

Rich Mixture



Jack Sampson and Chuck Clark preside at the 2008 Awards Banquet. Photo by Martin Valent.



January 2009

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A New Year *All You Need to Know to Get the 2009 Season Underway*

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www.swvrscca.org

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NOTE: Details on the membership and office-holder for the 2009 Board will appear in next month's issue of *Rich Mixture*.

Upcoming Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
February 6	Club Meeting	The Vehige House
February 15	Autocross (Robbie Nelson)	Riverside HS
March 6	Club Meeting	The Nelson House
March 15	Autocross (Chuck Clark)	Riverside HS
April 3	Club Meeting	The Clark House
April 19	Autocross (Miro Valent)	Riverside HS
May 17	Autocross	Riverside HS
June 13	Sports Cars Fly @ Mid-Ohio Regional Airport (David Powers)	Mid-Ohio Regional Airport, Parkersburg

General Event and Meeting Info

- Club meetings start at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.
- Autocross registration closes ***promptly at 9:30 a.m.*** First runs being at 10:00 a.m.
- Autocrosses are not over until the trailer is packed and the site cleaned up!
- TBA = To Be Announced
- Locations may change. Contact Martin Valent or check the website for updates.
- Everyone is welcome at all meetings!

Online Registration

Online registration is available for autocross events this year. Online registration helps out on the day of the event by making the event setup process much smoother. Please sign up online and help us make the event go faster, smoother, and better for everyone.

Register online at
<http://www.autoxrs.net/registration>

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2008 Awards Banquet

On January 10, the SWVR held its annual awards banquet. Thanks to all of those who attended. Now, without further ado, the hardware:

Rookie of the Year: John Taylor
 Race Worker Award: Sean Banerjee &
 John Tavalacci
 Female Worker of the Year: Cathy Clark
 & Tara Romberger
 Jim Anderson Memorial Award: Chuck
 Clark
 Best Event: TBA!
 PAX Championship: Martin Valent
 Clark Bowl: Martin Valent
 Elk Bowl: Chuck Clark
 R.E. Award: Scott Byrne
 Family Participation Award: The Clarks



Autocross Class Winners:

G/S: Mike Terry
 B/S: Kevin Smith
 S/S: Jack Sampson
 C/SP: Judd Thompson
 STS: Miro Valent
 SM: Martin Valent

Fun Facts About 2008 To Know and Tell By Jack Sampson

As a group, 340 drivers took 2078 runs and traveled 1056 miles; a distance roughly equivalent to a trip from Charleston, WV to Huntsville, Alabama and back. This theoretical trip would be accomplished in short spurts averaging six-tenths of a mile. No drivers completed all 80 of the available runs.

We are here tonight to celebrate the accomplishments of some of our members and distribute awards for 2008. It seems fitting to also celebrate some of our less-than-stellar moments as well.

During the year, the same 340 drivers mentioned before managed to bump, hit, smash, drag and otherwise mutilate 471 pylons, a 4% increase from last years 453. Martin Valent, last year's most prolific pylon punter was only second this year; with a total of 30 pylons. So, this year, we will induct a new member to the Order of the Bent Pylon. The winner – or loser – depending on your outlook is Judd Thompson. Considering the number of runs accomplished vs. the number of pylons hit; Judd is likely to hit a pylon 49% of the time. Oddly enough, our second place pylon masher, Martin, is more likely to hit a cone with a 50.8% probability. Tara Romberger was first in the Pylon per run category with 22 pylons in 32 runs; or 68% probability.

Some of us managed to deviate from the prescribed course 217 times. Tim Maddox was the member with the most off-course excursions; a total of 14 in 54 runs. He's getting better. Our Head Pylon Punter, Judd, was second with 13 off-courses in 67 runs.

Autocross Class Championship Points System

Points are accumulated from date of membership; i.e. join in June, points accumulate from June forward. Only the six best results are considered for year-end awards.

Event Dash Plaques awarded for 1st – 3rd only.

Twenty cars are normally required to qualify the class for the year-end championship cup (2 cars/event, minus one event).

1st Place in Class (two or more entries)	9 Points
2nd Place in Class (three or more entries)	6 Points
3rd Place in Class (four or more entries)	4 Points
4th Place in Class (five or more entries)	3 Points
5th Place in Class (six or more entries)	2 Points
Entry in Class	1 Point

Examples:

- Two cars enter a class. First Place is awarded 9 points, Second (last) gets 1 point.
- Three cars enter a class. First Place is awarded 9 points, Second-6 points, Third-1 point (for entry).
- Five cars enter a class. The first four competitors are awarded points per the table above. The fifth entrant is awarded 1 point for entry.

