

JAG Promotions



Post Magazine Racing Update

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This is the official non-Carbir Jeff Glenn racing update. The fact that you are reading this version means that you are getting the real story, and update from my latest racing activities, instead of a politically correct watered down and carefully worded account.

Formula Ford 2000 Program: After five races and virtually no testing, the series had a six week break. We desperately needed to test the car, the team had been up to its eyeballs building cars that were late, and never recovered enough to implement a test program. There was also pressure from my teammate to make all of the events, and skipping one in order to test the cars was out of the question. Dan Campbell, the crew chief of the F2000 effort was growing tired of Carbir owner Brian Utt and his business practices. To be more specific, Dan was not comfortable with Brian's payment style with vendors. This held things up even more. The other aspect limiting the testing program was that during key times Dan didn't seem to want to work weekends or evenings on the cars. We ran the first half of the season, running only the race weekends, trying to catch up to teams that had been running their cars since before the first of the year, and were running familiar tracks with familiar cars. We were also running shock valving developed by Dan Campbell. By mid season, we decided that we wanted to return to the setup we had used on the '98 car, a much softer package. During this break between races, Brian assured me that we would test. Eric had consulted with Ohlins, and was going to revalve the shocks. Many aspects of the program that Brian had promised had not materialized. Each car was supposed to have three engines. In actuality, between the two cars there were three engines. Engine mileage, wear, and time had slowed any attempts at testing. The testing was to take place at Mid-Ohio, and hopefully we would improve the cars, and come back to the second half of the season much improved. To this point, the cars were literally so stiff that Galen and myself were bouncing off the road, and it was extremely difficult to relay information about the characteristics of the car. I was again assured that the car would be ready for the test, and I set up the track time with the track (nonrefundable) and purchased another engine to make sure that it would happen. Two or three days before the test, the engines were removed from both cars, and sent to be rebuilt. The engine I had just purchased was at the engine builder as well. Test effectively canceled - with plane tickets in hand, track time arranged, and having purchased another motor to assure that the test would happen.... I realized that the Carbir team had changed. I had become a cog in the Brian Utt Carbir machine. I could not continue - feeding the Utt machine, and working in an environment where there is growing tension between all of the players. There were other preparation issues that did not seem likely to change with the situation also and it made no sense to forge ahead with no testing.

Don't get me wrong, Brian is a fun guy to hang out with, etc. etc. Things have continued to deteriorate within the team between Brian and Dan. The atmosphere became more strained. Brian tried to lure me back, and get me to come to the next races. I did not go. I was replaced by Andy Lally, a good driver who has more experience in the F2000 series than just about anyone. The thing that made this unnerving was the fact that Eric was right about the shock package. Andy got into a totally different car than the one that I had spent half of the season with. The car was better - a lot better with the new package. To make matters worse Galen stayed on the other valving, and the team was essentially split into two camps, with Dan looking after Galen, and Eric Purcell engineering Lally. Lally has gotten results with this new

package. He won a race in the rain, and has had numerous top five finishes. Galen struggled with the other car, and made little improvement. Things got so bad, Galen also left the team before the last event of the season. They have replaced him as well.

This brings us up to the current racing activities of the past four weeks. All along I had expressed an interest in testing the car, and working on making it better. Brian wanted me to drive the car as it is now, and also have me help set it up for his "Carbir-fest" test where he was testing people who were interested in running the last race with the car, buying new cars, or running next season with the "factory team." It was a three day test at Blackhawk Farms, with me in the car the first day, and eight guys to try it the following two. This was my opportunity to see how different the package felt. The tension within the team was obvious. Dan did not want anything to do with Brian or his cars. Eric was engineering the car, while Brian floated around avoiding Dan for the most part. The car was much improved, it was easier to feel what was happening with the chassis, as well as easier to drive. I got a good amount of time in the car, and was able to break the Steve Knapp record for the track. The car was less nervous - it was a different car than I had driven earlier in the year. I also did a few laps in Duke Johnson's Carbir Sports 2000 that he had brought out for one of the days.

To keep myself in a car, I put together a deal with Brian to run my old car in the last couple of ACRL races. I felt ready to do very well in the ACRL car after the successful test of the F2000. The ACRL schedule still had three races left - Irwindale Oval, Sears Point, and Las Vegas.

