



Autocross Roundtable (minus the table)

by Stacy Jurgens

I just returned from my first PCA tech talk. Having autocrossed with my boyfriend's 964 in the past (and currently making adjustments to my own car to make it autocross-worthy) the topic was pertinent to my interest level. Many thanks to Don's Autowerks in Campbell for hosting the event! Approximately 28 or 29 people attended and once everyone had enough coffee in their systems we sat down and started talking. At the end of our discussion we had the opportunity to walk around and look at the various performance parts both on and off of the cars in the shop. I especially enjoyed walking around under the car that was up on the rack and asking about the various things I could not identify. As this part of the session was more self-guided than anything, I'll focus on the group discussion portion below. I was informed that this tech session was a bit "unusual" with regards to the amount of discussion and depth of information shared so I wanted to highlight aspects that seemed important to know for PCA members interested in autocross (and time trial).



"Hey! Where's the table?"

As most of you may already know, though this is new to me since I am new, the GGR region has initiated a new Points Classification System for autocross and time trial series (take a peek at the form on their website: http://sandbox.visualproduce.com/rulcomm_cs/web/rulcomm_evalform.php). Of the attendees, we had Doug Ambrisko - GGR Autocross Chair for the past 2 years, currently an interested "spectator" - and Mark Powell - dual GGR and LPR member and a member of the Rules Committee that created the new GGR rules. As a result of this combination, we spent most of the session discussing the new rules. Most people had a lot of questions and I was furiously taking notes so I could relate some of the topics here.

Most people were curious about the reason for the new system. It was explained that the previous classification system was complex and often resulted in each class only containing a couple of cars that led to a problematic lack of competitiveness. There was also the issue of one modification potentially bumping one's car up to the next class where most cars had numerous modifications, which also led to a lack of competition within each class when this happened. The new system is intended to simplify the classification process and take into account each individual modification one might have made rather than lumping together potentially inequitable cars in one class.



You gotta give Linda Smith credit, she really knows how to look like a race car driver. All she needs are some sponsor patches.

The new classes are divided into groups with a span of roughly 50 points (again, please find more detailed information on the website as noted above). This system provides base points for the car's power-to-weight ratio. From this base, points are added for individual modifications ranging from the addition of tires, sway bars, a swapped out engine, suspension and so forth to the removal of items such as parts that would otherwise diminish horsepower so simply stripping items for

weight reduction. The horsepower and weight calculations were based on the curb weight of a stock car and derived from numerous published sources with more weight given to documents directly from Porsche. The idea is to provide any given driver in any given car (provided the modifications are allowed per the rules, of course) a larger group of cars with which to run against. More competition based in a more equitable classification system equals more fun for those interested in this aspect. Should you not desire to compete, of course, there is always the "fun group" for anyone who just likes to go out there and have fun simply for the fun of it.

Now that you know the "why" of it, "How does one know how to classify one's car?" you might be wondering. The website above is a tool for you to use for just that purpose. Once you find out the points assigned for your car, that information can then be put on the registration for future events. At the site you input some basic information to start and proceed to click on the applicable check boxes and radio buttons that apply to the modifications you have on the car you intend to use. "But what if I don't know what 'the cylinder heads have been ported' means? And how the heck should I know if the brake calipers are stock or not? I'm not the first owner, let alone the third!" No worries. For every item there is a "more..." link where you click to find out more detailed information for each stock item and/or modification listed. Of course, you can only do the best you can do – if you really have no idea, it appears that the intention is to simply do your best. If any issues come up, the classes are "self policed" anyway. Mr. Powell



Tech Chariman Jim Bryant belts himself in for the rough and tumble of the discussion.

indicated that he had not encountered major issues with this in the past 2 years as Chair and appeared to anticipate that any future issues should have the ability to be resolved fairly easily. If you REALLY want to know the specifics, particularly if you are not the original owner and may not have a clue what modifications have been made, I imagine that there are shops out there that would gladly measure and note each aspect of your car for the right price. :)

Other tidbits of note: GGR has a new 60 page rule book that can be downloaded from their website at <http://www.pca-ggr.org/show.cgi?id=ggrrulebook> (or, for ease of typing, to go www.pca-ggr.org and click on the "Rule Book" link part way down on the left side). One person asked if LPR would adopt these new GGR rules and classification system. It was mentioned that LPR talked about using both systems this year (LPR's current system plus the GGR point classification system) but that this may change. Please refer to the LPR website (<http://lpr.pca.org/>) for more information as the autocross events get closer. If nothing else, you can always run in the "fun group" at the first event and figure out the proper classification system next time – or just skip the trophy potential and do it for fun all season!



There's no question that the tech session is getting technical when folks start breaking the graphs out.

Another set of questions revolved around whether or not the new system is indexed based on the driver's ability. The answer is: no. From my perspective, though, I would imagine that one would not want this anyway. If fun is the goal, my assumption is you do not care about the abilities of others as long as it does not diminish your fun along the way. If competition is the goal, I envision that you would actually want to leave that aspect out so that you could compare yourself to the abilities of everyone in your class. If the abilities of all the other drivers are figured out of the equation, everyone is made "equal" and I thought competition was to compare the differences...



Suzette Pangrle has a big smile on her face... clearly this picture was taken before the guy started pulling out the graphs.

not the similarities. But, if there are enough people who want these aspects to change, for whatever reason, let the Rules Committee know and your ideas will be considered and potentially implemented for next year – especially if enough people suggest the same thing. I'm sure that, as with any new system, there might be bugs to work out but get out there and have a great time anyway! That's why we are all here, right? :)

Thanks again to LPR and Don's Autowerks for sponsoring and hosting this event and to GGR representatives for answering our numerous questions. I am looking forward to future tech talks!



Ralph Maines and Ken Mort; two grizzled veterans of LPR's long running tech series.



Above: This guy is thinking, "Enough with the talk, already. Are we gonna get a chance to get our hands dirty?"



New fashions in helmet design?

Autocross Roundtable



Another opportunity to view your car from a different perspective.



*Above, left: Finally getting an opportunity to get his hands dirty, this fellow demonstrates his natural proclivity for working on his own cars.
Above, right: This gent is clearly uncomfortable at the sight of a naked engine and is a prime source of Don Wise's income.*

