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we are in different classes, we usually battle for the overall win. I have been racing in our regional events several years longer than Iain, so I have had the opportunity to "dial-in" our car for the track--having only to make small changes on race weekend for conditions. Iain on the other hand, has been making changes, and adjustments every race. Combined with his honed driving skills, he has been getting faster and faster.

Iain, and I are good social friends. We spend the event talking and sharing stories about our cars. We always disclose any changes or improvements that we have made to our cars. I had not made any changes for this event, and Iain hadn't said that he had either. This weekend seemed as though it was going to proceed normally. My crew timed Iain in practice. He was running his usual 61.5 second laps. This is always a slight comfort to me, as our car had usually been slightly faster, with our times usually being in the low 60's.

As it turned out, old Iain was sand-bagging it! He out qualified me for the pole, 60.00 to 60.12. I think maybe he made some changes he 'forgot' to mention in our paddock conversation. (In fact, the race results show Iain's best race lap at a 59.4, compared with my best at 60.0. He was able to pick-up 2.1 seconds over his previous best time. Congratulations! Good job! (Tuning and practice obviously work.)

Now I knew that this race was going to be anything but 'usual'. Iain was on the pole, he could set the race's starting pace. He chose a speed faster than I would have liked--my car was at 5500 RPM in second gear, near the top of the power band in second, but still too slow for third. The green flag dropped. In an instant my engine wound to the limit. I was slightly surprised when the rev limiter hit. I quickly shifted to third, but the mistake was costly--Iain was a car length in front. As we neared the braking zone, I had almost pulled even. I moved slightly to the center of the track,

forcing Iain into a tight line around turn one. I quickly returned to the faster line. As Iain was forced slower through the turn, with a wide track-out, I was able to shoot down the inside for a pass on the exit. Looking in my rear view mirror I could tell he wasn't pleased. In fact, he was being a most discourteous motorist--tailgating, and threatening to bump me! He let me know he wanted by for the next two laps, poking his nose inside in the Chicane, and Off-camber turns. I drove a defensive line, but didn't block. I made it clear that if he wanted to pass, at least one of his wheels would have to be in the grass.

At this point, I knew it was going to be a very long race. His car was clearly faster. I knew that I could keep him behind me, but for how long? On the third or fourth lap, I got my answer. Exiting the Off-camber, I felt something strange. The car would not shift into third gear. It took a split second to realize that I was holding the top third of my shift-rod in my hand. The rod had broken clean off. Although I only floundered for a moment, Iain was right there, and drove past. He opened up a several second lead. Over the next several laps while I was adjusting to my new shifter position, he gained an additional several seconds. (It was a real experience to drive with a disabled car. I couldn't reach third or fifth gears easily. The shorter rod created a longer reach. Being strapped in a five point harness didn't allow much freedom of movement either. After the race, I noticed that my shoulders were extremely sore from forcing myself against the belts, and I had worn a hole in my right glove, and my hand was covered with blisters. It felt great--some machismo thing, I guess.)

Getting back to the race. I tried to keep my composure and work away at his lead. In the mid-laps of the race I thought I had a chance to catch him. I closed his lead down to about three seconds, and I hoped to make a charge at the end. But, I had been over-driving the car to close this gap. I was over-heating my rear

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