



VELOCITY NEWS

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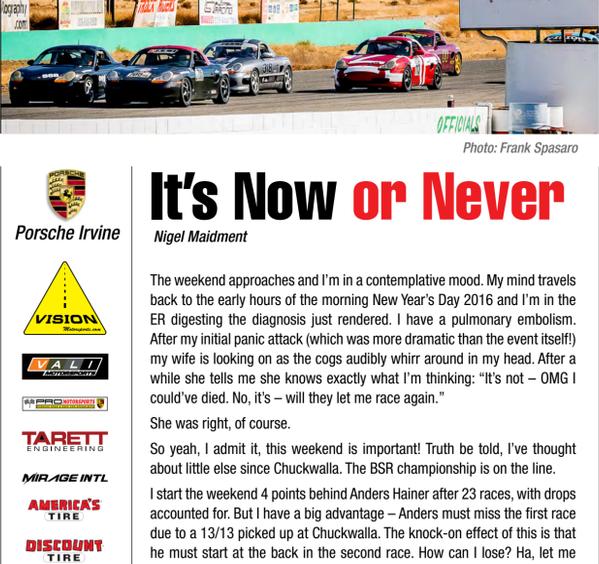


Photo: Frank Spasaro



It's Now or Never

Nigel Maidment

The weekend approaches and I'm in a contemplative mood. My mind travels back to the early hours of the morning New Year's Day 2016 and I'm in the ER digesting the diagnosis just rendered. I have a pulmonary embolism. After my initial panic attack (which was more dramatic than the event itself) my wife is looking on as the cogs audibly whirr around in my head. After a while she tells me she knows exactly what I'm thinking: "It's not - OMG I could've died. No, it's - will they let me race again."

She was right, of course. So yeah, I admit it, this weekend is important! Truth be told, I've thought about little else since Chuckwalla. The BSR championship is on the line. I start the weekend 4 points behind Anders Hainer after 23 races, with drops accounted for. But I have a big advantage - Anders must miss the first race due to a 13/13 picked up at Chuckwalla. The knock-on effect of this is that he must start at the back in the second race. How can I lose? Ha, let me count the ways!

The fact of the matter is Anders is faster than me at Willow (well, okay, he's just faster than me, period). He'll probably be on my bumper within a couple of laps in race 2 and likely beat me easily in race 3. Crunch the numbers Nigel, you're a scientist, you can do this. As they say, anything can happen in racing, so the multiple scenarios I come up with fill 4 pages of notepad!

I can win the championship by 1 point if I finish P2 in all 3 races, assuming Anders wins races 2 and 3. That's risky; there are a lot of other serious competitors in BSR. If I can't just keep him behind me in race 2 the path looks much more forgiving. But he'll be on as stickers. Should I save my stickers for race 2?

Or should I go all out in race 1 on stickers and hope for a win? Then a P2 and P4 in the other races would secure the championship, again by 1 point. I decide to wait and see who signs up. Know your competition. So I check the entry list daily, sometimes multiple times a day. I'm consumed. Will Gene Siga show up again and throw a wrench in the works, like he did at Laguna Seca? What about the new kid on the block - Malcolm Van Halen? He looks like serious trouble after Chuckwalla. Nope, it's Thursday night and they're not on the list. That's a plus. I can focus on the regular competition. Maybe see what times they post in Saturday's practice and decide from there.

It's Friday practice and I arrive pretty early. But not as early as many of my competition, apparently. Well, well, even Anders is here. He doesn't need practice! This is clearly serious. And what are the first words out of his mouth? "So, Nigel, you're gonna start at the back with me in race 2, right?" Dream on pal. I need all the help I can get.

The day goes well enough. I've invested in an extra set of stickers to practice on today for set-up purposes. Gone are the days when I would bring just one set of old multi-cycle tires to an event and expect them to last the weekend. I set some respectable lap times and am happy with my set up. Time for one more session before the track closes. I'm on my cool-down lap and check my mirrors. Looks like a couple of GT cars coming up fast in the distance. Wait a minute. They're BSRs. Oh nooooooo. It's Gene and Malcolm. The devious little @*%#*s. They've come to rain on my parade. That changes EVERYTHING.

