



#64 Sterling Mulacek, Shelby Cobra; #58 John Kish, 1973 Porsche 911E.

CVAR Brad Balles Fall Drivers School and Races

MSR-Houston, Texas

September 28-30, 2018

— *story by Don Gwynne*

— *photos by Brandall Binion*

Over 100 entrants, including 12 students, enjoyed nice weather for the Test/Tune/Practice (TTP) on Friday. Then on Saturday, the skies opened up. The experience of racing in the rain on Saturday served them well for Sunday afternoon's Championship points races. Rain and lightning caused shortening of the points races, and lightning danger caused cancellation of the final Group 3 race for Formula Vees.

Chief Instructor Berkeley Merrill ran another fine drivers school on Friday. The students included a mix of beginners with a few old salts renewing their licenses after a hiatus.

Student Roger Williams (a Canadian working in Houston, not to be confused with a long-time CVAR Spridget driver of the same name) had

never driven a race car before the school, but he arranged to drive Sam LeComte's orange #92 Camaro. This beautiful car was originally prepared and raced by Mark McIllyar (aka "Cone Boy") before Sam acquired it. Sam's Concierge Motor Sports, based at Eagles Canyon Raceway, rented Roger the Camaro, and he liked it so much he bought it! CVAR supporters like Bigger Hammer Racing, Barron Racing, Corsa Technica, and Concierge Motor Sports all can rent and support several different types of cars to make it easy to get started in vintage racing. Roger's instructor for the school was Corvette pilot Joe Robau, no stranger to going fast. Perhaps not surprisingly, Williams and his orange #92 Camaro led

the pack in the school races, turning a very respectable 1:54 lap at one point.

Michael Kopecky got his first taste of real racing driving his yellow and orange #30 Porsche 914. He did have a bit of PCA instruction a long time ago with his father, 911 RSR racer George Kopecky. If you are going to start racing in a Porsche, having George in your corner is bound to come in very handy.

Tom Hassell's grandson, Justin Couture, has been

crewing at vintage races for a while, but got his chance at Houston to become a driver in Tom's white #16 Mustang. He even gained some experience driving in rain on Saturday.

Lou Marchant's daughter, Julia Rogerson, did her first CVAR school a few years ago, but car troubles kept her out of it for a long time. Her second school, at MSR-H, went well on Friday, including some experience driving in rain, but sadly, her engine in her red #84 MGA let go on Saturday, so she didn't get signed off. Bummer.

At the other end of the experience spectrum, old hand SCCA racer R. David Jones participated in the school in order to reinstate his license, driving his blue and yellow #6 Zink Z4 Formula Vee.

Sunday morning weather was pretty good, but for the Championship points races, thunderstorms threatened to become a big part of the story. The first points race was for **GROUP 4**. But of twelve entrants in the class, only five hung in there and came under the starter's orders. Lou Marchant took the overall win and the VB class win driving her BRG #186 MGA, but she didn't have it easy. Joanne Lemmons was nipping at her heels driving a green #37 Morris Mini. The gap at the checkered flag was 2.3 seconds after nearly sixteen minutes of racing. Lemmons won the G4T class in second overall. The



#19 Phil Mulacek, Shelby Cobra; #17 Stuart Blackwood, 1971 Ford Escort RS.

remainder of the field was composed of SFP "Spec Sprites". Jackson Williams won the class in third overall driving his green #72 Austin Healey Sprite, about 45 seconds in arrears to the leading two cars.

The next race wasn't really a points race, it was for students. Of nine students cleared to drive on Saturday and Sunday, only four actually started the Sunday afternoon race. As noted above, Roger Williams romped in his orange #92 Camaro, and Julia Rogerson wasn't able to start because of a blown engine on Saturday. Paul Park ran times almost equal to the Camaro, driving his silver #95 Cooper T-56 Formula Junior, and finished less than two seconds behind Williams. Justin Couture ran third in Tom Hassell's white #16 Mustang,



#28 Colby Lemmons, 1967 Austin Mini Cooper; #37 Joanne Lemmons, 1963 Morris Mini.



#17a Herb Hilton, 1967 Ford Mustang; #84 Jim Sandberg, 1969 Corvette.

and Joe Edwards finished fourth in a white #17 Citation Z16 Formula Vee.

