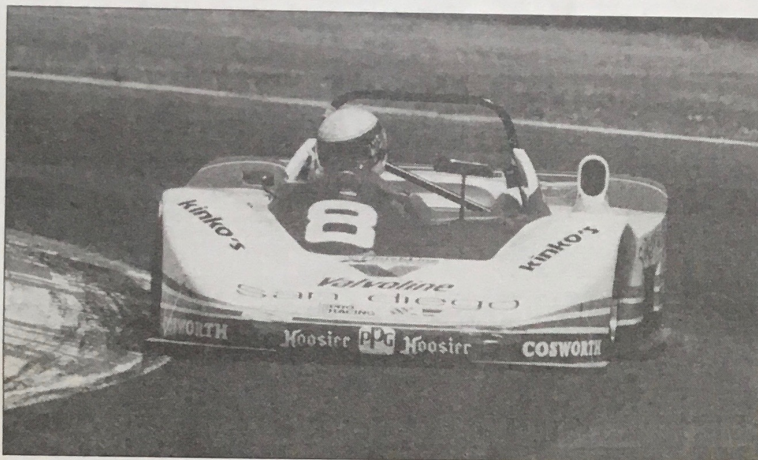


Season Review: American City Racing League

Sail Away

by Roger Diez



DOUG BERGER

Bob Schader won both July races at Portland from the pole position. This action is from race two.

The 1996 season was one of domination for Bob Schader, who clinched the drivers championship in the seventh race of the eight race season. He thus became the first recipient of the Vasser Cup, a new perpetual trophy named for former ACRL driver and new PPG Indy Car Champion Jimmy Vasser.

San Diego won the Blackaller Cup Team Championship trophy, edging Las Vegas.

At the Laguna Seca season opener in March, Schader was bumped off the pole by mere thousandths of a second by Team Las Vegas' Peter Zarcades. Zarcades crashed early in the race and Schader soon passed Team San Jose's Lee Lucas, grabbing the first of five season wins. San Jose took the team honors with a 2-3 finish for Lucas and teammate Jeff Glenn. Joe Giroski of Team Woodland won the S2000 category.

Next were a pair of oval track events at Mesa Marin, the first for the League since 1989. Again Zarcades pipped Schader for the pole, but crashed early in the race. Schader staged a wild battle with Memo Gidley, subbing for Team Santa Barbara's Brad Krause. Gidley wrested the win from Schader with a brilliant pass 28 laps from the end of the race. Reno's Rick Lee was third, followed by

San Jose's Lucas. Leo Giroski won the S2000 division, with Santa Barbara's Tom Bungay second. San Diego took the first of their five team wins.

Schader captured the pole for the second Mesa Marin race and led teammates Marc Zurlinden and Margie Smith-Haas to an historic podium sweep and their second team victory. Reno's Lee scored his third top-five finish, while John Ostlund won S2000 honors.

Back to road racing, the ACRL ran three races in two stops at Portland. Schader scored his second pole at the Rose Cup in June, but contact with Rick Lee dropped him to 18th at the finish. Lee continued, finishing behind winner Jeff Glenn for his second podium finish. Leo Sismani finished third for Team Las Vegas, but San Diego took the team honors by a single point with Zurlinden's fifth and S2000 driver Ian Wood's eighth. Joe Giroski was back on form, winning the S2000 class ahead of Wood.

Back at Portland for a July doubleheader, Schader won both races from pole. Lee finished second in the first race, while Sismani's and Chris Ronson's three-four finishes won the team crown for Las Vegas. Joe Giroski scored his third victory in S2000 over Team Wilsonville's Bill Bachofner. Lee and Sismani

swapped places in the second contest, while Glenn took fourth. Zurlinden's sixth-place finish and Schader's win gave San Diego a close team victory over Sismani and fifth-place Ronson for Las Vegas. Giroski led Ian Wood to the flag in S2000.

The following weekend found the ACRL at Sears Point. Glenn took his first pole of the season, bumping Schader from the spot. Schader took the win in a close finish over Glenn to clinch the drivers championship. Ronson scored his first podium finish when Rick Lee ran out of fuel two laps from the end while lying third. Smith-Haas' fifth-place finish and Schader's win garnered the team victory for San Diego. Joe Giroski eventually won

a (for him) tough race, leading Bill Bachofner to the flag.