It's settled. I have to put my all into winning race 1. There's every chance they will get between Anders and me in the other 2 races and spread the points gap between us. A big group of us go out for dinner Friday evening. Branimir Kovac, the current BSR "People's Champion", is making a lot of noise as usual. All good fun. We get up to leave and, oh no, that doesn't feel good. My back. I've done it again. It's the fragmented disc that kept me out of a racecar for months last year. (Yeah, I'm falling apart. I wish I'd started this game as a younger man). I knew I shouldn't have stacked that spare set of wheels at the end of the day. When will I learn, damnit?

It's 3.30am and I'm wide-awake and in some pain. This is not good. I spend the next couple of hours stretching out my back. I get into my car to drive to track. Aarrgh. Please tell me this is not happening! I arrive at the track and ease into the car to see how it feels. Not so bad once I'm strapped in. This isn't going to stop me. Pheew.

Qualifying goes very well and I'm on pole for the race. Gene P2. Malcolm P3. Brandy P4. It's race time and I've never been to grid this early before. Where is everyone? Let's get this done. It's a split start with BSRs starting second. There are several slower cars in the front group. I remember John Gordon's advice: leave a big gap so as not to catch them too early in the race. I slow the group way down. For once I get off to a good start and have the lead. Gene is glued to my bumper lap after lap. Malcolm passes Gene on the inside of T9. Wow that was a great move. Next lap I deal poorly with a 944 in front and Malcolm passes me on the outside in T8. That wasn't in my plan. I get a good run out of T9 and regain the position in T1. Gene takes advantage and slips through as usual. Next lap Malcolm passes Gene on the outside of T2. What a race! What's this? Malcolm's trying it on again on the outside of T9. I ain't gonna let that happen twice! Gene takes advantage of the better exit and takes Malcolm on the outside in T1. I've never seen anything like this. Gene is trying every trick in the book to pass me - feigning to the outside and back to the inside, corner after corner, filling my mirrors. Thank goodness for a yellow flag at T2 through T4 for the remainder of the race. At least they can't pass me there. I hold them off and who would have thought white could be such a beautiful color. It's the last lap and I've got this. But Malcolm isn't done yet. He pulls the sweetest move I've ever seen on Gene on the last corner of the race. He goes for the outside in T8 and as Gene drifts out he darts for the inside on a tight line through T9. He mounts the berm with Gene on his outside, maintains control and still carries enough speed to cross the line half a car length in front. That was very special. Oh, and I'd mention this is his second race weekend? This is where I realize this could be my last chance at the championship. This kid is gonna be tough to beat next year.

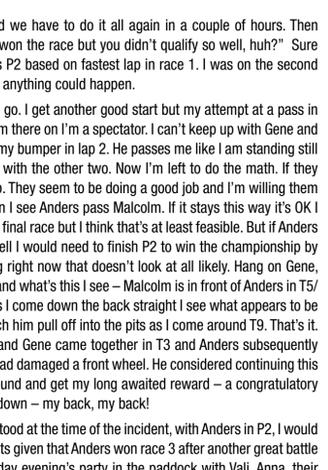


Photo: CaliPhotography

So, I'm feeling happy but exhausted. And we have to do it all again in a couple of hours. Then Brandy gives me the bad news: "So you won the race but you didn't qualify so well, huh?" Sure enough, Malcolm had pole and Gene was P2 based on fastest lap in race 1. I was on the second row with madman Andrew Weyman. Now anything could happen. So, I have a 16-point lead with 2 races to go. I get another good start but my attempt at a pass in T1 is, shall we say, forcefully aborted. From there on I'm a spectator. I can't keep up with Gene and Malcolm, and Anders is, as predicted, on my bumper in lap 2. He passes me like I am standing still and shoots off into the distance to battle with the other two. Now I'm left to do the math. If they can keep him in 3rd it's my championship. They seem to be doing a good job and I'm willing them on from an ever-increasing distance. Then I see Anders pass Malcolm. If it stays this way it's OK I tell myself. It leaves me needing P4 in the final race but I think that's at least feasible. But if Anders passes Gene and wins the last race as well I would need to finish P2 to win the championship by a single point. And from where I'm sitting right now that doesn't look at all likely. Hang on Gene, hang on! Then I come around the omega and what's this see - Malcolm is in front of Anders in T5/T6 - oh you beautiful young man! Then as I come down the back straight I see what appears to be Anders slowing down in T8 and then watch him pull off into the pits as I come around T9. That's it. It's mine. It's all over. Apparently Anders and Gene came together in T3 and Anders subsequently felt a vibration that led him to believe he had damaged a front wheel. He considered continuing this battle unwise. I get out of the car in impound and get my long awaited reward - a congratulatory man-hug from Branimir - no, no put me down - my back, my back!

