

June 2010



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On May 15th, several members met out at Rock Falls Raceway in Wisconsin to do some drag racing. Rock Falls is only about 10 miles out of Eau Claire and situated more or less in the middle of nowhere. Almost half the cars looked to be driven in. Some were set to go with slicks or were on the questionable side of being street legal, but there were plenty like me that had access to a trailer and didn't want to risk breaking without a backup plan. John D and Derek both drove their cars in and had no problems.

Once through tech inspection, we waited in the pits for the go-ahead to get in line and start racing. We were pitted at the 1/4 mile mark, along with a friend of mine Steve Marier. Steve has several Chevilles, including a silver 1967 Chevelle drag car that he brought. It has a big engine, big tires, and small ET. He's only had it running one season, so he's still trying to sort it all out. It was also Club Day at "the Rock", so I figured why not have a ringer on our side???

The great weather and lower early season turnout gave us plenty of chances to make runs. I got to the line 9 times while Derek, Tony, and John D seemed to get in all they wanted to. After each run, we compared our time slips to previous runs and figured where we could improve. The pit area was pretty basic-we had the club's EZ-Up and banner, a couple chairs, we each brought some tools, and a cooler. Steve had his enclosed trailer and a grill for lunch. We had a couple spectators come over to visit for a while, one was my friend Joe Derks who owns Bowties Etc in Cambridge. He has an orange 69 pro street Chevelle getting a new engine. He brought a 71 Chevelle project car on a trailer that he was going to be delivering to a buyer later that day.

In the afternoon they started the bracket racing competition. In the club car group, there were 4 from Northstar Chevilles and 2 others. That was it. I had a mental glitch and miswrote my ET as 14.82 instead of 13.82, so I broke out. Tony ended up winning the class and a trophy. Best times were: Tony: 11.50, John: very low 15s, Derek: 14.04, Bryan: 13.73 and Steve: 8.88. Overall, I think we each had fun, and were pretty close to what we expected from our cars. Rock Falls has more than just a club day too. Just about every weekend there's something going on, and at least once a month there's a test and tune day to go practice your trips down the track.

www.Rockfallsraceway.com Office: 715-879-5089

Next Meeting: Wednesday 6/23 7pm Davanni's-Eden Prairie 952-941-4444

ABCs & 123s of drag racing

While I was excited to go racing again, it had been 15 or so years since I had been on the track. I had some reservations about my car passing tech, as well as if I would remember what to do as a driver. If you've never been to a drag strip here's what to expect. Every track has some sort of safety inspection. Some tracks are more picky, and as your car gets faster, there are more rules you need to follow. The NHRA rulebook is where you want to refer if there are any questions.

Helmet: All helmets must have a tag showing it is Snell 2000 or Snell 2005 rated.

Fluid leaks: If it leaks, it stays off the track. You also need a radiator overflow tank.

Lug nuts: They must all be there. The rule states the wheel studs must extend into the nut at least equal to the length of their diameter.

Battery: Stock location is OK, must be solidly mounted. If in the trunk, consult the book for details on the switch and battery box or trunk firewall construction.

Shifter: Stock is OK, must have functional Neutral safety switch. Aftermarket shifter must have spring loaded positive reverse lockout.

Throttle return springs: Gotta have one, two is preferred.

Rubber fuel line: Maximum 12" total length. Braided hose and NHRA approved push-lock is OK.

Seat Belts: Stock is fine, must be worn while on the track.

Slicks: You must have a driveshaft safety loop within 6" of front u-joint and completely surrounding the driveshaft (also required on 12.99 or faster with any tire).

Clothing: Long pants are required, no tank tops.

You will want to check with the NHRA rulebook for details on specific modifications. The tech inspector has the final say. Be prepared to fix it, remove it, or go home if it isn't acceptable

Track tips

1: Get the layout of the place. Once you arrive, look for where tech is and find a pit parking spot. After going through tech, it might be wise to take a walk down to the staging lanes and see the layout of the track. Find concessions and the restrooms while you're at it. If you aren't sure, now is the time to ask instead of using your track and pit time once racing starts.

2: Listen to the tower's PA system. They announce which staging lane to be in, as well as any changes to the schedule and other important information.

