racing accident. Every car wore a #444 sticker in his memory.

Once again, we'd like to thank our sponsors:

Bennington Motorsports- for their service in car preparation, trackside, support, and good company, as well.

A Part Above – source of affordable used Porsche parts, and sponsor of the "hard luck award", which goes to Neal Agran, for the second time this year – lets hope he does not extend that "winning" streak!

NASA – home to the best "family" of racers – the GTS race group loaned us their grill to use when even our grill succumbed during the heat on Saturday!

Toyo tires – back from disaster to continue it's generous support of our class – we're glad to be back on

our RA-1's full time!

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