As it turned out, the had the race ended as it stood at the time of the incident, with Anders in P2, I would have won the championship by just 3 points given that Anders won race 3 after another great battle with Gene, and I finished 3rd. But Saturday evening's party in the paddock with Vali, Anna, their excellent crew and my fellow racers would not have been half as much fun for me!

Wow. What a weekend. What a year. What a club!



Photo: Frank Spasaro

DREAMS, SCHEMES AND RACING MACHINES

Andrew D. Weyman



Photo: CaliPhotography

The Season Finale at Willow Springs is always bittersweet. First the sweet. It's the last chance to earn competition points and stick it to my most vulnerable competitors. Without mentioning any names, John Momeyer, Jeff Shulem and Joe Wiederholt. Oops. That slipped out. Now, the bitter. The event is always scheduled on the same weekend as my wedding anniversary. Celebrating in the paddock diner can be fun but it's not exactly a romantic getaway. Most significantly, the Finale is where dreams can be realized and hopes can be shattered.

I touched base with a few members during the weekend to learn about what they were feeling at this latest event. Malcolm Van Halen, a rookie, whose performance last month at Chuckwalla was just a prelude to his impressive racing during the Finale, filled me in on what he sees ahead. At 19 years old, this racer displays amazing talent and maturity. He's been driving his Boxster for about a year. Malcolm recognizes how much he's learned and knows there's a lot more learning ahead. "I knew that coming in so young and inexperienced compared to other drivers would be a challenge but I welcome this challenge. I use it to propel me further and harder." Malcolm plans to run BSR next year and ultimately compete for the championship. I have no doubt Malcolm will realize his dream.

Kris Stone piloted his Nissan 370Z in Time Attack 2. Instructor Steve Radenbaugh helped Kris find several seconds. Kris told me, "I'm not going to lie. I was slightly intimidated heading back to Big Willow this weekend." Rad's knowledge and experience helped Kris meet the demands of the track, and gave him the confidence to test his car's limits. "Lap times improved, and I learned how to do it safely. At the end of the day, I felt relieved, accomplished, and exhausted." Kris found the town hall meeting to be especially fascinating, and it left him feeling inspired by the passion of everyone in the POC. "It's that dedication and love for the sport that keep bringing me back. I may not be able to buy into tracking a Porsche at the moment, but I can buy into the warmth and camaraderie."

With 110 entries, there was a lot goin' on. Here are a few highlights, in no special order: Okay. Me first. I set my personal best lap time in the first Orange Race on Saturday with a 1:34.582. Now, my wife. Happy anniversary, Honey. Terry Davis pushed her BSR hard enough to achieve her personal best and have a great race on Sunday with Scott Craig and Marty Mehterian. Nigel Maidment clinched the BSR championship after the second Orange Race on Saturday. Dream realized!

Eric Huetter and Patrick Brass battled it out in Time Attack 1 seizing every passing opportunity they could find as well as some that found them. Duane Selby was able to complete in the Sunday Red Race after Kurt Gokuback loaned him the O2 sensor from his street Cayman. Don Matz instructed newcomer Jacques Albrecht in Time Attack 2.

Mark Crigler continues to pick up the pace driving his street GT3 in Time Attack 1 and is looking forward to the next Racers Clinic. Mark Williams brought out his Ford GT350 and huge smiles to Time Attack 1. Ron Palmer saw his hopes shattered in his quest for a class championship when his newly rebuilt gearbox failed to shift out of 1st gear.

In Sunday's Red Race, fastest lap times of the first six finishers (Loren Beggs, Dave Elsner, Mike Monsalve, Kevin Roush, Bob Mueller and Duane Selby) fell within less than a second of one another with Mueller setting the pace at 1:24:321 in lap 10.