After the Group 5 race for students, Group 6 was called to the grid. Of sixteen entrants, eleven braved the weather and came under the starter's orders. CVAR's **GROUP 6** includes FA, FC, FF1, FF2, FF3, BSR, and S2000 cars. Two Formula Atlantics put on a good race up front, with Gray Gregory coming out on top for the overall win driving his blue #11 Chevron B39. Fastest lap of the race, however, went to Rick Wark's red #70 March, on his way to second overall and second in FA. Gap at the flag was slightly less than nine seconds. A bit further back, Jim Gewinner finished third overall to take an unopposed win in BSR driving his green #33 Lotus 23B. CVAR recently made older S2000 cars eligible, and Wally Meyer brought his white and red #20 Swift DB2 home in fourth overall to take the S2000 win unopposed. CVAR Formula Fords are broken into three classes, FF1, FF2, and FF3, with FF1 representing the earliest examples, etc. First Formula Ford to take the checkered flag was Nick Leonard's white #095 Swift DB1, to win FF3 class in fifth overall. Sixth overall and first FF1 was Jeff Langham driving his blue and silver #12 Merlyn Mk20a. Drew Fisher's blue and white #111 Zink Z10 took the FF2 class win in seventh overall. Rob Pink was DNF after three laps in his #01 blue Reynard Formula C.

CVAR's **GROUP 7** regularly includes C Production, D Production, and B Sedan cars. For this event, Phil Mulacek and

his son, Sterling Mulacek, brought a pair of real-deal 289 Cobras and a pair of real-deal Shelby GT-350s. They received special permission from the Chief Steward to run the two small block Cobras in Group 7, and the two GT-350s in Group 1. Phil Mulacek took the overall win in his blue and white #19 Cobra. Thomas Schluter did his best to keep him on his toes, however, and brought his blue #77 Datsun 240Z across the line just over one second in arrears at the finish for a very commendable second overall and first in C Production. About six seconds back was Michael Lovay's quick R/W/B #57 Datsun 510 for third overall and the B Sedan win. A bit further back, the second Cobra was being driven with care by Sterling Mulacek, in part because this car has an irreplaceable LeMans history. Glen Valdes took an unopposed D Production win driving his green #61 Daimler SP250.

Rain began increasing, and the **GROUP 1** race was shortened to 10 minutes. It was pretty much a Ford-powered show, with Mustangs and Shelby GT-350s filling the top five finishing positions. The lone Chevy was Jim Sandberg's big block red #84 Corvette. David Lasco and John Bergendahl put on some really close racing in the rain, with Lasco's red and white #90 Shelby GT-350 notching the win, but with a margin of less than a half-second ahead of Bergendahl's yellow #43 Mustang. Bergendahl regularly wrenches for the Mulaceks, but can obviously drive well too. Lasco's car used to be owned and driven by Don Roberts. Roberts was SCCA's Southern Pacific Division Champion in 1970 driving this same #90 GT-350. Lasco's #90 GT-350 and the Mulacek's #19 289 Cobra were both once part

of Jim Click's famous Ford Performance Collection. Sterling Mulacek crossed the line a bit more than seven seconds back, in his dad's blue #7 Shelby GT-350 for third overall and third in B Production. Phil Mulacek was almost a dead heat with his son, and at the checkered flag, his blue #18 Shelby GT-350 was recorded as being 0.042 seconds behind Sterling. A bit further back, in fifth overall, came Gene

Hassell in his red #83 notchback Mustang for the A Sedan class win. No doubt a handful in the rain, Jim Sandberg's red #84 big block Corvette took an unopposed A Production win in sixth overall. CVAR President Herb Hilton rounded out the finishers in seventh overall, less than a tenth of a second behind "Gunship" Sandberg, driving his yellow #17 notchback Mustang to second in A Sedan.

CVAR's **GROUP 2** is often one of the largest fields, but this afternoon, only three cars out of thirteen entrants came to the line. Something about rainstorms and open cars, perhaps. Like the prior Group 1 race, the Group 2 race was shortened to 10 minutes, and after those ten minutes splashed by, it was Stefan Schluter's orange #60 Porsche 914 for the overall win and the E Production class win. CVAR's Chief Instructor, Berkeley Merrill, finished second overall and second in E Production in his silver #12 Porsche 914. Ken Morris finished third overall and third in E Production in his black #08 MGB.

As it turned out, the Group 2 race became the last race of the day, because the Group 3 race that was to follow was cancelled due to lightning dangers. Thus, the third Group



#111 Drew Fisher, 1974 Zink Z-10.

3 race, run earlier that morning, became the points race after the fact. That race, run in better conditions, produced a very large grid of 22 Formula Vees, which included student drivers Scott Elieff, David Bevan, and George Jonas. These students finished near the back, which is understandable, but they gained a lot of valuable racing experience along the way. At the end of the 15 minute Sunday morning FV race, it was Hunter Barron in his blue #113 Nash Scrambler taking the overall win, besting the second place finisher Colin Lynch's silver #17 Formcar by just less than four seconds at the flag. Third went to Elliott (E.O.) Barron in his red #110 Taylor Stewart, and as if that wasn't enough for the Barron team, Elliot Barron came fourth in his silver and yellow #23 Pegasus. We are seeing a racing dynasty here, folks. Further down the finishing order, the Barron team also finished 7th (Heather Barron), 16th (clan patriarch Jim Barron), and 18th (Kassandra Barron Fuller).