Tie Breakers – Number of 1st, number of 2nd, total number of points, total number of cars beaten in class.

When a competitor is the lone entrant in a class, the times are compared to the next highest class in the SCCA Bumping Order as listed in the Solo Rules [*Appendix B of the 2008 rules - Ed.*]. Cars beaten in the higher class are counted as cars beaten in the class of the entrant, for qualification of the class for year-end awards. These cars count only for the individual beating cars in higher classes.

Example:

Joe Schmuck enters F/Stock as a lone entrant, driving a Bonsai Ballistic. His times will be compared to the times in the next higher populated class per the bumping order. If J. Schmuck has a better time than at least one of the entrants in the higher class, he will be awarded 9 points in F/Stock and F/Stock will be considered to have two (or more) entrants depending on the number of cars beaten in the higher class.

Clark Bowl Point System (as of January 1998)

1st Place in Class 3 or more cars	3 Points
1st Place in Class 2 cars	2 Points
2nd Place in Class 4 or more cars	2 Points
3rd Place in Class 6 or more cars	1 Point

When compared (lone entrant in class)	Beat 1 Car	1st Place – 2 Points
	Beat 2 or more cars	1st Place – 3 Points

The best ten of eleven events are considered, or one less than the total number of events.

Count each car beaten in the class you entered. Driver must accumulate a minimum of 20 Points to qualify for the award. This is equivalent to having one event discarded, as is the practice in the class Points System, and allows a person to miss one event without penalty.

Minimum number of cars needed to qualify is 2 times the number of events held – Normally 22

Tie Breakers will be invoked in the following order until the tie is broken.

Count first Places - Count cars beaten - Count Second Places (4 or more cars beaten) - Count Third Places (6 or more cars beaten).

SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA REGION – SCCA **SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS**

Revised January 2007

The Southern West Virginia Region follows the SOLO II rules as published by the Sports Car Club of America with the following exceptions or clarifications:

1. Car classifications and preparation rules are equivalent to those listed in the SOLO II rules, except Ladies Classes are not normally run (at this time). (Ladies classes have never been officially discarded.)
2. A driver may enter a points event only once. Non-points event entry limitations are at the discretion of the event organizer. A single car may be entered by no more than two drivers in the same class.
3. Drivers must run each heat with the remainder of the class. If a driver fails to present his car to run in the appropriate class or group within 10 minutes of the time the class is called; the run is forfeited and the car will be listed as DNS for that heat.
4. If a car is re-classified by National or the SWV Region, retroactively or with an effective date, points in affected classes will be adjusted retroactively or from the effective date forward.
5. Numbers and Class designations must be displayed on both sides of each car.
6. Excessive speed, reckless driving, tire warming, or any other actions occurring within sight of the event that may jeopardize the Region's public standing (as defined by the Event Organizer, Board Member, or Autocross Committee member) will be grounds for disqualification.
7. The Autocross Committee will have ruling authority on pylon placement in matters related to clarity of the course, spacing and width of gates. Safety issues are the realm of the Solo Safety Stewards, but the AC can make suggestions in this area.
8. Protests will be handled by the Autocross Committee, with input as required from others. Protests must be submitted, in writing, to the AC with a Protest Fee of \$10.00. The affected parties will meet and resolve the dispute, if possible. No member may be involved in decisions regarding protests within their class, or if they have a vested interest in the outcome. The protest fee is refundable if the protest is upheld. The penalty for car preparation violations is loss of points earned to date. The penalty for event violations is disqualification from the event.
9. Fun runs are at the discretion of the event organizer. The cost is \$1.00 per run.
10. Entrants are responsible to collect and properly dispose of their own trash. No items are to be left at the site after the event.
11. Courses should be well defined and lined whenever possible. Memory should not be a factor to remain "on course"; as stated in the SOLO II Rules.

15. All persons present on the event site must sign the waiver and prominently display the wrist band (above the waist and in front) supplied at the entry point. If you do not comply, you will be asked to leave.
16. Absolutely no alcoholic beverages or controlled substances are permitted at the event site. Non-compliance with this rule is grounds for immediate disqualification and expulsion from the event.
17. All entrants are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsman-like manner.
18. Workers must be on their feet, alert and paying attention to their duties at all times during competition.
19. Photographers desiring to enter the course area must be approved by the course safety steward and must be accompanied by a spotter. A minor may not serve as a spotter.

