

## Season Opener

Written by Jerry Whitteridge  
Wednesday, 03 March 2010 08:29

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Season Opener for NorCal fell on a weekend with changing weather.

Just five from the NorCal group was going to brave the rain but Greg and Ivan both had other commitments and couldn't make it out so it was up to the three of us (Jerry Whitteridge, Sid Lee and Steve Huey) to break in the new Season.

Sat practice was all race groups in the rain - I did 2 laps where I couldn't see a damn thing as the rain-x had worn off and I pulled into the paddock. Steve belted up but didn't try to come out and Sid did his *"I'm staying in bed - See you at Qual"*;

Qualifying went O.K. given the amount of cars in the group and I ran a 2.08 (not great) Sid did 2.04 and Steve a 2.13 running the longer 7A track configuration. We staged for the race with 65 cars on grid. We held back to get our own green and at the drop Sid was able to pull me with his rebuilt 88 motor and get to T2 in front of me. It then became a chase where he was able to pull away from me tiny bit by tiny bit. My best was a 2:05 and Sid had 2:03. Once he got away from me I kind of slacked off and 3 laps from the end Steve appeared in my mirrors. Now I had to really turn it up again and not let him get up or past me. He finished a car length behind me - I won't make that mistake again.

Sunday was a much better day - dry and a little cool and our normal track configuration without 7A, Again just Steve and me for practice - which consisted of ALL the race groups except the Formula Mazda's. I again got 2 laps in when the car died coming out of T11. Towed back into the paddock Steve and I found the set screw in the rotor had dropped out. &^%\$#\$&) - I was sure I put some loctite on it when I replaced it last year. We put the set screw back in but the threads had stripped just enough to not allow the screw to tighten but also it wouldn't just drop out so we ended up with a big glob of loctite and a zip tie to make sure it didnt back out. That seemed to do the trick and Qual went well. Well enough that I ran a personal best of 2:03.6 and qualified on the pole (of 944Spec) with Sid at a 2.04.5 and Steve at 2:08.9.

We confirmed with Jerry K that the pole sitter has to take the inside for T1 so that had me with Sid on my outside and Steve behind me. I knew that if Sid got into the lead he would again manage to walk away from me so I held the revs right at the start of my powerband as we approached the green. When it dropped we went for it and stayed side by side through T1 and T2 with Sid having to drop some speed on corner exit of T2 so I was able to pull into the lead at

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the entrance to T3. So now I had my first Pole and first time I lead a race ! I was pulling out all the stops to keep him behind (ran another personal best of 2:03.2) but he managed a run on me coming out of T10 in lap 7 and I was not quick enough to get over and defend T11. Side by side we went through T11 and he was able to lead me on the front straight. He then proceeded to run 2:01's to my 2:03's to finish the race. This was one of the best races I've ever had and I learnt so much even though I didn't hold on for the win!

By Sid Lee

Qualifying session was cut short due to oil spill which led to a crash after 5 laps so we were black flagged off the course. As a mental note, it is very important to push hard within the first few laps to try and get a good qualifying time as you never know how many laps you get during the qualifying session.

During the Sunday race, Jerry got a good start and I couldn't pull ahead going into turn 2. I felt he had a good line and gave me only 3/4 of a car width to pass on the inside which I didn't want to hit him nor go 2 wheels off trying to pass. I tucked behind him and pushed hard. Coming out of 6, I drafted behind him and tried to make a pass on the inside of 7. Braked really hard and initiated the turn but no grip from the tires as they weren't hot enough. Back end came out and I slid sideways and almost hit Jerry. Got under control and got back on Jerry's bumper.

Pushed hard to see if he would make a mistake. He was rock steady and drove a clean defensive line. I tried passing again on the 3rd lap on the inside of turn 7 and was not successful again. Later I tried a pass on turn 11 where I took an early apex and when I was exiting, probably came to around inches from hitting the side wall. Settled down and decided to wait for the right opportunity to pass. Noticed he was slowing down on several areas of the track and then I got a good run into turn 10 and pulled next to him as we approached turn 11. Got inside of him and braked really hard and came out of the turn ahead.

I have to admit that this was one of my favorite races since joining 2 years ago. This is what it's all about.

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