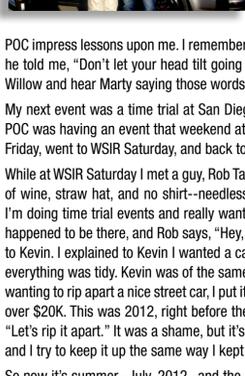
John Payne was back on track in a rented BSR and held his own. Kevin Roush coached John Armstrong and John's eyes grew large while riding shotgun. John now knows what he has to do to push his car to the limit. He won't shy away from the challenge.

The Town Hall meeting focused on revising our car classification system to a simpler, more competitive formula. There was lots of good feedback and the Competition Committee will continue working on the improvements. Fortunately, more dreams were realized than hopes were shattered. I'm already dreaming of next season....

My Old Street Car

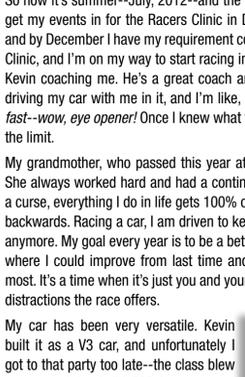
Bob Mueller

I was asked recently about my car and how I got into racing. Here is my story. I grew up with a dad and uncles who were interested in cars. We never got but always watched the Indy 500. I had muscle cars in high school: a '68 Camaro, '69 GTO, and '72 Dodge Challenger, and I liked to work on them. That faded until several years later when I bought a '79 911 Targa. It had an IROC front bumper and a whale tail. It was exotic looking. I bought it from a guy in San Francisco, didn't even do an inspection, just had to have it. I can't remember why I was looking for a Porsche or how I got interested in Porsches, but I do remember seeing that car and being smitten. Then I had several Porsches with small gaps in between: '85 Carrera, '95 Carrera, '02 Turbo, '05 Turbo. Sold the '05 around 2007 and was Porsche-less until 2012. I was at the Corona Festival of Speed in 2011 with my 13-year-old son when a light bulb went off. I had been racing triathlon for 18 years, and it occurred to me... start racing a car instead of your body. Sounded like a great idea.



Photos: Supplied by Bob Mueller

In January, 2012 I bought a 1985 Carrera, a beautiful street car today and out with 90K miles. It is the same color inside as it was as a street car. I wanted to get into tracking it, but I had zero track experience. Someone referred me to Jay Lee of Mirage International to do some basic setup things to my car, and Jay recommended the POC. When I decide to do something, it happens pretty quick, so I got work done on the car, bought an open trailer, and went off to my first track event at Streets of Willow in, like, two weeks.



At that first POC event my driving instructor was Jackie Lu (our club president's significant other - small world). I remember she took me out in her car first as a passenger. I felt like the car was out of control the whole time. It was crazy. She was a good driver and in control. I was just not used to the limit at which she was driving the car! I completed that weekend, and it was great. I had many people in the POC impress lessons upon me. I remember going out in my car early on with Marty Mehterian, and he told me, "Don't let your head tilt going through Turn 2." To this day I will go through Turn 2 at Willow and hear Marty saying those words.

My next event was a time trial at San Diego's PCA Festival of Speed at Auto Club Speedway. But POC was having an event that weekend at Willow Springs International Raceway, so I was at ACS Friday, went to WSIR Saturday, and back to ACS Sunday. I was hooked.

While at WSIR Saturday I met a guy, Bob Tachovsky. He's rolling my way on a skateboard, big glass of wine, straw hat, and no shirt--needless to say, very friendly. I start talking to him about how I'm doing time trial events and really want to build a race car and start racing. Well, Kevin Roush happened to be there, and Kevin says, "Hey, I know a guy you need to meet," and he introduced me to Kevin. I explained to Kevin I wanted a car in which all the parts and finishes had produced, and everything was tidy. Kevin was of the same mind, and I knew I wanted him to build my car. So not wanting to rip apart a nice street car, I put it up for sale and asked \$23K for it but couldn't get offers over \$20K. This was 2012, right before the air-cooled market took off. So reluctantly I told Kevin, "Let's rip it apart." It was a shame, but it's cool. I have this race car that used to be my street car, and I try to keep it up the same way I kept up my street car.

