



RING FREE GOES RACING – AGAIN



2009 JEFFERSON 500

Summit Point Raceway, Summit Point, West Virginia

The Vintage Racers Group (VRG) Jefferson 500 is an event with considerable track time. The event features two sprint races, two 1 hour enduros along with practice and qualifying sessions. The icing on the cake was an early entry entitled you to a FREE testing day on Thursday.

We arrived Wednesday afternoon with a light rain accompanying us for the entire trip. Registration opened at 5:00 and we were fortunate enough to get a paved spot in the paddock. This was our fourth trip to Summit Point, having made three during the early 1970's, our third in the rain.

It rained on and off during the night. However, by morning the track was dry. After the 8:00 drivers meeting we went out with an instructor for a few familiarization laps.



37 years ago at the IMSA Camel GT Virginia 250.

I went out in the first session and experienced quite a bit of rear wheelspin and had the transmission come out of 4th gear a few times. Told Jan about the wheel spin and shifter. We adjusted the shift linkage and Jan took the car out in the 2nd session, he came in after only 3 laps and we concluded our 4:11 rear end had a major problem.



Fortunately, Jimmy Dee, our good friend and Jans cheif mechanic at Nelson's Carriage House, was with us this trip. Upon inspection the gears were fine, so the problem had to be in the locker. Our other two complete rear ends, a 4:33 and a 3:89, had gone bad over the last two events. Luckily, we did have a complete 3:27 rear with us. We never

used the rear due to its low gear ratio. However, we decided to bring it, as a wrong ratio rear is better than no rear. So along with lunch break we were ready for the afternoons first session.



Jan went out for the first afternoon session and came right in with the transmission stuck in 2nd gear. We played with the shift linkage some more and Jan went out in the second afternoon session for 11 laps. The transmission had come out of third gear a few times on him. During the 9 laps I made in the third afternoon session I also experienced



the transmission coming out of 3rd a few times. We added .050 to the shift detent. Jan went out in the fourth afternoon session and came in after only one lap needing gas. We quickly refueled and Jan got in another five laps before the end of the session and the day. With the 3:27 rear end we were only reaching 5500rpm at the end of the front straight. Tire pressures were set cold at 24lbs. all around for the day. We ran a total of 39 laps using 17 gallons of gas.



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Woke up to rain Friday morning. It rained on and off all day with the track never drying out. With no rain tires we did not even take the car out of the trailer.

It had rained thru the night into the early morning on Saturday. Ours was a 9:00 enduro which we had to sit out. We did have quite a few people stop by to talk about the car. Rick Mandelson who drove a 1966 mustang "back in the day" and Tony Marra who knew Ray (Cuomo) and Al (FAZA) Cosentino. Also, had interesting and enjoyable discussions with Sam Holt.



With no rain since morning and other races taking place the track had dried up enough for us to make the afternoon sprint race. Since we had no qualifying times on Friday we started at the back of the 13 car field. Jan came in after the first lap with the car stuck in 2nd again, I freed it up and Jan went back out to finish the race.



Despite all the rain, we had a good day of testing on Thursday and got in at least 1 of the 4 races we hoped to run.



Having replaced our old, porous and leaking 1973 Holman & Moody 351 cylinder heads with a set of original Mondello 289 HiPo heads, our new Marcovicci-Wenz engine ran flawlessly. Ted Wenz was at the event as Marcovicci-Wenz Engineering had over 30 cars using their engines.



A bright side to all the rain was the appearance of the Jefferson 500 "umbrella girls". If vintage racing in the rain brings out "umbrella girls" like these, perhaps we should invest in a set of rain tires and go racing in the rain more often.



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