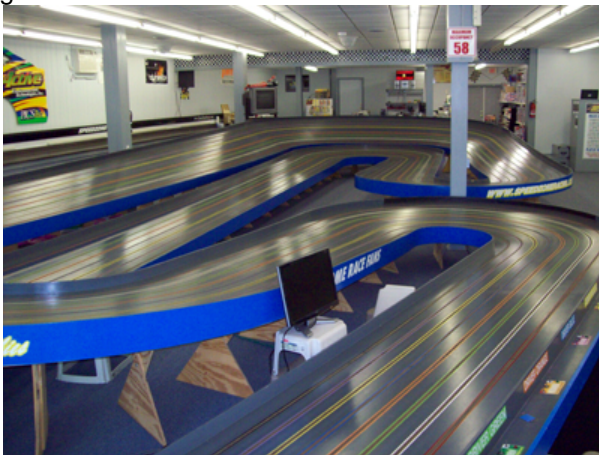


Mailmen Go Postal; GaGa Snuggled Up Close 6 Hour Petit LeMans Enduro – Speed Zone June 18, 2011 By Joe “Noose” Neumeister

A mere thought six months ago became reality when the first Retro East™ 6 Hour Petit LeMans Enduro was held on June 18, 2011. The venue was set for Speed Zone in Mount Holly, NJ since we had a race scheduled there for our Spring-Summer schedule and we always know the events will be smooth and efficient when we race there.

The event would be held on the super smooth 220 Engleman.



The format was to be eight four-man teams that would run 45 minutes per lane with each driver doing an 11 ¼ minute stint. Driver changes would be 1 minute as were lane changes. All work had to be done under the “green” and all spare motors and tires had to be teched in and impounded.

The question was how to make it so that the cars would be similar and the teams structured as evenly as possible. Tony P was contacted and the challenge to build eight exact frames was presented. Tony had no problem at all with it and he got in touch with Bryan Warmack to get the stuff he needed. The new Outisight Ferrari 330 P4 was chosen to be the body because it is a classic LeMans car and once each team decided on its colors, Noose went to work painting them. ProSlot Puppy Dog 4002Bs were the motors of choice that I tested and broke in ahead of time and tire types were limited to JK Treateds with a pair of the Big Hubs given to each team.



With a plan firmly in place, the announcement of the event was made with a requirement to have the entry fee in by the deadline given. It wasn't long before all thirty-two spots were filled and some alternates were available too!

“Crew Chiefs” were assigned and this role was given to the top racers within Retro East for the past season that were signed up for the event. Using results from our prior year of events, drivers were put into three “buckets” and the names were then selected at random. It was pretty amazing how evenly the teams turned out.

Here are the Crew Chiefs – from left to right John Streisguth, Chris Radisich, Roger Ruggeri, Matt Bruce, John Gorski, Jay Kisling, Mike Katz, and Noose



Here are the teams and the bodies they got. You will get to see the “after” photos later. LOL

Team 1: “Hang em High”
Noose, Dave DeMott, Jersey John Molnar, Adam Chaya



Team 2: "Black Sunshine"
Jay Kisting, Wes Pikunis, Gary "Hip" Culy, Jeff Bates



Team 3: "Mailman"
Matt Bruce, Derek Velez, Mikey Iles, Bruce Baughman



Team 4: "VWs"
John Streisguth, Mike Iles, Russ Katz, Ed Chaya



Team 5: "Lady GaGa"
Mike Katz, Ray Carlisi, Doug Murphey, Ed Hilland



Team 6: "Twistafatties"
Chris Radisich, Mac McPherson, Tony Lang, Mike "Duffy" Heinrich



Team 7: "Penske"
Roger Ruggieri, Preston Meyer, Max Iles, Bill Dougherty



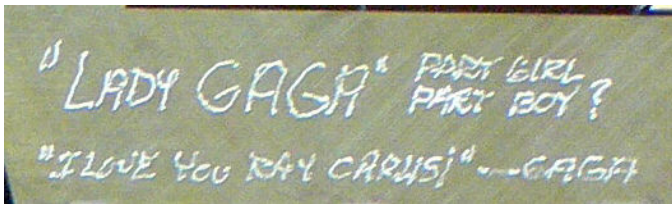
Team 8: "TQs"
John Gorski, Vinny Spina, Mike Mankin, Emil Fichman



As noted, Tony P built 8 awesome alike frames with JK front tires all mounted and ready to go. Of course it was given a name with Lady GaGa being one having some special markings.



The odds though of course of the "Lady Ga Ga" team actually getting this frame in the random pick was 1 in 8 and who would of though that they actually would wind up with it. LOL!



