



**Pacific Coast Road Racing Championships October 26-27,  
2013 Buttonwillow Raceway Park  
By Bill Haneline**

Buttonwillow Raceway Park and California Sports Car Club held their 3<sup>rd</sup> PCRRC over a delightful weather-wise weekend. For those that entered, they were able to show who is best in the west for all forms of road race sanctioning bodies. This year we had SCCA, NASA, HSR, and VARA vehicles racing each other. A lot of work went into this championship weekend and unfortunately there were conflicting events scheduled the same time. For those who were here they had a great time. On to the races...



### **Qualifying Race 1 SM**

This was the first race of the weekend for the SCCA and NASA Spec Miatas. Today's racing was set up as qualifying racing, except for the Miata group, which had 2 of them today. When the green is waved Tyler Vance in his NASA Miata starts his charge forward, leaving the rest of the field in his wake. Back behind him there is quite a battle for the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot with Clement Lee holding that spot with Mark Lange on his bumper. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap Vance gets a couple wheels off at the exit of Phil Hill but his increasing lead does not change any. In the Off Ramp area Lange is able to take 2<sup>nd</sup> position away from Lee. Completing the 4<sup>th</sup> lap Lee gets by Lange along with Grant Westmorland dropping Lange to 4<sup>th</sup>. As Vance continues to pull away from the field Westmorland passes Lee to claim 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the back of the field there is a good race between Steven Champlain and Francis Wu. At lap 6 the racing between Curtis Gong and Dave Varco gets a little too close as there's contact when Gong gets into the back of Varco. Varco has a large Off and On and Gong spins, dropping him to last. With 7 laps complete Westmorland passes Lee into turn one and captures the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot and Vance has opened up his lead to over 7 seconds. For the back Gong passes both Champlin and Hu and with 3 laps left Hu passes Champlin. With 2 laps left Lee is able to pass Westmorland and recaptures his 2<sup>nd</sup> position. Soon the checker is waved for Tyler Vance who easily wins by 14 seconds over Clement Lee and Grant Westmorland. 4<sup>th</sup> is Mark Lange and only .04 back is Rob Burgoon. The story for second is actually quite dramatic on the last lap and last turn when Lange (who was 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Lee) gets into the tail of Lee and loses his front bumper and this allows Westmorland to pass Lange and capture 3<sup>rd</sup>. Pretty exciting stuff!

### **Qualifying Race 2 Groups 1, 2, &3**

This field consisted of entries from NASA STR1 to SCCA EP. Michael Von Quilich in his Viper and Oli Thordarson in his Vette claim the front row and starting in the back is the T2 Lumina of Bob Kelley. When the green falls Von Quilich's Viper shows its power to the Vette of Thordarson and pulls away. There is a good race between the HSR Lotus Motorsport of Ron Anzalone and the Lotus Elise of Brent Smith but that ends after 2 laps when Anzalone pits. As the Viper clicks off laps Thordarson is gaining on him a little bit at a time and both are pulling away from 3<sup>rd</sup>

place Jim Wagaman in his NASA STR3 RX7. Having started last Bob Kelley in his SCCA GT2 Lumina is moving up through the pack up to 5<sup>th</sup> but has to pull in after 8 laps. With only a couple laps left Thordarson is all over Von Quilich's Viper in the turns but drops back on the straights. When the checker is waved Thordarson is only .4 seconds behind the Viper. Thordarson says he has something up his sleeve for the Viper tomorrow! Brent Smith passes Wagaman on the last lap to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. Class winners are: 1A - Michael Von Quilich Viper, 2A - Brent Smith Lotus Elise, 3A - Craig Stevens RX7

### **Qualifying Race3 Groups 7A and 7B**

When the flag is waved for our Formula/Sports Racer field Ehud Eddie Nahir takes a commanding lead in his SCCA CSR Elan DP-02 followed by Peter West in a SCCA FC. Nahir pulls out to a comfortable lead over West and both are rapidly pulling away from 3<sup>rd</sup> place James Kuhns in his VARA ESR Zephyrus. Nahir's comfortable lead starts to erode towards the end when West starts to reel him in. On the last lap West gets right up on the Elan's rear wing and across the line to finish the race he is only .5 seconds back from Eddie Nahir. James Kuhns wins ESR.