So now it's summer--July, 2012--and the car is done. I am on the time trial ram circuit trying to get my events in for the Racers Clinic in December at Willow. I had done a couple by this point, and by December I have my requirement complete, and I am in the Racers Clinic. I pass the Racers Clinic, and I'm on my way to start racing in 2013. For the next two years I spent a lot of time with Kevin coaching me. He's a great coach and a super quick driver. One of the best things is him driving my car with me in it, and I'm like, my car can do that--it can go through the corners that fast--wow, eye opener! Once I knew what the car could do, it really shortened the curve of finding the limit.

My grandmother, who passed this year at 101 years old, was an inspiration to me growing up. She always worked hard and had a continuous drive to keep moving forward. Be it a blessing or a curse, everything I do in life gets 100% or near to it. I feel if I am not moving forward I am going backwards. Racing a car, I am driven to keep finding new limits, as once found they are not limits anymore. My goal every year is to be a better driver than the previous year. At each track I identify where I could improve from last time and work on that. Qualifying is actually what I enjoy the most. It's a time when it's just you and your car and what you can get out of it without all the other distractions the race offers.



My car has been versatile. Kevin built it as a V3 car, and unfortunately I got to that party too late--the class blew up a year later. I did C3e for a season, and that went well, and then moved to GT4. We had a great time in GT4 with Monsalve, Bradley, Boyce, and John. So we were all competitive. Coming down to the season finale at WSIR, Monsalve and I were pretty close in points, and the last two races would determine the champion. However, there were some circumstances that happened, and we never had those last two races, although he probably would have got me.

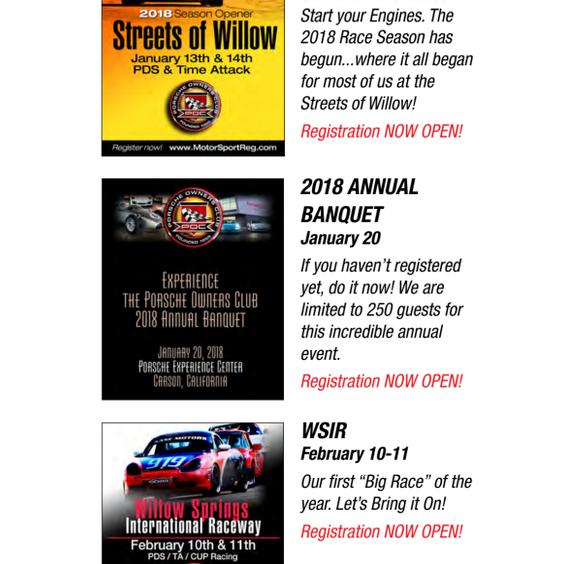
Last year I did some GT4 races and some GT3 races, and I raced with PRC in Northern Cal in Spec 911. I also did a few races with a Cup car and with a Radical. It was a fun year of trying different things and racing with a lot of different groups. This year I have done more GT3 races with POC and some races with PCA in GT4 (PCA is weight-to-liter, so my car is GT4 there), and I raced with PRC as well. The POC's GT3 really started shaping up to be a large class this year, and next year will be even bigger.

I recently purchased a 2014 GT America which was Porsche's GT Daytona car for the 2014 and 2015 seasons. It's a really fun car to drive. Next year the plan is to race GT3 in my old street car and do some PCA races in the GTA.

I tell people in other clubs I run with what a great and unique club POC is compared to all the other clubs because we are a power-to-weight ratio class, and that allows cars from across a 40-year span to race together, from air-cooled to water-cooled. It makes for a big class with lots of different cars.

More WSIR December 2017

Photos: Frank Spasaro



Register NOW for...



The STREETS!!
January 13-14
Gentlemen and Ladies Start your Engines. The 2018 Race Season has begun...where it all began for most of us at the Streets of Willow!
Registration NOW OPEN!



2018 ANNUAL BANQUET
January 20
If you haven't registered yet, do it now! We are limited to 250 guests for this incredible annual event.
Registration NOW OPEN!

WSIR
February 10-11
Our first "Big Race" of the year. Let's Bring it On!
Registration NOW OPEN!

Check Us Out!

Be sure to check out the POC website for our 2018 schedule of events and to stay current on PDS, Time Trial and Cup Racing standings.

And, don't miss the Official POC Facebook Page with photos, videos and comments from our members.