



#66 Peter Glawe, 1966 Austin Healey Sprite; #10 Erica Robau, 1965 Austin Healey Sprite; #50 David Hopkins, 1964 Austin Healey Sprite.

## CVAR Rise of the Phoenix Motorsports Ranch Houston, Texas

May 3-5, 2019

— story by *Don Gwynne*

— photos by *Brandall Binion*

Race Chair Dan Hilton was pleased to see more than a hundred racers turn out to celebrate The Rise of the Phoenix. Good weather prevailed, with the exception of a bit of damp track on Saturday morning. The name of the event reflects an “off again, on again” scheduling problem that was eventually



#27 Phil Mulacek, 1966 AC Cobra 427; #19 Pierre Mulacek, 1964 Shelby Cobra 289.

overcome, thanks to a lot of hard work and some extraordinary donations towards the event costs. In addition to generous donations from Cragg Eubanks and Peter Glawe, CVAR also received donations from Scott Robinson, Seth Higgins and Jim Sandberg. Scott Robinson donated “adult beverages” and Elliott Barron ran a very successful 50/50 raffle.

The CVAR Safety crew had very little to do, but they did a great job when needed. Dan Hilton served double duty as Race Chairman

and Safety Steward. Dan also whips up a mean Frito pie. CVAR’s Acting Vice President Bill Wolff served as Race Coordinator, and Erica Robau impressed as the Food Coordinator. Highlights included an ice cream truck on both Saturday and Sunday, Chick-O-Sticks, Frito pies, and lots of assorted adult beverages. A Food Truck served excellent breakfasts and lunches all three days.

A new twist was a feature race for just for **PORSCHE**s on Friday afternoon. A mixed bag of seven 914/4, 914/6, 911, and 911 RSR Porsches came to the line. Mike Briggs started on pole in his white #43 Porsche 911, but eventually finished third overall. Michael Saxe’s orange #979 Porsche 911 Carrera RSR moved into first overall in the first lap and was never headed. Bjorn Dischington’s blue #587 Porsche 911 ran second overall for most of the race after getting past Briggs. No surprise, the three 914’s proved to be no match for the 911’s. Of them, Berkeley Merrill’s silver

#12 914/4 finished highest, in fifth overall. Jay Zittler’s silver #39 914/6 was suffering from fuel pressure problems, and Tom Giertz’s silver & black #59 914/4 was having carb problems.

On Saturday afternoon, the **BRITISH SMALL BORE** feature race saw only six cars come to the grid, of the 21 cars eligible. After starting on pole, Steve Coleman decided to pit

on lap 6 due to fatigue, heat, and the dearth of other cars on track. Greg Blake had already taken the overall lead at that point, and went on to take the overall win in his silver #41 TR-3 at the end of twenty minutes. Colby Lemmon moved his blue #28 Austin Cooper S up from fifth on the grid to finish second overall, about 26 seconds back from Blake’s TR-3. Joanne Lemmons likewise moved up from last on the grid to finish in third overall driving her green #37 Morris Mini.

Eight **GROUP 6** cars of 16 entered came to the grid on Sunday afternoon for the first points race. Gray Gregory literally blasted his way up through the field when the green flag dropped, moving from seventh on the grid to take the overall lead on the third lap, never to be caught. His blue #11 Chevron B39 was stunning. After starting on pole, Nick Leonard had to settle for second overall, some 38 seconds back at the checkered flag. Thus the first two finishers also were the first place and second place finishers in the FA class. Best of the rest was John Taphorn’s red & blue #50 Reynard, which started third and finished third overall to take an unopposed FC class win. After starting on the outside of the front row of the grid, Alexandre Acemyan slipped as low as sixth in mid-race, but fought his way back to take the FF1 Class win in



#39 Jay Zittler, 1970 Porsche 914/6 GT; #587 Bjorn Dischington, 1974 Porsche 911.

fourth overall driving his black & gold #95 Beach T11F, one lap down on the top three cars. Edward Ziegler took an unopposed FB Class win in sixth overall, driving his gold #97 Beach T11F. The final finisher was William Trimbur, taking an unopposed FF3 Class win in his red #21 Van Dieman.

CVAR's "big thunder" **GROUP 1** race came next. David Fershtand showed himself to be the class of the field, starting on pole and leading every lap to take the overall win and the A Sedan class win in his blue #18 Mustang. After starting in third and running third most of the race, George Kopecky passed Tom Upton on the last lap to finish second overall for the FIA Class win in his black #97 Porsche RSR. Upton's red #77 Pantera finished third overall and second in FIA Class only a half-second behind Kopecky at the checkered flag. Roger Williams put his orange Camaro up into fourth overall for second in A Sedan class. Roger recently acquired this Camaro from Sam LeComte; it was originally prepared and