### **Qualifying Race 4 Groups 4-5-6**

Brian Linn in a SCCA FP Midget and Michael Manning NASA PTD BMW have the front row and pace the field up to the green. Starting last is John Bower in his SCCA GTL Sentra. In practice he had a transmission failure and they got it fixed before the race. Bower quickly starts passing cars with his sights set on the guys out front. The field has to have the pace car come out on lap 2 when the call is made for a full course yellow to clear a car off the track at the entrance of the start/finish straight. The car is towed quickly, restarts, and we go back to green flag racing. Again Linn pulls away from Manning and Bower moves up further. Dale Shoemaker in his SCCA STL Miata is finally running good and passes the RX 7's of Walt Carlos and David LeCren to claim 4<sup>th</sup> overall. Soon he is passed by Bower and with 5 laps to go Bower claims the second overall position. Further back in the field are 3 vintage cars... 2 very clean MGB's and (I hate to say it) a cute Fiat 850 Sedan Abarth. Up front Linn's MG Midget is closing in on the checkered flag and very soon he gets it first. 10.6 seconds behind him is John Bower and behind him is Michael Manning. Winning 4a is Brian Linn (SCCA FP Midget), 4B is Michael Manning NASA PTD BMW), 5A – David LeCren (SCCA ITA RX7), 5B – Jim Bishop (NASA PTF Celica), 6A – John Whiteman (SCCA Spec-B Honda), 6B - Randall Stark (HSR 2J)

### **Qualifying Race 5 Groups 8 ABC**

Top qualifier Denny Renfro in his SCCA Club FF Crossle has the pole position with Bob Hatle beside him in his HSR F4/X Swift. At the green Hatle wastes no time taking over the lead spot and close on the 2 Fords is the SCCA SRF G3 of Mark Ballengee. For FV mom Kim Madrid leads her son Chris Quinteros. Hatle's lead lasts 3 laps where he spins drops to last and is finished 2 laps later. Renfro takes the lead spot and pulls away from the SRF of Mark Ballengee. Ballengee is driving the new Generation 3 version of the SRF. The old Escort engine is replaced by a more modern and vastly better sounding Ford Fiesta engine. Mike Miserendino in a regular SRF is behind Ballengee. Quinteros passes Madrid on lap 3 to claim the FV lead. Ballengee spins by Phil Hill at the half way point and then has an off and on at Riverside. Miserendino is able to get close to Ballengee but Ballengee cleans up his act and pulls away. Craig Zaph in his SRF is having a good race with the VARA FF of Troy Tinsley and is able to break free from him and Jon French's SRF takes up chasing Tinsley. The checker is shown for Denny Renfro and 46 seconds back Mark Ballengee crosses the line. Group winners are: 8A – Mark Ballengee, 8B - Denny Renfro, 8C – Chris Quinteros.