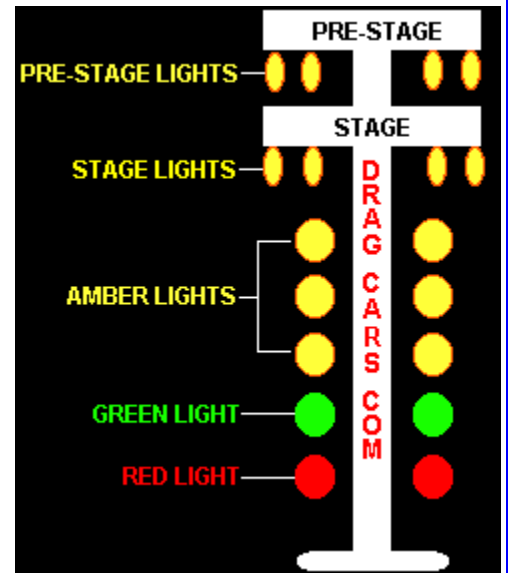
3: When you're ready, get in line. While waiting for your turn, watch what the other drivers do as they get near the front. The track staff will be directing drivers into the track and the burnout box using hand signals. Pay attention to the starting person. They will motion to start your burnout (if needed) and up to the line.

4: Look for the eye beam box, then when close watch the starting tree. The top light means you're in, creep forward until the second one lights-now you're ready. When both cars are ready, the tree is activated.



Staging tree: The amber lights will come down one at a time. In general, you want to leave on the last light due to the reaction time of yourself and your car. If you see the green light before you go, the other car will already be gone. Leave too early, and you red light.

Go Go Go: Pay attention to your car. Shift when you need to, keep the car straight. If something happens, immediately move to the side of the track. This will help protect the track as well as keep you in the good graces of the other racers. After crossing the finish, slow down steadily without losing control of the car. Look for the turn off lane. There is usually a near and far one, the far one will be easier to use.



	LEFT	RIGHT
Car # ...	124	150
Class ...		
DIAL ...		
R/T714	.493
60' ...	1.751	2.242
330 ...	4.981	6.010
1/8 ...	7.680	9.021
MPH ...	91.55	82.96
1000 ...	9.996	11.580
1/4 ...	11.958	13.738
MPH ...	115.15	104.83
Left 1st	1.5595	
CompuLink	AUTOSTART OFF	
Rnd # TO	310/311	
.....	CompuLink StarTRAK 2008	

Time Slip: After taking the turn, stop by the little shack on the return road. They will hand you your time slip. On here, you will find all kinds of info you can use to compare run to run, and even next time you're at that same track. Your car will be assigned a number, nice if you forgot what lane you were in from all that adrenaline. Grab that slip and head back to the pits before checking it out: blocking the return road is a no-no. Dial is used when bracket racing and is the time you guess your car will run. R/T is reaction time. Some slips will also show temperature, humidity and barometer. A good idea is to mark which column was yours for easy comparison. Some drivers write on the back how the car was set up, or other useful info to see how changes affected each run.

Tools and pit stuff:

Aside from your car, there's still plenty that you should bring to the track. #1 is a helmet. After that and cash, you probably want to bring: refreshments, sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat, camera, a friend, chair(s) and pen/paper. Tools might include an assortment of wrenches, a couple screwdrivers, pliers, duct tape, a jack (and wood for under it in dirt pits), flashlight, hand towels, blanket for laying on, and a tire pressure gauge. Space is always a consideration, plus what you will do with everything while you're on the track. This is where a tow vehicle and friends really come in handy. Spare parts might be something else to think about. Spark plugs, belts, hose clamps, spare fluids, maybe an assortment of fasteners. Depending on what breaks, it might be better to park it than fix it. Shade is always nice, some tracks have none so plan ahead.



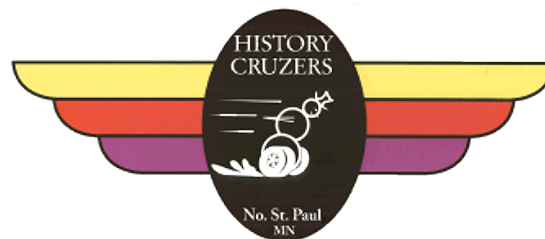
It happened to me

I was at the line. Heart was racing. OK, pay attention. Light the bottom staging light, good. Watch the lights: amber.... amber.... amb-**GO!** Pop. Huh? I felt the gas pedal hit the floor and stay there. Looked at the tach: it's at idle. Well, that's good I guess. Put it in park, shut it off, open the door. There's the track guy, he has a bewildered look on his face. Helmet still on, I look underneath-nothing. Pop the hood. I immediately see the throttle cable is loose but still attached. Look back in car-no cable at the pedal. Tell the track guy, he says push it out the back. Roll the window down, put in neutral, and start pushing. Heart still racing, but now it's because I feel a mix of anger and embarrassment. There's enough room to roll back through the burnout box as well as out past the staging lanes and off to the side out of the way. Now I have a chance to really see what's wrong. I dive under the dash and see that the end of the cable is still there. It's an aftermarket cable, but it looks good???