Course Markers:

1. A penalty of 2 seconds will be assessed for each pylon displaced or knocked over.
2. Course defining pylons displaced will incur the above penalty. Directional or 'pointer' pylons do not incur the penalty; except those placed after the finish line.
3. If weather permits, the course will be lined on at least one side. Crossing the lines incurs no penalty.

Course Design Rules:

1. All corners shall be negotiable without reversing by any car classified by make/model in these Rules.
2. The course shall be at least 15 feet wide and single-file slalom markers shall be at least 45 feet apart. Any series of course markers which are generally in a line and have the effect of a slalom are considered to be a slalom. Additional course markers associated with the slalom markers to form gates, "boxes", etc., do not cancel this limit. There should be a maximum width of 35 feet.
3. The course shall be well marked with pylons or other "markers". The base of each marker shall be outlined to permit accurate replacement if displaced.
4. Cars should leave a gate/turn headed generally in the direction of the next gate/turn.

Minimum of Three Runs:

Each driver shall be allowed at least three official timed runs per course. Only the fastest official run per course will be scored. In the event of extreme circumstances (weather or other calamity), the Board of Directors will determine how many runs will count, with input from the AC. The maximum number of timed runs allowed will be eight. If time allows, additional runs can be "organized Fun Runs".

Reruns:

Reruns will be granted only for timing failure or object on the course, and will not be given because of mechanical or other failure of the competitor's car. A minimum of five minutes must have elapsed, before a competitor may take a rerun. Pylon penalties are not carried over to the rerun. A DNF on a run for which a rerun would have been given shall stand and no reruns shall be given.

2009 PAX Championship Rules

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|---|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|---|--|-----------|---|-----------|---|-----------|---|-----------|---|------------|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PAX index will be applied to all SWVR 2009 events. 2. Every driver's quickest run of the day will be multiplied by the 2008 PAX index to produce a PAX time. 3. PAX times will be sorted, quickest (PAX FTD) to slowest. 4. Points will be awarded to the top 05 PAX finishers in the following amounts: <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr><td>1st place</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>2nd place</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>3rd place</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>4th place</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>5th place</td><td>8</td></tr> </table> | 1st place | 20 | 2nd place | 15 | 3rd place | 12 | 4th place | 10 | 5th place | 8 | <table style="border: none;"> <tr><td>6th place</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>7th place</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>8th place</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>9th place</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>10th place</td><td>1</td></tr> </table> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. A driver's 7 best finishes (out of 11 total events) will be counted in the final points. The number of counted events may be changed if the total number of SWVR events changes. 6. The PAX championship administrator reserves the right to resolve any disputes or ambiguities as he sees fit. 7. Highest point total at the end of the season wins the championship. 8. Remember - no wagering. | 6th place | 6 | 7th place | 4 | 8th place | 3 | 9th place | 2 | 10th place | 1 |
| 1st place | 20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2nd place | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3rd place | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4th place | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5th place | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6th place | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7th place | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8th place | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9th place | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10th place | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

2008 Mid Atlantic Road Racing Series Season Review

By Sean Banerjee

To say that the 2008 MARRS Championship for our friend Jon Kofod was a walk in the park would be possibly the world's biggest understatement. Even before the curtains rose on the season opener, disaster faced the team. Lets rewind back to 2007, after having sealed the ITS Title in the MARRS Championship Jon along with his handy crew of John Tavoracci and yours truly headed to Summit Point for a one off NASA race. The goal was to try out the freshly paved Summit Point track to see how much faster it was. Fast was an understatement, Jon was well into the 1:24 range in qualifying and it was obvious the track and the cooler weather was the perfect mix. Green flag flew on the race and Jon notched into second place overall, things were looking good until all of a sudden we didn't see Jon cross start finish. Word on the radio was the engine had grenaded, and as Jon limped back to the pits it was obvious the weekend was done. We took the valve cover off and saw the carnage, we were done all we could do was to sit back and watch the rest of the races.

So the team headed into 2008 needing a new engine, Jon and I discussed numerous times what would be the best plan. The troubled economic times meant we had to revert to another junkyard engine as Jon didn't have the finances to front a full prepped engine. Disaster number two struck midway through the off season when we got a call saying Hankook was stepping back from its amateur racing sponsorship. They would still provide contingency support but the free tire deals that had helped tremendously over the past 4 seasons were no longer available. This meant Jon had to buy tires himself and hope for good finishes to get enough contingency to get more.