### **Qualifying Race 6 Group 9**

The last race of the day will be for the Spec Miata group. Will Tyler Vance dominate like he did in the morning? When the green is waved Vance takes the lead followed by Clement Lee and Dave Varco and Mark Lange. Starting the 2<sup>nd</sup> lap Varco tries an inside pass on Lee at Sunset but all that did was let Lange get a better exit and pass Varco for 3<sup>rd</sup>. Like earlier Vance pulls away from everyone. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap Rob Burgoon, who had started in 8<sup>th</sup> has taken over the 3<sup>rd</sup> spot! In Riverside Burgoon is all over Lee but has Lange exit better and get up beside him and they go side by side through Grapevine. As they come down the front straight it is Lange ahead of Burgoon. Vance has a 9.5 second lead by lap 5 and will not be caught. On lap 6 the great battle behind Vance and Lee loses 5<sup>th</sup> place to Varco when he shoots out in the dirt at Grapevine with brake issues. Varco pulls into the pit lane and the front wheel falls off! There's even a great race in the back between Steven Champlin and Francis Hu again like this morning. With 10 laps complete Lange and Burgoon swap 3<sup>rd</sup> place a couple times. Curtis Gong is able to catch the battling duo of Lange and Burgoon and takes over 4<sup>th</sup> from Burgoon on lap 11. With 2 laps left Lee gets a wheel off at Riverside, which is not good when Lange is on your tail, and loses that position! Last lap's white flag is shown for Vance who is all by himself. If he only knew what was happening behind him! Lee starts slowing down drastically and is out of the picture. When 2<sup>nd</sup> comes out of the last turn it is Mark Lange with Rob Burgoon, Curtis Gong, and Grant Westmorland behind him. The great battle between Steven Champlin and Francis Hu ends at the last turn when Hu spins big time! Clement Lee comes across the line in 8<sup>th</sup> after a really great race with a flat right front tire. Tyler Vance won this race by a staggering 33 seconds!

### **Sunday Race 1 SM**

Today's Spec Miata race is 50 minutes long and like the other groups, will determine the Pacific Coast Road Race Championships best road racers in the West. Today the Non-Tyler Vance Miata's say that they will have something for Mr. Vance. They claim they had old tires yesterday and today he will not dominate. The starters throw the green and a bundle of Miata's charge into the first turn led by, who else... Tyler Vance! During the first lap Vance is followed closely by Clement Lee and a small distance behind them is Curtis Gong, David Varco, Mark Lange, and up from last starting position is Rob Burgoon. Gong spins at the Cotton Corners area and drops to dead last. When the field crosses to complete Burgoon has moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> place! There was another reason Burgoon moved up that far... his bumper into the back of Gong. Burgoon is bumped by Lange and has an off and on in the Off Ramp area but is able to hold onto 3<sup>rd</sup>. After completing the 2<sup>nd</sup> lap Burgoon on his own has an off and on at the Sunset turn. Things go downhill for Burgoon and for miscellaneous other infractions he is black flagged and parks his Miata on the trailer after 4 laps. Meanwhile Vance has Lee pressuring him and he makes a mistake at Cotton Corners, which allows Lee to take over the lead. At the 7 lap point and a distance behind the lead pair are Lange and Grant Westmorland. Coming out of Riverside Vance has a good run on Lee and takes back the lead. On lap 8 Lange has pulled up on Lee, who is about 3 car lengths behind Vance. The Non-Vances were correct about today! A couple laps later the lead three have pulled out a large gap over 4<sup>th</sup> place Westmorland, who has a large gap over the battling duo of Varco and Ian Thomas. At the half-way point Vance has less than a second over Lee and Lange drops back from Lee coming out of Riverside but recovers to get back near Lee. Back in 5<sup>th</sup> the duo of Varco and Thomas are having a terrific battle and swap positions a couple times. Lee and Lange try to team up to get by Vance but things are not working for them. With 20 laps complete the great battle between Varco and Thomas evaporates when Thomas has an off and on at the Off Ramp. 2 laps later Varco has an off and on at the first turn but Thomas is too far back to take advantage of it. As we are getting within a couple laps of the checker Lee and Lange are starting to lose Vance's draft and also Thomas has a big off and on at Cotton Corners ending any chances he had. Francis Hu is the person to

take advantage of Thomas' playing in the dirt and gets within a car length of his 6<sup>th</sup> place position. The checker is close and Lee sets his fastest lap trying to catch Vance. With one lap left Hu tries and inside pass in the first turn on Thomas, locks up his right front wheel and can't make the pass. Also on the last lap Curtis Gong pulls off by the Esses when his engine goes silent. For the race to the checkered flag Tyler Vance crosses the line 1.2 seconds ahead of Clement Lee. In 3<sup>rd</sup> we have Mark Lange, who set the fastest lap of the race. Finishing 4<sup>th</sup> is the lonely Grant Westmorland who had no one near him for most of the race. 5<sup>th</sup> is David Varco.