The other "names" given to the frames were Dreadnaught, Panzer, Titanic, Super Sled, Ton of Fun, Heavy Metal, and Number 9.

The frames, motors and locking collars were all put into sealed boxes. At 8 a.m. sharp numbers were drawn at random and each Crew Chief then went and selected one of the boxes, took their body and the pre-marked one set of tires they were issued. Lane assignments were then done at random the same way. At this point the teams were off to put together their cars, tune them, and be ready for tech at 9:30 a.m.

Last minute instructions and rules for the day were presented to the teams and the big one was that there would be no track calls. Oh boy. Yup, the race would go on until the assigned times for driver and lane changes. That would be the only time the power would go off unless there was a track issue of course.

Now it was time to see who could thrash the best. All that trash talking ahead of time on Slotblog and Facebook would get tested for sure. Most of the cars were assembled by the Crew Chiefs while other members of the teams obtained spare tires from the raceway, decided on spare motors, and got other spare parts together.

Tech started right at 9:30 as planned and just about every team was ready! A couple were getting a few more laps in on their tires, etc. and at 9:55 the track power was shut down and the first drivers were hooked up and ready.

The race was all set to go. Here are the cars on the tech table with the spares behind them.



At 10 a.m. the race was on!



At the end of the first heat it was Twistafatties and Black Sunshine leading the way. No carnage yet and the race was running smoothly. Team Penske had some issues then as did the TQs. Gorski's team sucked an interior into the gears causing their motor to slow down a bit. Roger's team might have hung a motor brush after a crash but then it came right back to like and lasted the rest of the race.

Driver changes went smooth as did lane choices. All work was being done as planned under the green but I will say that a slight change will made to this for the next one. More later.

The first real carnage of the event happened to one of the leading teams when Chris Radisich's team, Twistafatties, broke a rear axle. They lost some additional time when the gear got put on the wrong side. Mac races too many Falcons. LOL

My team, Hang em High, ran into some gear problems that would haunt us 3 more times. We lost almost 20 minutes total overall and it dropped us down from 4th to last pretty quickly.

Meanwhile Team Lady GaGa got ahead of Black Sunshine who ran into a broken guide problem. Team Mailman was out there running nice and steady and

doing what you have to do in these events; stay out of trouble and make laps!

At the 2 hour mark, tech was held and only 3 teams passed so it was into the pits under the green for the other 5 teams to put on fresh tires and get back into it. Amazing how fast this was done! Team TQs, Gorski's team, decided to change motors since theirs had slowed down after that incident with the sucked in interior. No one was allowed to change motors until the 2 hour mark anyway unless of course one smoked. As it turned out, there were no motor changes except this one but more on this later.

Team VWs were moving up in the pecking order and were running a strong 4th by mid-race. Twisafaties were flying now and making up a lot of lost time after that brown axle. My team continued to struggle as I said and we had more gear changes going on. Team Penske was moving along and the TQs were having issues.

Guys got to get a bite to eat during the race as the BBQ was fired up for some early afternoon munching. Meanwhile drivers were doing their thing running their stints as their crew chiefs planned.

Another tech was held at the 4 hour mark and again some teams had to head for the pits for some fresh rubber. Those that changed tires at the 2 hours mark and were still legal could possibly have an advantage as the tires wore down for the last hours. If I recall correctly, I think only 1 or 2 of the the teams used 3 sets of tires and a lot made it on just 2 pair. I know we did.

So here we are getting ready for the last heat. No one could believe what they were seeing on the screen. Lady GaGa held a very slim lead over the Mailman. Mike Katz's GaGa team was heading to the purple lane and Matt's Mailman team as heading to the very fat red lane. This looked to be the set-up for one heck of a finish. Meanwhile, our team moved from last to 6th and it looked like were would remain there. Twistafatties, Chris' team, was trying to make a run at the VWs who had a hold on 3rd place. They came very, very close to overtaking them but just ran out of time. Meanwhile, Jay's team, Black Sunshine, were flying and Wes Pikunis put in the Fast Lap of the race with a 5.652. Now remember this is at the 5 ¾ hour mark!

So who would get to be the team that would get to stand under this awesome banner made by Hip Culy?



The Mailmen made their move on Lady GaGa and over took them. Team VWs held off the Twistafatties. After 6 hours of racing there was only a 6 lap difference between 1st and 2nd place!!!!

The final results. Here is what was on each of the participant box plaques and the winner's plaques that were made by Ralph Thorne.