This meant we had to double and even triple stint tires, the last few seasons we had new tires for each weekend and sometimes new tires for each session.

The disasters weren't over, around the second week of March I got a call from Jon saying he had crashed his mountain bike and broken his elbow. MARRS 1 was less than a month away and the doctors were indicating that he would have to get surgery. As Jon and I talked over the next few weeks we realized it would be a last minute decision on his part on whether or not we were racing in MARRS 1 and let alone the entire series. On Wednesday of the race weekend Jon made the decision to go racing, he said he had limited movement in his arm but would deal with the pain to make sure he got a solid start to the season.

As dawn broke on MARRS 1 we began to wonder whether the bad luck was behind us. It wasn't, Friday night as Jon and Brian Curry buttoned the car up they began discovering an idle issue. Brian thought he had it fixed, and took the car out for a test drive around the test loop. A deer ran out as Brian evaded and the curbed the car damaging the radiator. Jon had to miss first qualifying as they furiously searched to find a radiator. When Jon got to the track he was running on no sleep and his arm could barely move, John and I had to help Jon get suited up as any movement to his arm resulted in even more pain. When the green flag flew on the second qualifying session things started to look better and better. Steve Hoffman had showed up in his ITS Acura Integra GSR as well and Jon was easily keeping pace with him. As the checkers dropped on the second qualifying session we were solidly in

P2 in ITS and starting from the third row overall. Things were definitely starting to look better as the weekend progressed. The sun never did rise on Sunday as we were greeted with cloudy skies and intermittent rain. The track was slick as snot, but we knew this was going to help as Jon was the rainmeister. Green flag dropped and Jon took off like a rocket ship, blazing by Steve and began to start gapping the field. Laps went by, a spin in turn 3 on lap 5 dropped Jon back a few spots. That didn't stop his pace, he quickly began reeling in the cars and began closing the gap back to Steve who was now leading ITS and the overall race. Lap 8 went by and there was no sign of Jon, things weren't looking good as the radio from the pit marshals was silent. Could the engine have grenaded again? John and I drove around the perimeter of the track to see if we could locate Jon when suddenly one of the guys informed us that Jon had been involved in a huge wreck and was in the infield care center. We jumped back in the car and drove at breakneck speed to the tower. When we got there Jon was sitting with the medical staff, he was shaken up but said he was ok and the safety gear had done its job in keeping him safe. What had happened was a faster ITR BMW had dive bombed Jon going into turn 1 and wrecked him. The rear suspension had broken and as Jon tried to nurse it to a safe spot he went off track and crashed into the tire wall. We still hadn't seen the car as the first priority was making sure Jon was ok. The BMW had been involved in another incident on the first lap and taken out the second place car ITR BMW. The driver was a rookie driver and paperwork was filed to ensure he knew his actions were not ok.

As we headed back to our pits we realized the season was done for when we saw the car. The whole front end was destroyed, the right side of the car was destroyed and there was suspension damage on the rear of the car. At this stage all we could do was roll the car into the trailer and head back. MARRS 2 was four weeks away, but we weren't sure if the tub was totaled or not. The BMW driver had offered to pay for the damages, which was nice of him. Over the next few days we began furiously researching spare tubs, trying to find all the parts and pieces knowing that we had little or no time if we wanted to make the MARRS 2 race.

The next four weeks were spent on email and the phone as all of us tried furiously to come up with a game plan to resurrect the reason. At some points we just wanted to quit, but Jon had mentioned that this would be his last season racing so he could devote more time with his family. One of our friends Andrew Zimmerman who was Jon's teammate back in the Honda Challenge days and who Jon drove for in the 2005 12 hrs at Summit and the 2007 and 2008 13 hrs at VIR had an Integra shell in New Jersey. The plan was to get the tub once we got the word the ITS car was salvageable. The week before the race we got word the car could be salvaged and that the body shop was working on it. Jon drove through the night on Thursday to New Jersey to retrieve the tub. The team worked through the night Friday as they raced to get the car back together. John and I were at Summit early Saturday, stop watch and notebook in hand intently recording ever single lap time for the other cars. Why? Jon wasn't going to make qualifying; we needed a miracle. As Sunday dawned it was obvious things could go very wrong, Jon was started 43rd out of 43 cars in a mixed field of ITA/ITS/ITR cars. As the green flag dropped, Jon began

a marathon drive that cannot be described in words. John and our friend Kyle Roosa along with regular MARRS ITA driver Chris Perera were on the stands at the carousel while yours truly sat on the pit wall.