Looking at the pedal I see the bushing is still there, but when I pop it out, the hole in the middle is a little ragged. In my best small town repair person voice (in my head) I say "*Well, there's yer problem*" Walk back to the pits. Did I mention we were at the ¼ mile mark and my car was at the start? Get some tools, go back to car-thanks for the ride John D! I undo the allen head set screw and pull the cable out of the casing and through the firewall. Thread it back through the bushing and reattach it. Simple job. Went back in line, made another good pass and hit the pits. All fixed.

Next run, it happens again. This time after a parade lap (down the track at idle speed), and being towed back to the pits, several of us get to figuring out a semi-permanent fix. The winner was John Delke's stripped wire nut with the cap cut off. It was small enough to not let the cable end through, but big enough to not go through that bushing. A \$0.15 fix for a \$0.15 broken part. That fix has served me well since. I will look into an all metal fix: probably a small rivet washer instead of the wire nut, but of all the things that could have broken, I'm glad it was something small and relatively simple.



We are the host club at the North St Paul cruise on **Friday June 25th** at 5pm. The club's responsibility is to keep an eye on traffic at our corner so pedestrians are safe and non-cruise cars stay out. We will have our own parking area reserved just for the club. Please come out and support your club as well as have some fun! There will be plenty of time to go walk around as well as just hang out. If you haven't been to North St Paul, it's a very nice old style main street just off Hwy 36 near the giant snowman on Margaret St. We'll see you there-Look for member's cars and the club banner.

Car Craft Summer Nationals: July 16-18. Minnesota State Fairgrounds

How to Photograph Your Car

Part 3: Equipment & Settings

By: Troy Kruger

www.customshowboards.com

Now that you know about lighting and composition (see prior installments in past issues), let's discuss your digital camera and how to set it up. If you don't have a digital camera yet, that's OK. Just realize it's not as difficult to use or expensive as you may think. In fact, going digital is very economical as you don't have to spend any \$\$ developing pictures you don't want, or that don't turn out.



Contrary to what you may think, you don't need an expensive camera to take good photos. Even more true is that a good camera will not automatically make your photos better! Whatever camera you use, learn all the features and how to take control over some of the manual settings. You CAN take good pictures with a \$200 point and shoot digital camera, but make sure it allows you to adjust the ISO and shutter speed or aperture (depth of field). Despite what the marketing hype tells you, don't get too hung up on Mega Pixels and such as you will rarely need what most cameras are currently offering. Get the camera with the most manual settings you can afford in your price range.



Digital SLR w/ manual ctrls



Pocket cam w/ manual ctrls

If you are ready to move up, use a digital SLR camera, but only after you know how to use it. These cameras with interchangeable lenses are very sharp and provide the absolute best prints. Again, learn some of the manual settings and you don't have to spend a fortune here, either. I have shot pictures published on the covers of a catalog and used for large poster prints using only an \$800 8MP camera and lens kit. If you master lighting, composition, and how to control the settings in your camera, you will be very happy with basic equipment, no matter what your budget is.

For exterior shots of the whole car, I like to use my zoom lens, tripod and position myself far back from the car so that I'm shooting at 100-170mm. If you are too close to the car, it will look distorted. Sometimes that's OK, but only if you are intentionally trying to achieve that artistic effect. For most of us, we will be happier with truer proportion shots for our prints. Be careful though, b/c the more zoom you have the harder it is to keep the camera still, so use a tripod. Since my photos are always enlarged to poster size, I set my camera to ISO 100 speed to reduce the grain/noise. ISO 200 works for smaller engine and interior photos where I have less light. I



too close/distorted



160mm, tilt, overcast

can get away with ISO 400 using my DSLR. Your equipment will vary with how much noise you get at various ISO speeds.

For depth of field, I set my aperture to about F8 for full car shots when I want the whole car in focus. I can't do this without a tripod, as my shutter speeds slow way down in low light, unless I'm shooting a brightly colored car. I'll go handheld and F3-F5 for engine and interior using a flash when I have to. If you are forced to go handheld, keep an eye on your shutter speed so that you don't get into the "blur" range of your steadiness. For me, that's about 1/50th/sec. I need to avoid coffee on scheduled photo shoot mornings!

The other necessity is a circular polarizer. If you have a DSLR, you can get one of these for your lens, which will drastically reduce reflections and glare from the car when you use it correctly. I can't do my job without this valuable tool in the bag.



No Polarizer



With Polarizer

Finally, if your camera supports it, and you have Photoshop, shoot in RAW image mode. It will allow you to change exposure, color temp, contrast, etc using a true

digital negative. That way, if you get some of these settings wrong in the field you can change them in a near lossless way on the computer. Just be sure you have the largest memory card you can afford in that camera b/c RAW photos take up a large amount of space.

If you have any comments about these series of articles, I'd love to hear from you. You can call me at (763) 545-2232 or email me: troy@customshowboards.com. You can also find the remainder of the photo tips on my webpage: www.customshowboards.com