



January 2025 Spring Series #1

# Pylon Press

SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA - PHOENIX AZ SOLO REGION

## Event Synopsis

**BRIAN MILLER**  
PYLON PRESS EDITOR

Solo racing started off with a bang at the first event of the 2025 Spring series on 1/19/25. A cool January day greeted PASR participants with strong competition evident once again across the various car classes. **Nick Crohn** set the pace in the Novice group with a strong lap time of 47.685 and PAX score of 857. The Ladies battle for top PAX class honors continued to be close with **Jessie Bistras, Mindi Cross** and **Julie Woodbury** scoring very close PAX scores. Jessie narrowly came out on top this time with a total PAX score of 896. Over in SSC class, there were a total of four entries, all driving the same model – BRZ Subarus! **Matthew McNulty** edged out **Austin Brown** with a PAX score of 914 vs. 909.

On MLK Day, 91 drivers took to the track at AMP for an action-packed day of solo racing. Lap times ranged from 1:14.627 and up to times of 1:50.00 seconds and above. Regardless of times, all drivers had a fun and memorable day. Among various notable performances set at the event were times laid down by Camaro SS 1LE drivers **Ron Bistras, Craig Berger** and **Dave Bahl** – all who posted notably fast times in the 1:22 range. These times were among the best of the day.

The January Synopsis would not be complete without a big shout out to **Danielle Simons** for organizing a successful and fun awards dinner following the January 19<sup>th</sup> auto cross. Racers and guests gathered at the Saddle Mountain Brewing Company in Goodyear, AZ for drinks, dinner, awards and some bench racing. *Thanks for a nice event Danielle!*



*Driver of the Month*

**Ben Zukowski**



**2012 CHEVROLET CORVETTE GRANDSPORT**

**Ben Zukowski** drives a Super Sonic Blue 2012 Corvette Grand Sport, after having a C5 for the better part of a decade. He found the Grand Sport locally and really likes the GS model due to the gear ratios and the awesome LS3 engine. The only modification he has is adding a set of customized Koni shocks carried over from his C5, serviced by ProParts USA. For tires, the Corvette is riding on Yokohama AO52's.

Ben's autocrossing career began in earnest around 2015 and he has been competing ever since. His earliest involvement with cars was drag racing at the now demolished KCIR in Kansas City while attending college in the late 90's. Since joining the SCCA he have been to events throughout California, Arizona, and Nevada, as well as participated in his first SCCA Nationals in September 2024.

As far as his autocross aspirations go, its continuous improvement for him. He visions forward by saying "Someday I would like to win a Class award a National event."

Upcoming 2025 PASR events are Feb 8, March 15, April 13

# Car of the Month



Driven by Father & Son

Ron & Andrew  
Tornell



Vintage  
1991 Toyota  
MR2 Turbo

**Ron Tornell**, and his son **Andrew**, are relatively new at autocrossing, although he has owned his vintage **1991 Toyota MR2 Turbo** since 2016. When Ron got the car, it had a few oil leaks and some broken parts. In trying to fix one thing, another broke, so Ron had to remove the engine, which started the whole rebuild process. The original turbo engine was 200 Hp and 200 ft-lbs. of torque. The rebuild added ARP main and Head studs, rod and flywheel bolts. The pistons are forged Carillo 9.0:1 compression with a Cometic 1mm multi layer head gasket. The transmission has been rebuilt. Ron is now running a Kelford CAM 258 intake and 222 exhaust duration. GSC valves and springs. Latest additions are an ATS racing CT27 turbo and modified ECU and 550cc injectors, lower springs.

Andrew was the one who got Ron started on autocross last year by buying him one Toyo R888r tire for Christmas, wrapping it in brown paper. They have now completed 3 autocross days and 1 track day. The dual are making plans for more car upgrades.