By the time the cars had reached the carousel on lap 1 Jon had passed 13 cars, passing cars left, right and center and going 3 wide where one car could barely fit. He was on a mission, meanwhile race leader Nathan Lucas was pulling away. By lap 2 Jon had passed 17 cars, by lap 8 Jon was sitting in 13th place overall. So in 8 laps he had passed 30 cars, simply unbelievable. Lady Luck was smiling, a multi car incident at 10 brought out the double yellow. Jon had a fast car, but then things started going nuts. The slower cars simply weren't bunching up and Jon didn't get an ideal restart. With only a handful of laps left Jon still stormed through a few more cars and ended up 8th overall and 4th in class. The car had held up, but as we talked after the race it was evident the car was well down on power. We were estimating 30-40 hp based on the lap times alone. The idle issue remained and Jon's ailing arm wasn't helping matters. MARRS 3 was coming up in 4 weeks and we for Jon to win another ITS title it would take a miracle.

MARRS 3 brought forth scorching hot weather, as Jon took the green flag on the first qualifying session. Stop watch in hand we timed the top three cars, Jeff Lucas in the Lucas Racing Datsun, Darrell Stein in the RX7 and Jon. Jon was consistently half a second slower than Stein and 0.9 slower than Lucas. After the checkers dropped we looked over the car, extra power would help but that wouldn't be easy to find on a race weekend. We looked through our notes and decided to drop the pressures a little to see if it would help. It didn't help the lap times any but Jon

said the car felt a little more settled. For Sunday's race Jon would start on the third row and in third place in ITS.

The green flag dropped as the two front running ITR BMWs took off followed by AJ Nealey in the ITA CRX and the ITS cars of Lucas and Stein. Jon was caught up in his own battle with an ITR Porsche. We watched anxiously knowing the ITR car wasn't in our class, the Porsche spun on lap 4 and almost took out Jon in the process. Another disaster just avoided. For the next few laps Jon struggled to find time as he couldn't claw into the gap to the front runners. As the laps wound down Jon fell into the clutches of the 4th place ITS car of Mark Gibson. Jon tried bravely to hold Gibson off and finally in the closing stages of the race Mark got by. Once by Jon launched a counter attack to regain the spot before finally settling down for a 4th place finish in class and 7th overall. The team had two short weeks to prepare before heading off to Nelson Ledges in Ohio for MARRS 4 and 5. Nelson is a fast and grueling track where one mistake can end your weekend. We knew a good finish at Nelson would bring us back into the game, but one mistake from anyone could lead to disaster.

With John working in DC over the summer we were trying to figure out what the best option would be for Nelson. Jon called up and said our friends with the Baby Grand cars – Roger Austin, Phil Ackley and Jason Neal would help with the transport by using Roger's stacker trailer. So the plan was for John, Jon and Jon's twin daughters to head towards Nelson in Jon's Pilot.

**See the Flat Out Racing
GSR on the back cover.
Photo by Ryan Jenkins.**

We got to Nelson and set up shop with the Baby Grand guys, the weather was questionable and we weren't sure if our wet setup would work at Nelson. Jon headed out for qualifying and decided to just get a good timed lap in so he could get a reasonable race start. Abdul Aziz was on ITS pole in the BMW, Nelson is Aziz' home track so there was a definite advantage there. Things weren't going 100% well as we discovered a broken wheel stud and with the help of AJ Nealey's spare stud we managed to get the car bar together before the race started.