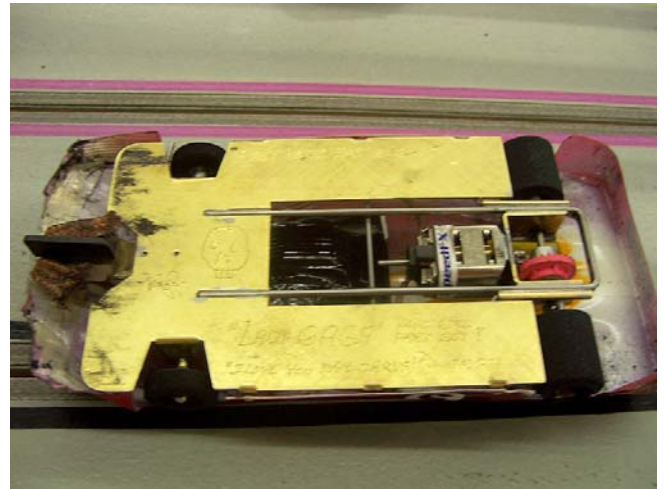
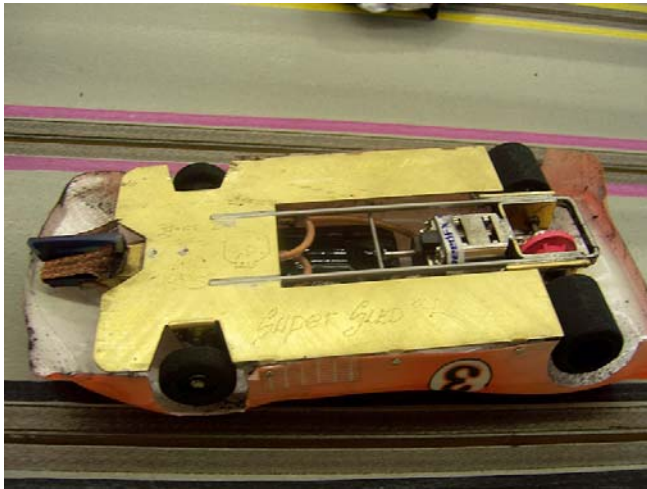
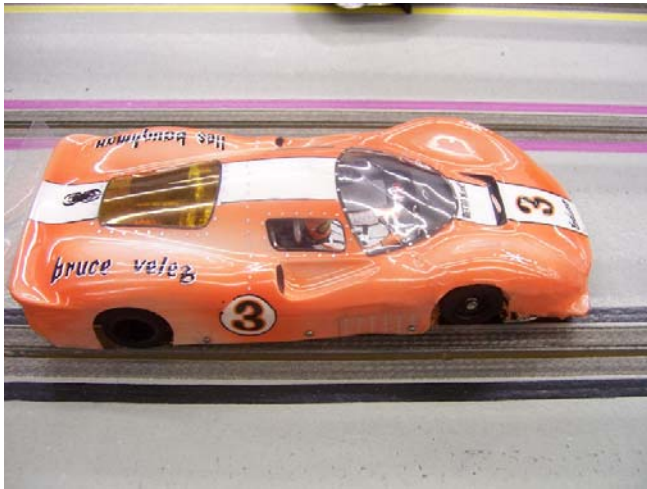
The podium cars:



1st – Team 3: “Mailman”
Matt Bruce, Bruce Baughman, Derek Velez, Mikey Iles,
3436 Laps, 5.761 Fast Lap Time, 429.5 Avg. laps per heat



Here is the winning car after the race. Matt's team got Super Sled 1. They ran 8/29 gears and were the only team to do so. They weighed in at 123.5 grams and used a Red Fox guide.



2nd – Team 5: “Lady GaGa”

Mike Katz, Ed Hilland, Ray Carlisi, Doug Murphey

3430 Laps, 5.758 Best Lap Time, 428.8 Avg. Laps per heat.

3rd – Team 5: “VWs”

Russ Katz, Ed Chaya, and John Streisguth. Mike Iles had to leave for his real car racing and missed the picture.

