



South Jersey Region SCCA
50th Anniversary

*The Official Newsletter
of the South Jersey SCCA*

February 2009

Welcome Back, At Speed!

We have two brilliant new tracks, a new racing series, new events, new members, new challenges, and a fantastic new season ahead of us for all of our members --- officials and workers, road racers, autocrossers, rallyists!

So it is only fitting that we introduce a new At Speed – rejuvenated after a bit of an absence, with new editors and contributors.

On behalf of our new editorial team --- my parents, Dick and Bev Smith, who are lifelong journalists and public relations professionals, and myself --- I welcome you all back to At Speed.

Our goal is not only to reinvigorate and improve At Speed in the months ahead, but to get coverage for our club and our events, and most importantly, for you our members, in the local news. We are blessed with many great people and stories waiting to be told.

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Email SJRAtSpeed@comcast.net with your newsletter contributions, pictures, and ideas.

And if Dick or Bev contact you to talk about your experiences, please take the time to share your stories.

There is a lot we can do to promote our club and activities in the broader media, thanks to what we have --- a rich history, interesting members, and truly exciting and newsworthy events.

I look forward to serving as your humble scribe as we enjoy this tremendous time in our motorsports lives.

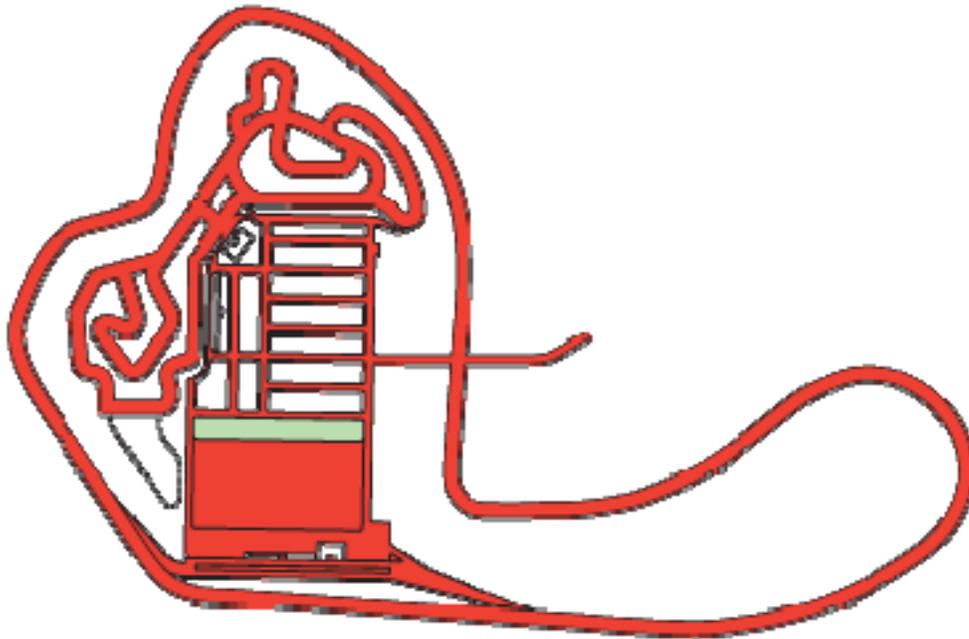
Yours for the sport,
Tom Smith



Special Feature: New Jersey Motorsports Park

2008 saw a dream come true for anyone with a pulse and a love of motorsport: New Jersey Motorsports Park opened in early July 2008. Both tracks are true driver's tracks requiring courage, commitment, and skill. The vistas of the surrounding countryside are beautiful, as are the facilities. Our region and people could not have done more to make it a fun place for all. Whether as a driver or a spectator, every day at NJMP has been a magical day for me. Allow me to share with you a perspective of both tracks from inside the helmet, At Speed.