### **Race 2 Groups 1-2-3**

There are a few cars missing from today's grid, including Oli Thordarson, who made some improvements to his Vette but damaged his car in the warm-up. Today races are 30 minutes long with the exception of the Spec Miata group. When the field gets the green Michael Von Quilich and his Viper storms away from the field. In second the NASA STR3 RX7 of Jim Wagaman pulls away from the SCCA EP Mazda of Craig Stevens. Starting last is Bob Kelley in his SCCA GT2 Chevy and makes it up to 4<sup>th</sup> as they complete their first lap. Today there are 2 SCCA STU cars, Dale Shoemaker's Miata and James Spurling's BMW Z3 and they have a spirited race going on. On the 4<sup>th</sup> lap Kelley takes the 2<sup>nd</sup> place away from Wagaman and Von Quilich is spanking the group. On lap 5 Spurling tries to take away the STU lead from Shoemaker under braking at Sunset but locks them up and backs out of it. Next lap Spurling has a good run coming down the S/F straight and takes over the STU lead. When the group reaches the half-way point Kelley is slowly gaining on Von Quilich. With 4 laps left Kelley falls off the pavement in a big way at the Grapevine and is stuck in Buttonwillow's soft dirt. Cal Club's safety crew is dispatched and they pull him out and safely out of the way. Several laps later Kelley restarts and re-enters the race several laps down. During this Spurling's Z3 is losing power and Shoemaker takes the STU lead back. With only 2 laps left the SCCA EP Miata of Brian Linn starts to weave back and forth like he is running out of fuel. This allows the turbo 240 SX of Keith Calcagnie to pass him and move into 4<sup>th</sup> overall. Michael Von Quilich has an easy race and soon comes up to take the checker. Behind him is 2A winner Jim Wagaman, in 3<sup>rd</sup> overall is 3A winner Craig Stevens

### **Race 3 Groups 7**

Ehud Nahir in his SCCA CSR takes the lead at the green and crosses the line to complete the first lap with the SCCA FC of Peter West on his tail. Under braking for the first turn West passes Nahir and stretches out the lead. Leading VARA ESR is James Kuhns. On lap 3 Nahir passes West down the back section but as they cross the line to complete lap 4 West dives past Nahir into the first turn to grab back the lead. West has a .7 second lead which evaporates down the back straight as Nahir repasses him. West completes that lap all over Nahir and takes back the lead under braking for Sunset. Again West is passed by Nahir down the back, but it is under braking for Grapevine that Nahir makes the pass. With 6 laps complete West takes the lead back under braking at Sunset. This time going down the back section West's lead is too large for the horsepower of Nahir's CSR to catch him. West crosses the line to complete 7 laps and has about a 6 car length lead. This time Nahir is close enough to out power West down the back and again has the lead going into Grapevine. Crossing the line to complete lap 8 and making it the halfway point Nahir is not challenged by West going into Sunset. Nahir continues to lead for 3 more laps when West makes the pass into the first turn. West pulls out a 1 second lead and Nahir cannot find a chance to get by him. With 2 laps left Nahir finally gets around West between Riverside and Grapevine. The field gets the white for last lap and Nahir has a good run through Riverside and pulls out a lead on West. When Nahir gets the checker he crosses the line the 1.9 seconds ahead of West. That race was the winner for the weekend for lead changes!