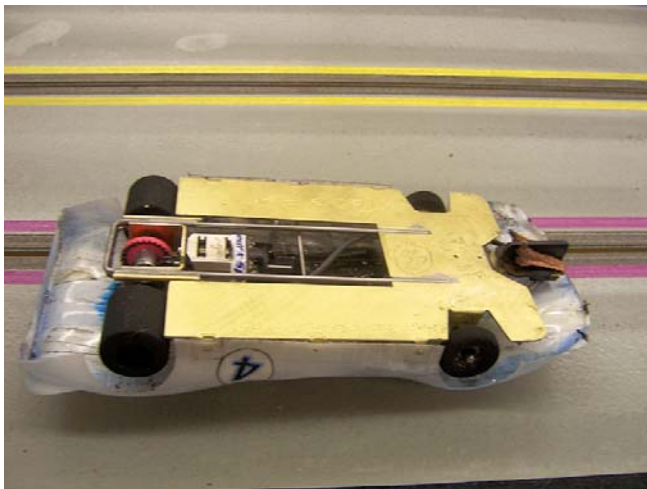
3332 Laps, 5.757 Best Lap Time, 416.5 Avg. Laps per heat.



Here is their car. Weighed in at 123.8 grams, geared 7/27 and they used a Parma guide. They of course had the now famous Lady GaGa frame.



Here is their car. Weighed in at 123 grams, geared 7/27 and they used a JK guide. They had the Ton of Fun frame.



5th – Team 2: “Black Sunshine”
 Jay Kisling, Wes Pikunis, Gary “Hip” Culy, Jeff Bates

3316 Laps, 5.652 Best Lap Time and Fastest Time of the Race, 414.5 Avg. Laps per heat

Here is their car. Weighed in at 123.3 grams, geared 7/28 and they used a Red Fox guide. They had the Number 9 frame.



4th – Team 6: “Twistafatties”
 Chris Radisich, Mac McPherson, Tony Lang, Mike “Duffy” Heinrich

3328 Laps, 5.711 Best Lap Time, 416 Avg. Laps per heat

Here is their car. Weighed in at 121.9 grams, geared 7/27 and they used a Parma guide. They had the Heavy Metal frame.

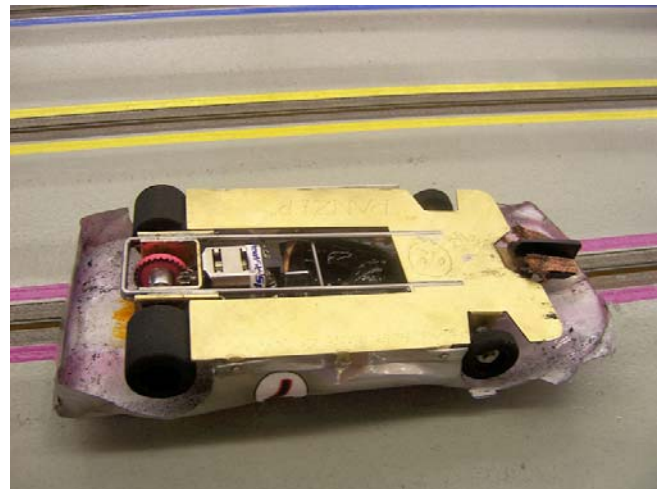
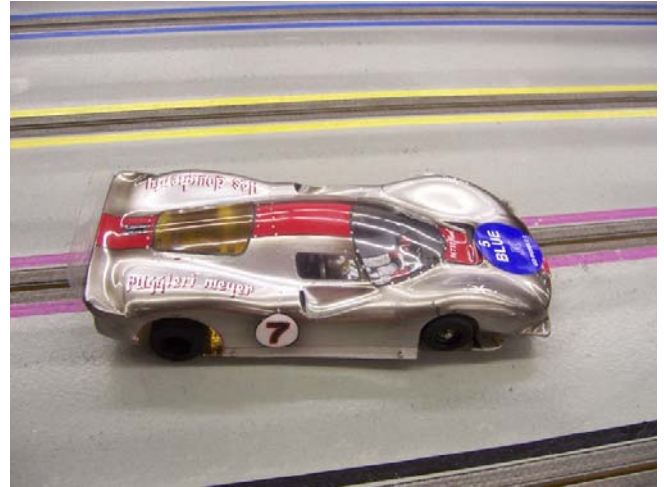
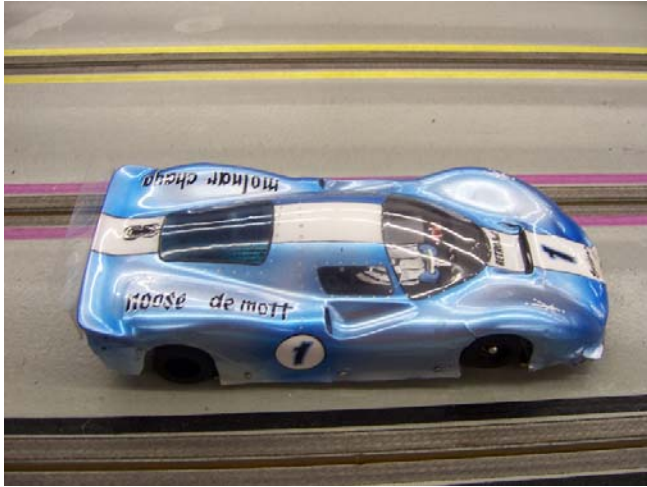