**#5 Edward Ziegler, 1968 Beach T11; #50 John Taphorn, 1988 Reynard FC.**

Sedan. Scott Robinson finished fourth overall for a second place in C Production. Michael Kopecky had a tough slug of it to earn the E Production class win. On the way to the grid, the engine in his yellow and orange #30 Porsche 914/4 loaded up, and he had to start from the back by the time he got things running right. He was moving up through the field well, but a spin and a pit stop set him back again. He made it back up to fifth overall by the finish, crossing the line just ahead of CVAR Chief Instructor Berkeley Merrill's silver #12 Porsche 914/4. Three seconds behind Merrill came Pete Sandy in his white and blue #04 Austin Healey Sprite, who won the F Production class. The one C Sedan competitor in this race, Bobby Whitehead, didn't get very far, DNF on the

Nine of the 14 entrants in **GROUP 4** came to the grid for the Sunday afternoon points race. Joe Parks started on pole and led from green to checker to take the overall win and the FJr2 class win. Mike Vecellio moved up from seventh at the start to second overall at the finish for the VB class win in his black and white EMPI Crusader, quite a ways back from Parks's Formula Junior. Jeff Walker took the SFP "Spec Sprite" class win in third overall, driving his black #27 Austin Healey Sprite. With a seventh overall finish, Stephen Heitzke took the G4T class win in his blue and white #82 MG Midget.

Last race of the weekend was for CVAR's new "**GROUP 8**" classes. Chief Instructor Berkeley Merrill provided a G8 orientation session, and the new G8 drivers behaved well. G8 is intended to provide a place for newer cars and drivers to participate in CVAR events. Eligibility includes production based cars up to 1989 that are authentically prepared to the period they represent. Sub-classes include G8-4 (4 cylinder cars), G8-6 (6 cylinder cars), G8-8 (8 cylinders cars), and G8-U ("over prepared" cars like Trans-Am, FIA). Further details are available on the CVAR website. In order to assure the new G8 entrants had a fun weekend with plenty of cars on track with them, any driver already registered in G1, G2, G4 or G7 could also run in any of the G8 sessions for no additional entry fee. Several drivers took advantage of that unique



**#2 Phil Mulacek, 1967 Shelby GT350; #43 John Bergendahl, 1966 Ford Mustang.**

raced by Mark McIllyar. It was a minor miracle that he was able to start the race on Sunday at all. After suffering a rear axle failure and loss of wheel and tire on Friday, Roger and crew drove all the way to Dallas for parts and worked all through Saturday night to make repairs. His perseverance was rewarded with a good point race finish. John Bergendahl drove the Mulacek's yellow #43 Mustang to fifth overall to take the B Production class win.

**GROUP 2** and **GROUP 7** were combined for the next points race. Not surprisingly, it produced some good racing. Mike Lovay started on pole driving his red/white/blue #57 Datsun 510 B Sedan, with Steve Clayton alongside in his white and blue #25 Datsun 240Z. After the green flag, it didn't take Clayton's Datsun very long to get past Lovay's Datsun, and that's how they finished at the end of eleven laps. Clayton's first overall finish notched him the C Production class win, and Lovay's second overall finish gave him the B Sedan win. Cynthia Trifilio started third in her blue #55 Fiat 124 Sport Coupe, and ran in third overall the whole race for a second in B

second lap after a squeeze play at the kink took him over a curb that damaged his exhaust pipe.

Seventeen Formula Vees of CVAR's **GROUP 3** rolled out next. In as closely competitive class as FV, it is rare for any one car and driver to dominate the entire weekend. But that is exactly what Heather Barron did. She won every FV race and set a fastest lap in one of them. In the Sunday afternoon FV points race, she started on pole in her yellow #82 Caldwell D-13 and never looked back while taking the overall win. She crossed the finish line with more than a two second lead over the second-place car. Hunter Barron and William Wolff had a "hammers and tongs" back and forth battle the whole way, with Barron's red #113 Kellison Mk 2 coming in second. Wolff's white #68 Zink Z-5 finished third, about a half-second behind the Kellison.



**#196 Ralf Kuehnhoefer, 1971 Chevron B19; #35 Nick Leonard, 1981 Ralt RT-4.**



**#95a Alexandre Acemyan, 1969 Beach T11F; #5 Edward Ziegler, 1968 Beach T11.**

opportunity in the earlier heats, but let the G8 drivers have the track all to themselves for the last race of the day.

Phil Mulacek sat on pole in his blue #27 427 Cobra, with Pierre Mulacek alongside in his blue #19 289 Cobra. Matt Blehm started

in second overall for most of the race, then on the fifth lap, slipped to fourth at the finish. Phil worked his way back up to second overall at the checkered flag. Langlainais finished third in his red Mustang. After getting into the lead on the first lap, Blehm never looked back, to

take the overall win by a margin of 36 seconds. Blehm thus took the G8-6 class win, and Phil Mulacek took the G8-8 class win. No G8-4 cars started the race.

CVAR mourns the loss of two long-standing members. R David Jones, 50 year SCCA racer and CVAR member died April 11 after a long illness. Bill Haga, long time CVAR member, and Chief Instructor died May 6 after a long illness. Both will be sorely missed.

CVAR's next race is set for Sep. 20-22 at Texas Motor Speedway. This is CVAR's third annual Race Against Kids Cancer. The event will include a car show being anchored by the Ferrari Club and the Lamborghini Club, CVAR swag bags and tee shirts for early registrations, the Chris Watson Band, and a Saturday night dinner celebrating the Morgan Adams Foundation.

