

Okemo Mountain Hillclimb, KSCC 14-15 June 2008.

By Mike Wilson

First off, comments from others about the weekend (and this write-up) are always welcome.

What happens at Okemo stays at Okemo. Some people allowed me to do things, which I really appreciate. That is all I will say; it stays at Okemo.

Good weather Saturday, with a few sprinkles. Great weather Sunday afternoon; probably a good call on the part of the chairpeople Victor Parrotto and Earl Hayes to wait out the weather and get 4 dry sunny runs Sunday afternoon. For Saturday we had no police presence. On Saturday a cyclist (from Massachusetts, riding up from Brattleboro) rode right by start saying "I'll be careful".** He was turned around by John Reed; Victor used some of his political skills to fix a potential argument by letting the guy ride up and down at lunch. Aldo, our normal officer, returned for us Sunday, although it is not clear what the future holds here.

Added by Steve Jones

The conversation on the wire (I was at checkpoint 6 listening to the following conversation) was quite interesting and humorous during the "bike incident" on Saturday.

- Karen (Control): We just had a guy on a bike ride right by me and head up the hill. He won't stop! Stop the bring-down cars at checkpoint 7 until we get this guy off the road.
- John Reed (CP 1): Smokey will stop the guy when he gets here.
- John Reed (CP 1) a little later: He just rode right by Smokey without stopping. He won't be getting by me; I'll be off the phone for a second.
- John Reed (CP 1) a little later and a little out of breath: He is stopped. (at this time I am picturing the guy hog-tied at John's feet).
- Karen (Control): What are the guy's intentions?
- John Reed (CP 1): His intentions are not to get arrested or get me any madder at him that I already am.
- Karen (Control): Those are good intentions.

Later speaking with Smokey, he said that the cyclist just sat next to John at the checkpoint like a little puppy that was just spanked (something along those lines)

With only 28 entrants, and the resulting limited pool of hangers-on to supply workers, almost everybody in the parking lot did some work to support the event. But if we lose Sharon Roof, we are in trouble. I overheard her say something like "I have every position filled. Some of the drivers I have not talked to yet, but I have put their names in". Without that kind of knowledge of who does what kind of work, these events would be much harder to run.

The S2 cage relaxation rule which went into effect for the 2007 season is allowing more people to try this in their modified EVOs and Subaru. S2 was populated with these; I believe all newcomers to this hill. Another newcomer of note is Burke-area resident Rick Flachbart in the

very pretty P2 914-6 (which might benefit from a shorter first gear based on the time between start and his shift to second).

The driving story of the weekend is first-timer at Okemo and 3rd ever hillclimb entrant Joey Kale. In a Subaru he built himself, running in S2, he did a 2:23.40 which was first in class and second overall. This beat long-time entrants Arlo Cota with a 2:26 in his STI and Don Taylor with a 2:27 in the Eclipse. Both were not on their fast tires. Arlo was trying a new vendor and ran Saturday on Toyo RA-1s (he did not like them) and Sunday on R-888s. Don peeled the tread off of the Kumho V710 and was back on the V700s.

Butch King and Jerry Driscoll came back for the weekend. Jerry was at the hill solo most of the weekend, although Sandy and daughter Sue graced us with their presence Sunday afternoon. Jerry beat Butch on the course by .01 second - 2:27:31 vs 2:27:32. Robby and Smokey Smolinski co-drove a helmet and shared a corner station. This was the limiting factor in the bring-down time (no this is not a complaint; it is a response to a complaint). Thus Karen Pringle on control could be more relaxed about sending other corner workers down the mountain without holding up the event. Robby also beat Earl in P4 giving Earl an excuse for a long story at the awards. Not sure how much Earl paid Don Taylor to be the straight man; it was worth it though.

Allan Dennis test-drove the Rabbit his brother Kevin bought from Steve Jones - the ex-Peaslee ex-Rutan Rabbit. Brian Dennis had a Spitfire with a Dodge 2.2 motor in it; there were teething problems (no not actual teeth; Brian and Tina's baby is not quite that old yet) but made it to the top several times. Some corner workers found much hilarity in those runs; maybe they can comment. David C. Dennis was back also with Maxed Out, which broke the clutch line at the slave cylinder twice (more accurately, it broke the line once; I did not learn the exact cause of the second clutch failure). Steve Jones seems to be masterminding some kind of bunny-shuffle; the rabbits may not be multiplying but they are moving around. Dan and Deb Rutan appeared Saturday evening with the Tub 2, which replaced the ex-Peaslee Rabbit on Steve's trailer for the northward journey home.

I believe only 2 drivers went off (twice for one of them I think). Nick Cota is trying to learn the crash-and-drive-away techniques patented by his father, and Earl went off, apparently spectacularly but with no damage (also trying to learn from the master). So possibly the most car body damage all weekend was Joey Kale's front bumper coming off when he took his car off his trailer.

Sherman Baumann kept up his winning ways with FTD again at 2:19.48, just about a second off his personal best (I don't think FTDs ever get old by the way). He handed off one of the annual Excellence in Wheeling awards to Bill Hudson (who now has both) and got the annual King of the Hill award from Michael Wilson. My apologies for not mentioning former Kings of the Hill John Reed and Bob Smoky Smolinski when I singled out Jerry as a former winner; I was just not thinking.

Everybody seemed to be happy that I was there. Thanks again to all who put on a great event. As I said before, too bad so many missed it.

Michael Wilson

***Cyclists are used to road closures that they can walk around the one bad part. It may not have occurred to him that this was closed for a different reason. I behave that way on a bicycle - ride up to the part that is missing and see if I can walk around it.