Ron was an avid motorcycle rider, having 5 motorcycles at one time. He's ridden to Key West Florida, Prudhoe Bay Alaska and Tuktoyaktuk Canada. Andrew has accompanied his dad on many of these trips. Last year Ron's wife requested he give up motorcycle riding because she was on pins and needles every time he went out. Autocross is his replacement for adventure! Ron says he thinks this sport will be just as much fun and a lot safer, plus he can share the adrenaline rushes with his son who he claims is a better driver than he.



GOOD  
FATHERS  
MAKE  
GOOD SONS.

Unknown

"Nobody is born with a steering wheel or a gear shift in their hand. It's something you choose to do or you don't."

MARIO ANDRETTI



# SUPERHEROS



## SAFETY STEWARDS

## SOLO SAFETY STEWARD

solo: 'soʊ.loʊ/  
safety: /sæfɛti/  
steward: /stɛwərd/

Someone responsible for ensuring the safety and compliance of participants during a solo racing event. Their primary goal is to maintain a safe racing environment for all participants, while allowing fun and camaraderie. Aka Superhero.



PASR Solo Safety Stewards pictured above are: **Jonathan Herold, Dennis Riehle, Wiggy Greacen, Paul Nielander, Ken Martens, Brian Miller, Kim Kemper, Chris Groppi, Dan Hawrylkiw and Jeff Woodbury**

The role of a Solo Safety Steward (SSS) at a solo autocross is critical for ensuring the event runs safely. Here are their primary responsibilities:

- 1. Verifications:** A SSS obtains and verifies the insurance certificate, checks worker positions and equipment placement to ensure that viewing areas are well designated and coordinates with other safety workers as needed.
- 2. Course Walks:** They participate in course walks, providing insights on potential hazards and ensuring that the course is designed with safety in mind.
- 3. On-Site Monitoring:** During the event, the Solo Safety Steward monitors the activities on the course, ensuring drivers adhere to safety rules and guidelines. They look out for any unsafe behavior or conditions. Additionally, a SSS applies reasonable and prudent judgment to course design, course speed, launch intervals, spectator viewing areas, event site layout, traffic flow, worker stations and course conditions.
- 4. Emergency Response:** In the event of an accident or emergency, the SSS coordinates the response, ensuring that medical assistance is available, and that the situation is handled quickly and effectively.
- 5. Reporting:** After the event, the SSS may be responsible for reporting any incidents or safety concerns that arose during the competition, contributing to the overall improvement of safety protocols for future events.

Overall, the SSS plays a vital role in promoting a culture of safety, helping to ensure that all participants can enjoy the thrill of autocross in a secure, safe environment.

## Reminders ✨

"A true racer knows that safety gear is as essential as the engine."

"The thrill of racing comes with the responsibility of safety. Always respect the limits."

"Never, never sacrifice safety for speed."

# 8 HACKS FOR A SOLO RACER TO RECALIBRATE THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS



TECH TIP BASED ON NEUROSCIENCE

In the world of autocross racing, drivers are now beginning to understand that, in addition to preparing their vehicle to perform, they must be mentally and psychologically prepared as well. Understanding the way our nervous system operates, and the vital role the vagus nerve plays in solo auto racing, can enhance overall performance. The vagus nerve is one of the largest and most complex cranial nerve in the human body, responsible for keeping us calm, and returning us to a calibrated state once we have experienced allot of excitement. Here's what we need to know:

- 1. Stress Response:** During solo racing, drivers may experience heightened stress and adrenaline. The vagus nerve helps regulate the body's response to stress, including heart rate and anxiety levels. A well-functioning vagus nerve can promote a calming effect, helping drivers maintain focus and composure.
- 2. Heart Rate Variability:** The vagus nerve is involved in heart rate variability (HRV), which is the variation in time between heartbeats. High HRV is often associated with better cardiovascular health, improved resilience to stress, and overall well-being. Conversely, low HRV may indicate stress, fatigue, or potential health issues.
- 3. Breathing Regulation:** The vagus nerve influences the respiratory system. Controlled breathing techniques can help drivers reduce anxiety and improve concentration during a race. This can lead to better performance and decision-making on the track.
- 4. Gut-Brain Connection:** The vagus nerve connects the brain to the gastrointestinal system. A healthy gut can influence overall well-being, including energy levels and focus, which are crucial for solo racing performance.
- 5. Recovery:** Post-race, the vagus nerve can aid in recovery by promoting relaxation and reducing stress levels. This recovery period is essential for drivers to recuperate physically and mentally after the intense experience of racing and preventing burn-out and excess fatigue.