As the green flag fell the battle for second place heated up between Scott Nutter in the Mazda and Michael Lattanzio in the BMW. They traded spots throughout the race until Nutter spun in 13 and Jon easily got by Lattanzio to seal second place in the race. We headed back to the hotel and pulled out the calculators, lady luck was smiling on us as Jon had unofficially taken over the championship lead. Then lady luck decided to frown as things started to get questionable weather wise on Sunday. Qualifying looked to be wet; the three of us headed down pit road and walked the track perimeter trying to judge the surface. At Summit we know where all the bad spots are in the rain, we had no idea what Nelson would do. A last minute call to go to full wets proved to be a decent choice for qualifying, but quickly turned south. Jon was fast in the first few laps, but the track was drying and it was evident that the last few laps would set the field. Ray Boniface, another local driver, picked intermediates and set the pole as Jon gridded up in second place in ITS. The goal was simple for Jon, stay out of trouble. Jon did exactly that, he let Boniface take off and dropped to third behind Glenn Evans for a while as Glenn got a jump on the start. Jon pulled a brilliant pass on Glenn at the

kink at well over 120 mph to take over second. The remainder of the race Jon kept a decent pace but as the final lap approached all hell broke loose. Up front the battle for the IT-7 class lead had heated up, it was the final lap and the IT-7 cars ended up taking each other out at the kink. Yellow flags were out, as Jon approached the scene of the accident. Lattanzio in the BMW who had started dead last was in hot pursuit and appeared to not see the yellow and almost took out Jon at the final turn. Another disaster narrowly avoided, we watched in horror as what could have become a huge wreck at one of the fastest turns in the US.

As we packed up and headed home we realized the season was slowly starting to turn around. Jon still didn't have a win, but consistent race finishes had landed him on the top step of the MARRS title chase in ITS. With three weeks before the next race, we began calculating what finishes Jon needed to seal the title. The hurting economy meant Jon had no funds to rebuild the engine, a typical ITS engine runs upwards of \$7k at the least. The front runners in a similar ITS GSR had about 170 to the wheels and Jon's last dyno result said he was down in the high 130s.

Building on the momentum from the midseason turnaround in fortunes the team headed back to Summit for the latter half the season. Saturday qualifying and Jon locked into an epic battle with Darrell Stein in the ITS RX-7. Stein held provisional pole by a scant 2/10th of a second. With the weather warming up we decided to keep the same tires, this proved to be a poor choice as Jon didn't improve his times in the second session. Unlike seasons past we didn't have the luxury of sticker tires for each qualifying session. At the end of the day Jon had P2 locked in qualifying

and would start the race from the third row.

Jon got a great start and drove by Stein to take an early lead, over the next five laps Jon began building a solid lead until a slight bobble in three and Jon lost momentum that allowed Stein to catch back up and execute a pass heading into 1. Jon stayed on Stein's bumper over the next few laps, but the warmer conditions and the breakneck pace was putting the tires through their paces. Jon dropped back a little and settled into a nice rhythm to lock up second place in ITS and move him closer to the ITS title. We knew a podium at the Labor Day double would lock up the title. "It's easy to overlook the importance of consistency and go for the win each time but in the end it doesn't matter how many races you win or lose as long as you win the title" commented Jon after the race.

With a few weeks break before the Labor Day double and a question about whether Jon would return to racing in 2009 we decided it was time to revert the car back to the old paint scheme. Jon along with Brian Curry worked through the next few weeks and repainted the car back to the Nonnamaker's scheme from back in the Grand Am Cup days. After the morning qualifying session Jon slotted into second place in ITS behind Steve Hoffman in the other ITS GSR. The green dropped and Jon got a great start as Hoffman dropped back a few spots, but as they headed into turn 1 Jon was pushed wide by AJ's CRX as Hoffman quickly closed up the gap. With Hoffman's car having some 30 more horses than Jon's tired engine he quickly built a gap as Jon began working on making up lost ground to Marc Gibson in the ITS 280Z. Over the next few laps Jon stayed glued to Gibson's bumper and began pulling a nice draft coming out of 10.

The hard racing was taking an effect on the brakes, Jon dropped back and settled into third place for the rest of the race to ensure he got a podium finish and move one step closer to the title.

We knew if Jon finished anywhere higher than 4th on Monday's race he would be the 2008 ITS champion, in fitting fashion Jon would start the race from pole. Missing from the front was Hoffman who was experiencing transmission issues and didn't want to get in the way of the ITS championship battle. Jon got a great race start and held off Gibson, but the torque in the 280Z meant Gibson got a nice run in five and took over the race lead. Meanwhile Hoffman who had started in the back was reeling in cars and heading towards the front of the pack. Jon had other plans for Gibson as he turned up the ante and began pulling a huge draft through 10 lap after lap. Jon patiently waited for that opportune moment to make the pass, and it came in turn 7 when Gibson made a slight mistake allowing Jon to go through and take the race lead. Gibson's repeated attempts to make the pass back proved futile. Meanwhile Hoffman had caught back up and Jon let him through knowing all he had to do was finish in the top four to take the title. As the checkers dropped Hoffman crossed the line to take the ITS win with Jon in second. Jon had now become the 2008 ITS Champion for a second year in a row. It wasn't after a few weeks that we learned that Hoffman was disqualified for avoidable contact on lap 9 when trying to pass the #9 ITS BMW of Chuck DeHaven in turn 6. The stewards ruled it against Hoffman and Jon moved up one spot to take the win.

