

Pylon Press

SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA -
PHOENIX AZ SOLO REGION

September 2024 – Fall Series #1

Volunteer of the MONTH



Brian Peters



Brian Peters is a creative and competitive guy who observed that with the SCCA Nationals coming up in September at Lincoln Nebraska, local solo racing competitors needed some tune up and practice time to sharpen skills and get into a competition mode. Unlike competitors from northern and eastern parts of the country, many Arizona drivers had not been on an autocross course since early April. Brian therefore provided a solution by organizing a practice day at AMP on August 17th for local national level competitors to tune up their cars and skills and be ready for the big show in Lincoln in September. To avoid the late afternoon heat sink in August the event started at 8 am sharp and was concluded by 1 pm. *By using a very efficient "drive to the line when ready scheme,"* 25+ drivers were able to get in multiple runs on a 40 second course that featured the traditional 7 cone slalom and Nationals style offsets. A big shout out to Brian and all those who assisted him from PASR registration, SSS, course setup and the AMP employees that helped put this much appreciated practice event together. Brian is also a willing volunteer at the monthly SCCA events.

Event Synopsis

By Brian Miller,
Pylon Press Editor

It was very warm for the first of the 2024 fall series at Arizona Motorsports Park. The Bill Pribil designed course called for good slalom technique and proper car entry position at the turning cones to max out a favorable line through the fast sections of the course. The Sportsman class set the top time of the day mark with **Tedd Lewis** laying down a blazing time of 39.554 in his D Mod class Lotus. The best PAX score went to **Dave Schotz** with a top PAX for the day of 1000. Several remarkably close lap time contests occurred in multiple car classes throughout the day. In the Cam-T **Juan Leal Jr.** posted the best time, followed by **Lance Hamilton, Matt Leon, Chris Hall Michael Hitt** and **Dan Hipskind** whose best times were within one second of Juans time! In SSP, which was won by **Dave Young**, fellow Porsche drivers **Kim Kemper** and **Brian Miller** came within one half second Dave's time. Other close racing occurred over in STS open where **Jorge Rios** barely nipped out **Brent McCune** by less than a second!

Driver of the MONTH



Matt Carsten & son Miles

When you teach
your son,
you teach your
son's son.

~ Unknown



Matt Carstens is new to autocross. He has been a car guy since his youth and is currently entering his second series season with the PASR group. A long-time resident of Phoenix, Matt is a family man and animal lover. Family pets include two horses, three dogs, a cat, and a bearded dragon. In addition to his newfound love for auto crossing, Matt enjoys off roading his jeep and mountain biking. Matt makes his living working as an electrical engineer at Lumun Corp. as a solutions architect. His autocross ride is a **1994 Honda Civic** that features several aftermarket upgrades including Skunk Coil overs, competition wheels and upgraded radiator. Under the hood is a stock 1.6 V-Teck engine that puts out 125 hp and 106 foot pounds of torque. This surprisingly provides plenty of power to thrust the 2200 lbs. Civic around the cones in go-cart style. Matt looks forward to having his sons, Mason and Miles, join him as co-drivers in the Honda in the future for some family time at the track. When asked if he saw any ways to improve the PASR autocross events Matt had high praise for the club, its helpful members and the club leadership. Matt offered an interesting idea of modifying the TO run so drivers could complete all 3 or 4 runs back-to-back time only runs to improve on each run without the interruption of a grid break between runs. This is a creative, out-of-the-box idea.



Clean dash gauges carefully!
Use a soft damp cloth to lightly wipe dust from the clear plastic lenses on your dashboard. Too much pressure will scratch them. Too many scratches can make it difficult to read your gauges under certain lighting conditions, especially during the times you are on the track!



SEPTEMBER
Car of the
MONTH



*Clifton
Ragland*

Clifton Ragland has a real sleeper in his prized and most unusual **1969 Classic Lotus Europa**. One might think, *'oh what a cute little car!'* Don't be fooled! Clifton has owned the Lotus for 9 years and admits the retromod took 4 years to complete – and yet was well worth the time it took to complete. The engine is a turbo Toyota 2GRFE, 3.5l V6 that puts out four hundred hp (up from the factory engine rated at 85hp), at the rear wheels. All the mods are one off custom. The frame from the firewall back is all tubed. Rear suspension is custom SLA. Brakes are one off Wilwoods. Dual master cylinders, an intank fuel pump from a Mustang, 15x8f, 15x9r wheels, custom front ARB, Vintage Air A/C, E153 LSD gearbox. Weight went from 1550lbs with 85hp to 1,700 with the extras. Clifton did not overlook any detail in this remarkable build.