Irwindale Speedway. October 1,2. *American City Racing League running with NASCAR's SouthWest Tour.* With a field of eleven cars, it is painfully obvious that ACRL's car counts have dwindled, and the series is in trouble. The same core group of competitors are keeping it alive and the competition at the front is at times pretty lively, but at the same time it is hard to hide the fact that there are half the number of cars on the grid. Brian, Eric, and myself all thought we had a fairly good chance of getting right back in the saddle and delivering results as we had done in 1998, winning a one off race at Mesa Marin. I had tested at Irwindale earlier in the year in Chris Ronson's car and we had gone quite well. There were a few things to sort out; a new tail / wing combination and Hoosier had the ACRL on the softer R45 tires. Friday was a test day, and we spent the day dealing with a car that was slow to turn in, and was working the front tires too hard. I struggled to turn roughly the same times as the rest of the field, and was behind Peter Zarcades by as much as a second. At the end of the day we found that the rake of the car was wrong and the car was too low in the back. Saturday's schedule had us on the track twice for practice, the qualify, and a 75 lap race. We continued to struggle with car, never achieving both grip and balance. It was clear to me that the Ohlins shocks gave the car a little more grip. My car was still fitted with the Penske shocks that we had used in 1997. Last winter, we switched to Ohlins shocks, and they had made a definite difference in lap time and seemed to be easy on the tires. The cars were not working with the same settings that they had run at the last race at Irwindale or the test I had done previously. We were still guessing when qualifying came around, and Peter Zarcades qualified on the pole with a new record. I was third, behind my teammate Fiorenzo Tirinnanzi. Steve Romak and John Ostlund were also struggling, and qualified behind Brad Pierce in Chris Ronson's Carbir.

Before our race, we happened to be in a spot where we could see a test missile launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base. In the smoggy red Southern California sky, fifteen minutes after sunset the missile was launched. It was fascinating to watch the light from the rocket engine slip out of the atmosphere and disappear. It left a trail of vapor that was light long after it was dark on the ground, creating a rainbow that was refracted through the vapor trail.

The race started about an hour late. Peter Zarcades pulled his typical starting antics with jumping on and off the brakes and gas right up until the flag was thrown (by guest starter Brian Utt.) The first start was aborted - I got a great start and was right up under Zarcades. The second one was successful, and Firenzo slotted into the second spot with me in third. From the fans standpoint the race was a pretty good one. Zarcades bumped Firenzo and fell back. Firenzo led for about 25 laps, with Romak and I behind.

Ostlund came around me and Zarcades made it back to the front (and subsequently took off.) Romak and Fiorenzo touched and I made it past them briefly into second, then Ostlund got by me again. Fiorenzo ended up spinning and was black flagged. Romak, Ostlund, and I battled for second for the rest of the race. My car wouldn't work down low on the track, and became very loose after about 15 laps. There was a yellow near the end of the race, and I made a bid for second place on the outside of Ostlund in the last corner. I got next to him, but could not make the car stick, and Romak slipped past. I ended up fourth. We had missed big time on the setup, and the car did not stay consistent. Fiorenzo had a great run until he exchanged a little paint and was black flagged. Brad Pierce in the other Carbir ended up sixth. Ostlund was second and Romak ended up third.

It took us until halfway through the following weekend to really come up with the fundamental problem in our setup.

Sears Point. October 8-10. Another weekend with an eleven car field, this time with the NASA club, an alternative to SCCA that caters mostly to sedan type cars. Friday was a NASA sanctioned test day. They combined our cars with mostly stock early 1980's Mazda RX-7s and other sedan cars. This made the testing a little exciting - luckily no one was collected. We continued to struggle with the car during our three sessions on Friday. We were not finding success with setups that we had refined with these cars in 1997 and 1998. The car felt horrible - like the front and the back were not connected. When I would straighten the steering wheel, the car felt like it would continue turning in the arc from the previous steering input. Weird. We kept coming up on front springs, while trying a ton of other stuff. Before, the car had not responded positively to these front spring rates, but it was the only thing that was really working to make the car more driveable.