### **Race 4 Groups 4-5-6**

In this race our pole sitter is Brian Linn who has swapped over to a SCCA FP Midget. Beside Linn is John Bower in his SCCA GTL Sentra. When the green is waved both these cars pull away from the field. For 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> are the 2 NASA BMW's of Michael Manning and Michael Mihld. Closing in on them is the SCCA STL Miata of Dale Shoemaker. Soon Shoemaker is able to pass Mihld down the back section. Linn starts to pull out a sizeable gap over Bower as the race progresses. As a matter of fact the whole field starts to space itself out except for the last two cars... the huggable/squeezable Fiat Abarth of Bill Curtis and the MGB of Randall Stark. At the 7 lap point the Abarth spins at the Sweeper and Stark's MGB is able to get ahead of him. Next lap, which is halfway, the Abarth passes the MGB going into Sunset and the B almost loses it. With 10 laps completed the gap between Linn and Bower is over 9 seconds. This will increase greatly when Bower spins at the Sweeper! Meanwhile the MGB of Stark is hounding the Abarth of Curtis. With 3 laps left Stark blows by Curtis in the back section between Riverside and Grapevine and it looks like the race is over between them as the Abarth falls back. Linn gets the white flag for last lap and out of nowhere the Abarth of Curtis is charging up on the MGB of Stark! Linn takes the checker and behind him Stark comes out of the last turn ahead of the Abarth and right before the checker appears to slow allowing Curtis' Abarth to pass him! The gap between them is a half second. Brian Linn wins class 4A, in 3<sup>rd</sup> is the winning 4B BMW of Michael Manning, 6<sup>th</sup> o.a. is the 5A winner David LeCren in his RX7, 7<sup>th</sup> o.a. is 6B winner Paul Konkle Jr. in his MGB, and the last class winner is John Whiteman in his 6A Honda Fit.

### **Race 5 Groups 8**

Last Championship race of the day and it is SCCA SRF, SCCA FV, and HSR/VARA/SCCA FF's. Starting in the back is Bob Hatle in his HSR F4/X Swift FF and Troy Tinsley's VARA FF Crossle. In grid Tinsley discovered he had forgotten his arm restraints and had to go back to get them. The pace car slowed the field enough for Tinsley to catch up with them. When the field got the green Tinsley charges up on the right and Hatle picks the left. Tinsley is successful and Hatle runs out of room and contacts a SRF and spins with broken rear suspension in the first turn. The pace car takes to the track and the field is now under a full course yellow situation so the emergency crews can safely remove Hatle's Swift. Soon they are able to resume racing and Mark Ballengee leads son in law Mike Miserendino. Ballengee has an advantage in his SRF over the other SRF competitors as he is running the Generation 3 Ford Fiesta engine. After a few laps Ballengee is pulling out a lead over Miserendino, Craig Zaph, and Tinsley. Our 2 FV's of Chris Quinteros and Kim Madrid are occupying the back part of the field. Tinsley's Crossle has the SRF of Jack Willes trying everything he can to get around him. When Ballengee reaches lap 5 Willes is able to pass Tinsley for the 4<sup>th</sup> position under braking for Grapevine. Tinsley is able to get by the very wide SRF of Willes next lap at the end of the S/F straight. At the half way point Ballengee has a 6 second lead over Miserendino. Behind Miserendino in 3<sup>rd</sup> and all by himself is Zaph. In 6<sup>th</sup> Jon French, who had spun earlier in the race, is reeling in Hank Raymond in his similar SRF. There is an event with 3 laps left that change our lead position when Ballengee spins in the Sweeper and has an off and on at the next turn handing over the lead to Miserendino. Zaph is also able to get by him. With 2 laps left Raymond has an off and on at the Off Ramp and French is able to get by him. The white is shown and Miserendino starts his last lap. Ballengee parks the Gen 3 in impound and Willes is still hounding Tinsley. When the checker is waved Mike Miserendino is the first to take it. 20 seconds back is Craig Zaph, 3<sup>rd</sup> is 8B winner Troy Tinsley, back in 9<sup>th</sup> is the nose-less 8C winning FV of Chris Quinteros. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Pacific Coast Road Racing Championships are over and the best road racers in the west have finished having a great racing weekend. Keep this date open for next year... November 22-23, 2014 You might be the next champion!