**BRITISH CAR RACE**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 EP G. Blake/1958 Triumph TR3 2:00.087
- 1 CS C. Lemmons/1967 Austin Mini Cooper S 2:01.212
- 1 G4T J. Lemmons/1963 Morris Mini 2:05.212
- 1 FP G. Reed/1967 MG Midget 2:07.035
- 1 SFP E. Robau/1965 Austin Healey Sprite 2:12.524
- 2 FP S. Coleman/1972 MG Midget



**43 Mike Briggs, 1973 Porsche 911.**

**GROUP 1**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 AS D. Fershtand/1968 Ford Mustang 1:48.892
- 1 FIA G. Kopecky/1973 Porsche RSR 1:48.741
- 2 FIA T. Upton/1972 Detomaso Pantera
- 2 AS R. Williams/1968 Camaro
- 1 BP J. Bergendahl/1966 Ford Mustang 1:51.642
- 3 AS J. Fershtand/1969 Ford Mustang
- 2 BP P. Mulacek/1965 Ford Mustang
- 3 FIA M. Briggs/1973 Porsche 911
- 3 BP S. Mulacek/1966 Shelby GT350
- 4 BP P. Mulacek/1967 Shelby GT350

**GROUP 2/7**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 CP S. Clayton/1973 Datsun 240Z 1:54.784
- 1 BS M. Lovay/1969 Datsun 510 1:55.245
- 2 BS C. Trifilio/1971 Fiat 124 Coupe
- 2 CP S. Robinson/1972 Datsun 240Z
- 1 EP M. Kopecky/1971 Porsche 914 1:54.399
- 2 EP B. Merrill/1972 Porsche 914/4
- 1 FP P. Sandy/1959 Austin Healey Sprite 2:01.580
- 2 FP G. Reed/1967 MG Midget
- 3 CP J.M. Iturbe/1972 Porsche 911

**GROUP 3**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FV H. Barron/1972 Caldwell 1:55.935
- 2 FV H. Barron/1969 Kellison Mk 2
- 3 FV W. Wolff/1968 Zink Z-5



**#77 Thomas Upton, 1972 Detomaso Pantera.**

- 4 FV D. Calkins/1972 Lynx B
- 5 FV D. Boucher/1969 Nash Scrambler
- 6 FV J. White/1965 Zink C4
- 7 FV M. Rogers/1968 Bobsy Vega
- 8 FV D. McDowell/1969 Zeitler
- 9 FV D. Phillips/1969 Zink C4
- 10 FV B. Griffith/1972 RCA

- 11 FV E.O. Barron/1972 Taylor Stewart
- 12 FV J. Williamson/1970 Caldwell D-13
- 13 FV D. Bevan/1964 Zink
- 14 FV S. Elieff/1960 V Bug Fast V
- 15 FV K. Barron-Fuller/1969 Zink C4
- 16 FV D. Dyckman/1968 Zink C4



**#95 Joe Parks, 1961 Cooper T-56.**

**GROUP 4**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FJ-2 J. Parks/1961 Cooper T-56 1:54.863
  - 1 VB M. Vacellio/ 2:05.689
  - 1 SFP J. Walker/1961 Austin Healey Sprite 2:09.950
  - 2 SFP P. Glawe/1966 Austin Healey Sprite
  - 3 SFP E. Robau/1965 Austin Healey Sprite
  - 4 SFP D. Hopkins/1964 Austin Healey Sprite
  - 1 G4T S. Heitzke/1964 MG Midget 2:15.110
  - 2 G4T S. Mulacek/1965 Ford Mustang
- GROUP 6**  
PL CL DRIVER/CAR
- 1 FA G. Gregory/1977 Chevron B39 1:38.819
  - 2 FA N. Leonard/1981 Ralt RT-4

- 1 FC J. Taphom/1988 Reynard FC 1:46.222
- 1 FF1 A. Acemyan/1969 Beach T11F 1:45.332
- 2 FF1 J. Langham/1972 Merlyn Mk20a
- 1 FB E. Ziegler/1968 Beach T11 1:50.108
- 3 FF1 T. Blakeney/1972 Royale RP-16
- 1 FF3 W. Trimbур/1982 Van Diemen 2:07.058

**GROUP 8**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 G8-6 M. Blehm/1982 Mazda RX-7 1:53.939
- 1 G8-8 P. Mulacek/1966 AC Cobra 427 1:54.166
- 2 G8-8 M. Langlainais/1985 Ford Mustang
- 3 G8-8 P. Mulacek/1964 Shelby Cobra 289



**#1 Willis Murphey, 1966 Elfin Mono Mk2c.**

**PORSCHE CHALLENGE**

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FIA M. Saxe/1974 Porsche 911 Carrera RS 1:48.707
- 2 FIA B. Dischington/1974 Porsche 911
- 3 FIA M. Briggs/1973 Porsche 911
- 1 EP M. Kopecky/1971 Porsche 914 1:56.805
- 2 EP B. Merrill/1972 Porsche 914/4
- 4 FIA J. Zittner/1970 Porsche 914/6 GT

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