Lightning is an epic 1.9 mile road course. Approaching Turn 1 at full throttle (125+ in an ITS car, and I won't quote a speed for the FB car out of deference to my parents' hearts) you brake hard for the blind uphill Turn 1. You feel the apex more than see it, misjudge it by a small amount and you either leave a car width on the table on exit or you put four wheels off. Getting it perfect will have you shouting in your helmet. Turn 2 can be flat out if you dare, but you must get the car pointed straight to brake and set up for the diabolical Turn 3-4 right/left combination which catches so many drivers out resulting in dirt and marbles everywhere. Turn 5 --- the 'ski jump' --- is a blind right over a brow dropping off downhill that will challenge you to find the perfect approach, entry, and exit for you and your car. The track then bends flat out to the right as you accelerate under the bridge and brake hard for the left-hander, Turn 6. Watch from either side of the bridge sometime and you'll see clearly those who nail it perfectly and those who don't. You gain a lot of speed before entering the long, long last turn referred to as The Light Bulb. I don't want to give anything away here for worthy competitors who may be reading this, but suffice to say that you can enter and exit this neck-stretching turn very quickly indeed with the right approach and line. Even the long straight which follows requires concentration. A 25 lap race on Lightning was a mesmerizing challenge that seemed to pass in mere moments due to the focus it demands. Lightning is a mini Nurburgring.



When we moved on to Thunderbolt, the second of our truly special tracks, there was an active debate among the drivers as to which track was 'better'. I expect that this will be a debate which will remain unresolved for years, and that speaks volumes about the caliber of both tracks. Lightning has a beautiful almost melodic flow about it. Thunderbolt teases you with that same flow, then throws some mind-bending challenges at you to ensure you curse as much as smile inside the helmet. Oh, and Thunderbolt requires real courage. You'll pull your belts tight if you're committed to a hot lap.

If you run mainly NeDiv tracks you will likely see your highest top speed approaching Turn 1 at Thunderbolt. It is a fast, conventional right hand turn that rewards skill and judgment under braking and turn-in, and an early return to full throttle. Turn 2 is a very fast corner but blind with elevation change, just like Turn 1 on Lightning. You absolutely must maximize speed and smoothness through Turn 2, yet it can be difficult to do. Turn 3 is flat out if you dare, but it's not easy and the penalty for a mistake could be severe. If you do Turn 2 and Turn 3 well, you are rewarded with a very fast run down the back straight, and depending on the class of car, even a hint of air as the car feels like it jumps over a crest just prior to braking for Turn 4. Without giving too much away, I will say that Turn 4 is a right hander than can be done quite a bit quicker than it first appears.

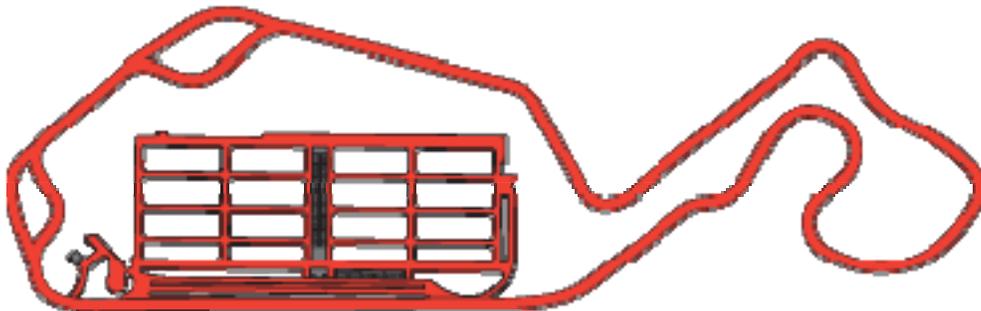
The left hand Turn 5 is challenging and catches a lot of drivers out. It is actually a fairly conventional turn, yet it is easy to overcook it going in too hard or leave too much speed on the table with a poor turn-in or apex.

I thoroughly enjoy the two right-handers which follow. Turn 6 in particular is much faster than you would think at first, requiring 100% commitment, precision, and skill. It's easy to overbrake for both corners, yet you do not want to drop a wheel off by getting the line wrong.

The next set of turns are affectionately referred to as The Jersey Devil. You approach the tightest part of the track flat out through a right hand bend. Hint: the proper approach is not what you think, you need to draw a diagonal line rather than following the way the track is paved. The right/left combination is very tight and deceiving indeed, prone to lots of wheel-spin on throttle. You can easily overheat your tires here, front and rear, so remember the old adage of going slow to go fast.

A set of S-curves follow that reward precise clipping of apex and preservation of speed.

And the signature turn is the last turn under the bridge onto the front straight. Watching the Rolex Daytona Prototype cars go through here in qualifying was the most exhilarating spectator experience of my life. Heavier cars with ground clearance seem to benefit by jumping the concrete patch, formula cars by avoiding it. Either way, if you're not grinning ear to ear entering the front straight, you need a different hobby.