Here are several effective methods for an autocross driver to recalibrate their nervous system:

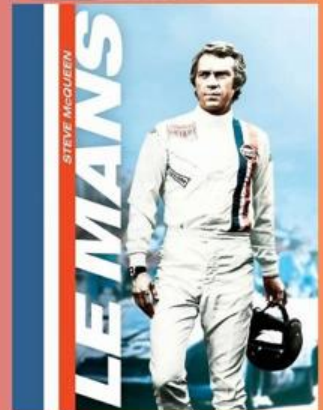
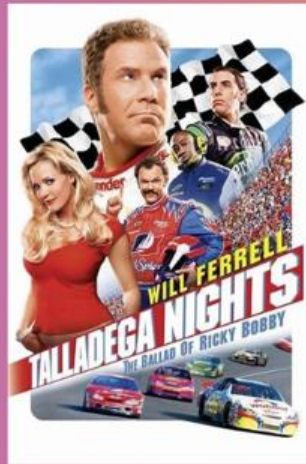
- 1. Deep Breathing:** Pause and practice diaphragmatic breathing, where you inhale deeply through the nose, allowing your diaphragm to expand, and exhale slowly through the mouth. The most important thing to remember is that the exhale must be longer than your inhale. This will activate the vagus nerve and promote relaxation, especially when you combine it with an audible sigh.
- 2. Sighing** helps reset our breathing pattern. It typically involves a deep inhalation followed by a slower, prolonged exhalation, which can help regulate the autonomic nervous system. Whatever emotion you are experiencing on or off the track, take a big sigh – let it out! It's therapeutic! Rather than cuss or throw a fit, follow the science and sigh!
- 3. Laughter!** Neuroscience suggests that laughing is the fastest way to activate several areas of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex (involved in decision-making) the limbic system (associated with emotions), and the motor cortex (responsible for physical movement, including the skills of driving!) There is science behind laughing at your mistakes.
- 4. Singing or Sounding:** Engaging in singing, humming, or chanting can stimulate the vagus nerve due to the vibrations produced in the throat, promoting a sense of calm.
- 5. Stretching:** Incorporating yoga or gentle stretching can improve vagal tone and promote relaxation. Simply rising your arms as if you are yawning, opens the chest and promote deep breathing which makes the vagus nerve very happy.
- 6. Shake it off:** Jump, move, shake our hands or skip. All these movements are recalibrating.
- 7. Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tense and tighten different muscle groups in the body and then relax them. Start at your feet, and progressively tense and release your whole body. You can even do this while you are in your car staging to drive.
- 8. Positive Affirmations:** Positive words set the tone for calm or better focus.

# PYLON QUIZ

## MOVIES ✨ MOVIE STARS ✨ AND FAMOUS FAST CARS



How many cars from the famous racing movies can you name?



## ANSWERS

"Fast & Furious" Series featuring a Nissan Skyline GT-R starring Vin Diesel as Dominic Toretto

"Days of Thunder" featuring a Chevrolet Monte Carlo starring Tom Cruise as Cole Trickle

"Ford v Ferrari" featuring a Ford GT40 starring Matt Damon as Carroll Shelby

"Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby" featuring a NASCAR stock car starring Will Ferrell as Ricky Bobby

"Need Speed" featuring a Ford Mustang, starring Aaron Paul as Tobey Marshall

"LeMans" featuring a Porsche 917 starring Steve McQueen as Michael Delaney