The Reno season finale produced the biggest field of the season, 29 entries. New FF2000 champ Steve Knapp arrived with the new Carbir chassis, set pole position and led until he lost his front bodywork and crashed on lap 10. Rick Lee took the point on the restart with Leo Sismani and Marc Zurlinden right behind. Lee took the win, followed by Gidley and Sismani. Sismani's third and Zarcades' fifth took the team victory for Las Vegas. Joe Giroski scored his sixth win of the season, winning the S2000 drivers title with his father Leo finishing second in season points. ■

ACRL Results

Pos	Driver	Team	Wins	Poles	Points
1.	Bob Schader	San Diego	5	4	645
2.	Rick Lee	Reno	1	0	622
3.	Leo Sismani	Las Vegas	0	0	590
4.	Jeff Glenn	San Jose	1	1	563
5.	Chris Ronson	Las Vegas	0	0	526
6.	Mark Zurlinden	San Diego	0	1	500
7.	Joe Giroski *	Woodland	0	0	487
8.	Leo Giroski *	Woodland	0	0	407
9.	Ian Wood *	San Diego	0	0	371
10.	Peter Zarcades	Las Vegas	0	2	332

* S2000 drivers

S2000 Results

Pos	Driver	Team	Wins	Points
1.	Joe Giroski	Woodland	6	693
2.	Leo Giroski	Woodland	1	594
3.	Ian Wood	San Diego	0	531
4.	John Ostlund	Fresno	1	440
5.	Bill Bachofner	Wilsonville	0	380

Pos	Team	Wins	Poles	Points
1.	San Diego	5	4	1357
2.	Las Vegas	2	2	1238
3.	Woodland	0	0	1025
4.	San Jose	1	1	995
5.	Santa Barbara	0	0	947

Champion Profile

Bob Schader

Bob Schader's domination of the American City Racing League's 1996 season was pretty complete—four poles, five wins and the title wrapped up with one race to go. Schader was just plain fast all season long.

The 50-year-old attorney from Boulder, Colo. has been racing since 1979. From SCCA Formula Fords, he soon advanced to Formula Atlantic (1980 MWDiv Champion), Super Vee (1983 MWDiv Champion), S2000 (1982 MWDiv Champion and 1985 National Champion), ACRL, and IMSA GTU, GTO, GTP and WSCSM. He was named Ford Motor Company's "Driver of the Year" in 1985, IMSA's "Most Improved Driver" in 1993 (finishing second in GTP Lights), and took WSC class wins at the Daytona 24 Hours in 1994 and 1995.

Schader was "pretty pleased" with his season, with one exception. "I was really upset with myself for letting Memo Gidley beat me at the first Mesa Marin race," said the champion. "If he had



LAURA TISINGER

First ACRL podium sweep: Margie Smith-Haas, Bob Schader and Marc Zurlinden at Mesa Marin.

come back for the second one, I had him covered."

The new champion was lavish with praise for his crew and equipment. "Arnie Loyning builds better engines than 99.9 percent of the other guys," he said. "And Bruce Foss and the folks at Hoosier have produced a really remarkable tire...consistent from start to finish." He also had praise for Bill Margraf and Bill Dieterle, who prepped the car, and for Jim Morr and Jim Lachenmaier, who kept it running at the track: "The car always came off the trailer ready to race." Schader has sold his Lola and is working on a deal for 1997, driving a Van Diemen. ■

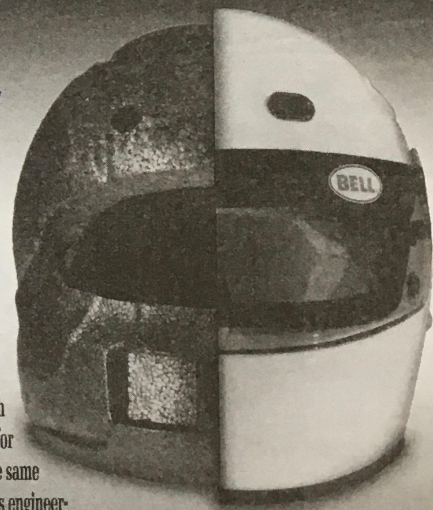
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