Saturday's agenda was three times out on the track, and the scheduled fast five qualify was changed to a practice due to limited track time and a lack of cars. It was Friday night and into Saturday morning where we really realized that these newer Hoosier tires were screaming for a completely different setup than the previous tires. The other tires had been much stiffer at the front, and the car worked with a reasonably soft front spring package. We also had concerns about the amount of downforce the new tails were creating, and in the first session Saturday, in addition to a large spring change, we ran the wing low at the normal angle, low with the angle cranked up a bunch, and then high off of the back of the tail. The spring change was a tremendous help, and it felt like the wing up off of the tail produced the most downforce. The second session on Saturday was lost when the right front lower wishbone failed due to fatigue on the out - lap. In the last session of the day, we made more changes, and were .9 clear of the field. There was still work to be done to the car however. Brad Pierce had not gotten a chance to run much on Saturday due to an engine problem, but he was ready for Sunday. We continued make changes before the qualifying session Sunday morning.

Sunday. Qualifying required more effort than I had expected. I went out, ran about four or five laps, put in a pretty quick time on sticker tires, and came into the pits to cool the tires. Brad Pierce was .2 behind me when I came in, and while the car felt better than it had been, I knew it was not all the way there yet. While I was in the pit lane, Brad bested my time by .04. I had to go out, and had time for two laps before the session was over. On the cooled tires, the car pushed quite a bit, and my last lap was quick, but the announcers did not get the last lap of the session and it was announced that Brad had the pole. After the cars were weighed, the official sheet came out, and I had beat Brad by a mere tenth on that last lap. We were both almost a full second clear of Steve Romak in third place. I was a little concerned about the push that I had picked up at the end of that session, and we made some minor changes before the race. I knew that the other two Carbirs seemed to grip a bit better with the other shocks, but I was hopeful that I could run away and hide during the race.

The race was scheduled to be 18 laps or 30 minutes. I got a good start, and took off, putting two seconds on second place the first lap, and another second the next two laps. The car was good for about four laps, until the rear tires began to heat up. I could feel the rear of the car going loose so I tried to conserve the

rear tires. It didn't work. I was spending more and more time sideways, and Brad got closer and closer. He caught me in two laps. When he caught me I was sideways in the carousel, and we went side-by-side into seven, and all the way to the esses. I ran out of room and fell in behind. His car was definitely not loose, and he just started to drive away as I slid like a sprint car around turn eleven, two, three, four, six, seven eight, you get the picture. A couple laps later I spun trying to hang onto it in turn 11. I stayed in the throttle and smoked the tires, and was still in second place. I lost eight seconds - I could still see Brad, but could not make up any ground because the car was getting worse. Later on, I spun again, and got going while still in second place. I ended up finishing second, some 16 seconds in front of third place. Brad Pierce had won in the Carbir, and Fiorenzo finished third - his first podium. Our finish gave us the city-team win for Hollywood as well. If we had been able to make the car stay consistent, I would have continued to check out. Eric and I made gains with the setup package for these tires, and I am fairly confident that the Ohlins shocks are a bit easier on the tires. What was really disappointing was the fact that we were not able to make the 001 car as consistent as the others.

However, it is always fun to drive at Sears Point - it is one of my favorite tracks. The fact that a bunch of friends were able to come out and have an OK time makes it definitely worth while. I was also able to get a little more visibility for Bank of the West, KJWL, and Top Shelf at Irwindale where there was a crowd of several thousand. Mystery sponsor "Digital Island" was also on the car at Sears Point in front of a crowd of hundreds.

Onward and Upward.....

I was originally scheduled to do the last race of the ACRL season in Las Vegas October 22-23. Frankly I am disappointed that we were not able to make the car better for either of the past two races - at least at the last one we had the speed, it just didn't last. I have been talking to (anyone and everyone I can) other teams about different things for next season. It just so happens that I have been given the opportunity to test a current Formula Atlantic car for Hylton Motorsports. The dates more or less conflict with the ACRL race in Vegas. (The ACRL event will be run with a Porsche club event.)

The Atlantic test will take place at Buttonwillow, and I am looking forward to it. I will let you know how that goes.

JEFF GLENN