He shared that the journey start to finish was to make the car the best all around *extreme* car he could. He drives it as much as he can on the weekends, In 5 years, Clifton have put almost 11,000 fun miles on it. Looking at his lap times and Pax score, his hard work and patience has more than paid off as a fun, fast and great looking autocross car. He runs in EMOD and posted a 43.445 this last race.



Perfection is not attainable,
however, if you chase perfection,
you can catch excellence

Vince Lombardi



DAILY REMINDER:

**Keep
driving
forward,
in life ...
and on the
track so
you'll never
have a
reason to
look back!**





BALANCE IS ONE OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT FACTORS IN AUTOCROSS
— CAR AND DRIVER!



For those who are looking to get involved in autocross, after investing in good tires, a few suspension upgrades will make a world of difference in an otherwise-stock vehicle without breaking the bank or dramatically altering the vehicle's road-going drivability. Balance is one of the biggest keys to an effective autocross suspension setup. By distributing loads as evenly as possible between all four tires, you can get the most from your car's potential performance. A great autocross suspension setup not only handles well, it also provides plenty of feedback and confidence-inspiring predictability. Experts recommend starting your upgrade program by first taking the car out and establishing a solid baseline for its performance at test-and-tune events. Simply throwing parts at the problem and hoping for the best can do more harm than good.

Effective upgrades will improve cornering ability, and the car's ability to handle predictably in a varied range of situations. Dialed in suspension helps to distribute loads more evenly between all the tires and makes it easier to utilize all the braking capability on tap, as well as put power down when coming out of slower corners.

As much as the driver's braking and acceleration inputs dictate weight transfer to the front or rear of the car, the sway bars, or anti-roll bars, dictate the lateral weight transfer. With a relatively stock vehicle, you only have so many knobs you can turn to affect handling and provide feedback to the driver, yet bars will do that. They can turn a 'loose' [oversteer-biased] car to 'tight' [neutral, or understeer-biased] or vice-versa, depending on what you choose for front and rear bars. Generally speaking, a stiffer rear sway bar is going to promote more oversteer in a rear-wheel drive car, while a softer bar will shift the vehicle's character more toward understeer. A bit of rotation can be useful on tight autocross courses, though, so you'll likely want to find the sweet spot that delivers 'neutral' behavior. While that can be tough to accomplish without some trial-and-error testing, sway bars with adjustable end links can provide the flexibility needed to fine-tune the car's setup over time.

If you use too soft of a bar up front, you'll get too much body roll and too much weight transfer onto the tire, which can cause the front to push [understeer]. And if it's too stiff, you don't get enough weight transfer, and that can create an understeer condition as well. Typically, you want a setup that minimizes roll but still allows for some weight transfer across the front axle. Sway bars, or anti-roll bars, dictate the lateral weight transfer of a vehicle. Although many vintage vehicles came from the factory with sway bars, they're typically nowhere near adequate for the rigors of autocross. Aftermarket sway bars are more effective and offer much greater adjustability.

If someone is planning to autocross regularly adjustable bar are recommended by many pros like Kyle Tucker, founder of Detroit Speed & Engineering (DSE) and TechTip blog writer. He writes, "Fine tuning of an adjustable swaybar can also help dial in the car for a particular course and road surface, too." He adds that the front sway bar is even more important than the rear bar when it comes to adjusting a vehicle's lateral behavior.

** The information in this tech tip is a compilation from various google sites and not authored by any one driver.

PYLON PRESS QUIZ

What's true?

1. There are an estimated 1.2 billion cars in the world today.
2. An average car has 30,000 parts.
3. Almost 95% of a car's lifetime is spent parked?
4. 80% of an average car is recyclable.
5. 65% of the world drives on the right side of the road.
6. 95% of the cars in the U.S. have automatic transmission.
7. White is the world's most favorite car color.
8. Toyota Corolla is the world's best selling car
9. A crash typically happens within an average of three seconds after a driver is distracted.
10. People who takes Quizzes are competitive in nature!



All statements are true!

Upcoming Dates

Oct 14 (Mon)
**SCCA Solo
Track Day**

Oct 19 (Sat)
**SCCA
Driver's
School**

Oct 20 (Sun)
**SCCA
Autocross
Event #2**

Nov 10 (Sun)
**SCCA
Autocross
Event #3**

Dec 14 (Sat)
**Autocross
Event #4**

Ideas for Tech
Tips or
Educational
Articles please
submit to
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