#43 John Bergendahl, 1966 Ford Mustang; #83 Gene Hassell, 1968 Mustang; #27 Jacob Ammon, 1969 Corvette.



#54 Tim Blakeney, 1972 Royale RP-16; #55 Scott Robinson, 1969 Winkelmann; #12 Jeff Langham, 1972 Merlyn Mk 20a.

GROUP 1

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 BP D. Lasco/1965 Mustang Shelby 2:04.053
- 2 BP J. Bergendahl/1966 Ford Mustang
- 3 BP S. Mulacek/1966 Shelby GT350
- 4 BP P. Mulacek/1966 Shelby Mustang GT350 289



#90 David Lasco, 1965 Shelby Mustang.

- 1 AS G. Hassell/1968 Ford Mustang 2:18.866
- 1 AP J. Sandberg/1969 Corvette 2:04.065

- 2 AS H. Hilton/1967 Ford Mustang

GROUP 2

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 EP S. Schluter/1973 Porsche 914/4 2:07.336
- 2 EP B. Merrill/1972 Porsche 914/4
- 3 EP K. Morris/1969 MGB

GROUP 3

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FV H. Barron/1969 Nash Scrambler 1:58.037
- 2 FV C. Lynch/1963 Form Car Fv
- 3 FV E.O. Barron/1972 Taylor Stewart Fv
- 4 FV E. Barron/1972 Pegasus
- 5 FV M. Rogers/1968 Bobsy Vega
- 6 FV J. Strnad/1967 Zink C-4
- 7 FV H. Barron/1972 Caldwell D-13
- 8 FV B. Wolff/1968 Zink Z-5
- 9 FV D. Calkins/1972 Lynx B
- 10 FV J. White/1965 Zink C-4
- 11 FV P. Summerville/1967 Zink Z-5

- 12 FV E. Lovay/1970 VW Formula Vee
- 13 FV J. Williamson/1970 Caldwell D-13
- 14 FV W. Murphey/1969 Lynx B
- 15 FV A. Hughes/1969 FV
- 16 FV J. Barron/1969 Lynx
- 1 R.D. Jones 2:16.0 12
- 17 FV K. Barron-Fuller/1963 Autodynamics

- 1 Student S. Elieff/1960 V Bug FV 2:21.917

- 18 FV J-P Carter/1968 Zink C-4
- 2 Student D. Bevan/1965 Autodynamics Mk 2B
- 3 Student G. Jonas/1968 Zink

GROUP 4

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 VB L. Marchant/1959 MGA 2:12.305
- 1 G4T J. Lemmons/1963 Morris Mini 2:12.920
- 1 SFP J. Williams/1972 Austin Healey Sprite 2:17.965
- 2 SFP R. Williams/1959 Austin Healey Sprite



#55 Cynthia Trifilio, 1971 Fiat 124 Coupe.

- 3 SFP D. Turner/1964 Austin Healey Sprite

GROUP 6

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 FA G. Gregory/1977 Chevron B39 1:40.655

- 2 FA R. Wark/1980 March FA
- 1 BSR J. Gewinner/1965 Lotus 23B 1:49.916
- 1 S2000 W. Meyer/1987 Swift DB-2 1:51.663
- 1 FF3 N. Leonard/1985 Swift DB-1 1:53.364
- 1 FF1 J. Langham/1972 Merlyn Mk 20a 1:54.547



#30 Michael Kopecky, Porsche 914.

- 1 FF2 D. Fisher/1974 Zink Z-10 1:56.876
- 2 FF1 T. Blakeney/1972 Royale RP-16
- 3 FF1 S. Robinson/1969 Winkelmann
- 2 FF2 D. Bell/1974 Lola T-342

GROUP 7

PL CL DRIVER/CAR

- 1 BP P. Mulacek/Shelby 1:50.987
- 1 CP T. Schluter/1972 Datsun 240Z 1:54.304
- 1 BS M. Lovay/1969 Datsun 510 1:55.928
- 2 BS S. Blackwood/1971 Ford Escort RS
- 3 BS C. Trifilio/1971 Fiat 124 Coupe
- 2 CP J. Kish/1973 Porsche 911E
- 3 CP J. Smith/1971 Nissan/Datsun 240Z
- 2 BP S. Mulacek/Shelby Cobra
- 1 DP G. Valdes/1961 Daimler SP 250 2:07.158

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