Thunderbolts



Autocrosses warm the winter! February 8, Citizens Bank Park. March 8, New Jersey Motorsports Park. March 22, Citizens Bank Park. Brian Heun 609 927 0126 x107 or www.phillyscca.com/solo2/. Challenge yourself against the clock through the cones with speed and precision. Your car will thank you for the exercise.



Cars on Track! South Jersey Region returns to Lightning March 21-22 with an SCCA Club Racing Drivers' School for aspiring drivers wishing to earn a competition license. Running in conjunction with the Drivers' School will be a **Performance Driving Experience (PDX)** so you can put your car on track in a controlled environment. Drivers, officials, workers, and instructors are needed. email SJRAtSpeed@comcast.net and I'll point you to all the info needed as soon as it is available.



Racing at New Jersey Motorsports Park

We have two of the greatest drivers' tracks in North America in our backyard, and we're going to tear up some tires and burn some asphalt in 2009. Here's the rundown:

- National + ProIT on Thunderbolt! June 6-7
- Regional at Lightning July 18-19
- Regional at Thunderbolt August 22-23
- Jersey Road Race Classic and ProIT October 17-18

This is the chance for you, your family, and friends to make our Motorsports program the finest in the nation. Drivers, officials, workers, anyone who wants to help or just see what racing is all about --- come and join us!



Flagging & Communications and Fire School will be held at NJMP in April, probably the first weekend. Details will be provided in the next newsletter. Anyone interested is encouraged to help out at the Drivers' School then attend this training. This is a fantastic opportunity for experienced officials and workers, as well as new folks who may want to get involved. SCCA workers make it all happen and make our sport great!



Matthew DiRenzo opens shop in Voorhees, NJ (www.direnzoracing.com) offering engineering, preparation, and driver coaching services. Matthew competed at the RunOffs 2003-2006 and was the 2003 SCCA National Jim Fitzgerald Rookie of the Year. Your program can benefit from his experience and skills.

Lightning Up

The return of At Speed will feature periodic updates from our spiritual

advisor and chief debtor, Stig White.

Those of you who were members in the late 1980's through the mid-1990's may remember Stig's racing program with yours truly as driver and Joe Hines as chief engineer, as well as Stig's occasional contributions to our newsletter.

I spoke to Stig recently at his home in Newcastle-Under-Lyme (he wishes they would sweep up) in Staffordshire, England. He has been under the weather for the past 10 years, suffering

complications arising from a poorly shaken martini.

He is bothered by the BBC show Top Gear, and what he perceives to be encroachment on his brand by referring to their tamed racing driver as the white Stig. He pointed to pictures of my early Showroom Stock and Improved Touring cars run under the banner of Stig White Racing as proof that he is, in fact, the original Stig White. He sent a letter of protest to the Top Gear producers, demanding compensation, but it was returned postage due. I promised that I would try to get on the show to duke it out on the Top Gear test track with their 'Stig' and to uphold our honor by besting the poseur Stig's lap time.

Our Stig was excited to hear about the fabulous new tracks in Millville, and promises to visit us as soon as possible. Most of the restraining orders have been

He has been in negotiations with Honda to buy their mothballed Formula 1 team, but their insistence on payment and reluctance to continue funding the payroll and operating expenses are standing in the way of an

otherwise solid deal, according to Stig.

He foreshadowed the current banking crisis by founding a bank early last year, Insufficient Funds, in nearby Stoke-on-Trent. I.F. Savings & Trust went bankrupt 9 minutes after

opening. He is patiently awaiting his bailout money.

Otherwise, I found that Stig is still Stig, and while he remains thoroughly confused about which side of the road to drive on ("It should not matter," he decried, "as long as you maintain the proper racing line") he is getting around reasonably well. He is terribly afraid of ducks, however, a condition that has plagued him since childhood.

So, look forward to the return of Stig White Racing on my Formula B car this year, and an announcement from Stig



At@Speed

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Web site: www.sjr-scca.org

Member meeting: February 11, Ventura's Rt 73 South of Kresson, 8pm but come early!

Autocross: February 8th at Citizens Bank Park. March 8th at New Jersey Motorsports Park.

Club Racing Drivers' School: March 21-22 at NJMP.

Performance Driving Experience (PDX):
March 21-22 at NJMP.



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