6th – Team 1: “Hang ‘em High”

Noose, Dave DeMott, Jersey John Molnar, Adam Chaya

3148 Laps, 5.820 Best Lap Time, 393.5 Avg. Laps per heat

Here is their car. Weighed in at 124.5 grams, geared 7/27 and they used a Red Fox guide. They had the Panzer frame



8th – Team 8: “TQs”

John Gorski, Vinny Spina, Mike Mankin, Emil Fischman

3130 Laps, 5.820 Best Lap Time, 391.2 Avg. Laps per heat

Here is their car. Weighed in at 124.1 grams, geared 7/27 and they used a Red Fox guide. They had the Titanic frame

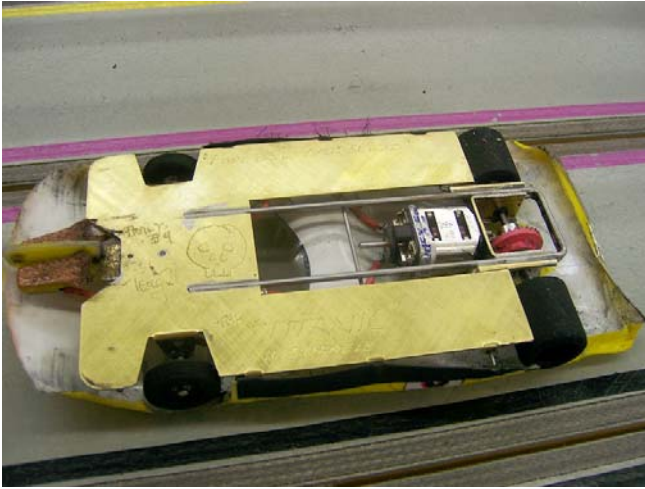


7th – Team 7: “Penske”

Roger Ruggieri, Preston Meyer, Max Iles, Bill Dougherty

3144 Laps, 5.866 Best Lap Time, 393 Avg. Laps per heat

Here is their car. Weighed in at 124.3 grams, geared 7/27 and they used a Parma guide. They had the Dreadnaught frame



So now it was time for some more BBQ (thanks Jay and Mac!) and bench racing. Some Blue Moons were floating around too (thanks Roger!)

At this time, there was a raffle within each team. The first pick would get the Tony P frame, the second pick would get the motor, the third pick would get the Controller Buddy donated by Mike Swiss of Chicagoland Raceway, and the last pick would get the body.

Some teams chose not to have the raffle and that was OK too. In fact, the winning team (Matt's) gave the whole car to their number 4 driver, Bruce Baughman. Nice going guys.

So in conclusion...

Wow. What a race!

Essentially 30 seconds separating the 1st and 2nd place teams after 6 hours! Then you have only 20 seconds between the 3rd and 4th place teams!

No motor blow-ups. If you do the math you would see that that these cars ran the equivalent of **16 normal mains**. Many found that bushings in the motors were just fine and there was still plenty of brush life left. Thanks ProSlot for the great motors!

As I noted earlier, there were not many tire changes at all. All the hubs held up fine and most teams only used 2 sets while some did use 3 sets. The fronts were all in pretty decent shape although some were worn down pretty low. Again, remember this was 16 normal mains. Most teams used probably six sets of braids overall. Even that is pretty good.

With the exception of perhaps the Gorski team that had a rough time of it, all of the bodies held up very, very well. Thanks Oversight!

And finally, the skills of Tony P were awesome. It was truly amazing how equal these cars were overall and especially in the handling department.

There was no doubt that this will become an annual Retro East™ event! As mentioned earlier, the only change foreseen right now is that there will be one or two designated pit stop areas so those working on or getting the cars can do so without causing marshalling problems.

Unfortunately, the shirts we had planned could not be done on time but everyone had their order in and will get them later. Here is what they will look like.



Front



Back

Well, that's about it. I want to personally thank Ron Hershman of Oversight, Dan DeBella of ProSlot and the man himself Tony P for their help in making this happen. We must of course thank Mike Iles and Jay Kisling of Speed Zone and especially Brandon Millinghausen for all his work as race director.

Our next event is for F1s on the King and GTCs on the Hillclimb on July 9, 2011 at the World Famous Port Jefferson Raceway. Until then, CYA!