"This may be sweetest of the four titles" said Jon. "With the bad economic conditions we lost one of our main sponsors this season and the incident at MARRS 1 heavily damaged our car to the point we weren't sure if we could even repair it and had considered dropping out of the championship. You can never count these guys out and we rebuilt the car and ran with a motor that was down on power all season. In addition, with funds limited we had to run most of the season on used tires, while our competitors were on newer rubber. In the end it didn't

matter because this team never quits and we just made the most of what we had to win this title" commented Jon after winning the championship.

Terrible weather greeted us at the MARRS Finale; history would say the weekend would be a nightmare. But, in the end the weekend couldn't have been any more perfect. It was a textbook dominating win in questionable weather conditions. As dawn broke on Saturday the weather was horrendous, rain and more rain greeted us. Jon headed out on full wets and decided to log a few laps and head back to the pits. His fast lap was good enough for pole by over a second. The weather began clearing in the afternoon as Jon headed out on dries and went much faster as he slotted into pole in ITS with a 1:26.9 second time. His lap time was some 2 seconds faster than the next ITS car. Up front were the 3 ITR BMWs, so Jon would start the race on Sunday from the second row.

Dawn broke on Sunday and the weather couldn't have been crazier. One second we had sun, the next second rain, and the next second a drizzle. We scoured the laptop and John's cell phone for weather data. It appeared that a front was coming through but it would not be enough rain to merit going out on wets. At the last minute we made the call, it was time for intermediates. We knew that the tires would simply be terrible on the onset but if the weather played as the radar showed the rain would let off and Jon would have the perfect set up for the end of the race. We got to the grid and saw everything from slicks to full wets; the race was going to get interesting.

Knowing the tires would be questionable on the start we told Jon to let the ITA cars go, they were on a mix of rains and intermediates. The green dropped and Jon instantly fell back, letting AJ and Brian Price go through. By lap 5 a dry line was forming, and instantly Jon's tires became the perfect choice. He drove by cars like they were standing still and quickly began reeling in AJ. A full course caution in the middle of the race meant the last few laps would be a dash for the gold. Jon rocketed by AJ on the start and began hunting the ITR BMWs. We

monitored his lap times and he was consistently 0.5 to a full second faster than them. The front runners were on rains, which had worked perfect for the start but now our gamble for intermediates made us the rabbit. Jon caught up with the third place ITR car and got by when the BMW made a mistake going into 1. As the laps rolled on Jon began making a charge for the overall win. When the checkers dropped it was Dan Jones taking the win in ITR with Marshall in second a bumper length behind and Jon hot on the heels 3 car lengths back in third place. Jon had won ITS in a dominant fashion and had he got another lap would have won the race overall. Jon also set the fastest overall race lap, some 0.5 seconds faster than the ITR BMWs. What a way to close the season out! As Jon pulled into the pits, John hopped in for a well deserved victory lap to celebrate a perfect drive by Jon that resulted in an impressive win.

As Jon and John pulled into the pits after their victory lap we reminisced on what had proved to be the toughest season in Jon's racing career. It was a season filled with disaster after disaster, but to be a great team one has to endure each incident and learn from it. We knew the car was down on power, so we strategized and in the end consistency proved to be the key. Jon started racing the Integra in 2004 where he battled tooth and nail with teammate Ian Carpenter as they become co-champions in the East Coast Honda Challenge series. 2005 saw the series decline as Jon went on to record 8 consecutive wins and 2 second places to become the 2005 East Coast Honda Challenge H4 champion. 2006 proved to be another tough season, battling hard with Kirk Dohne in ITA as Jon finished runners up in the MARRS ITA Championship. 2007 and a series of engine problems forced the team to switch to ITS, and Jon went on to become the MARRS ITS Champion. As Jon's car sits stowed away in his trailer we don't know what 2009 will bring. The team has talked about doing some select races in other regions – Watkins Glen, Road America, etc. Other plans include running more endurance races; we've also talked about forming an endurance karting team with the three of us.

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