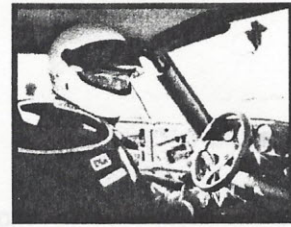


The 1998 Road Racing Season Opens!



By: Scott J. Schulte

Congratulations to the new road racing committee of **Steve Hirasuna, Art Sonen, Chuck Garner, and Bill Clutter**. On January 24, 1998 the first wheel-to-wheel race under their organization was successfully run. The event was well organized, and introduced several new dimensions and procedures. The entry fee for this race was reduced to \$195; a points system and a season championship program were implemented; trophies were awarded to the winning drivers; and a new reward incentive, called "the worker bucks program", was started. (For every race worked a person will receive 200 worker bucks, coupons, which can be redeemed for various products and services with participating merchants.)

The new, tighter schedule started the event at 9:00am sharp with a driver's meeting in the paddock. With our new format, by noon both race groups, closed wheel and open wheel, had run their 30 minute practice and 15 minute qualifying sessions. The Solo I race group had also been on the track for their only practice session.

Lunch in the paddock was complemented by the first round of the "pit stop challenge". Through this new event the SCCA hopes to increase its' public awareness and generate additional income for the road racing program. Two teams compete head to head in a real time pit stop. Two Formula Fords roar, engines running, into side by side pit boxes. Both cars are raised on jacks, then all four tires are changed. The cars are then 'dropped', and race off to a finish line. The first serviced car to cross the line is the winner. This month's competitors were a team from **Jiffy Lube**, and a team from the **Outrigger Hotels**. Each team took about 15 minutes to familiarize themselves with the cars, and were then allowed one practice round. In the practice round, although close, Team Outrigger came out ahead. It was a little bit of a surprise to the Lube Techs who work on cars every

day, that this team from the hotel chain, affectionately nick-named "the bed makers", took victory in this preliminary round. The finals were going to be exciting! With over a hundred people watching on, Team Outrigger, with driver **Bill Clutter** was the first to screech into the pit box. Both cars were raised, and the competition began. Both teams worked feverishly. It was close. Jiffy Lube appeared to be ahead, but was having trouble with the right front tire exchange. Both cars hit the ground at almost the same time. With engines roaring, and tires smoking they both raced to the finish—Team Jiffy Lube and driver **Tom Ito** winning. I can't wait to see next month's match-up. We would like to thank both Jiffy Lube, and the Outrigger Hotels for their participation, and financial support of this event.

The first racing event of the afternoon was the Solo I timed runs. **Ron Mishima** and **Lindsey Akamu**, both driving Porsche 911s, were released onto the track as the first group. Their best single lap times were 1:02.033 and 1:03.475 respectively. **Wesley Aihara** ran alone in the second race group. His best lap time was a 1:05.650.

The wheel-to-wheel racing began with the closed wheel racers. Although controversial, the grid was split to allow a "better" race for the Spec Racers. **Scott Schulte**, the pole sitter in his RS1 classed Porsche 911, started on his own row, with the Spec Racers driven by **Shigeomi Hirabayashi, Bob Westmoreland, and Dave Goto**, being allowed to grid behind. **Ed Kemper** and **Art Sonen** made up the final starting row. When the green flag dropped Schulte never looked back, leading for the full 25 minute timed race. The Spec race, as is often the case, was decided in the first turn of the first lap. Three anxious drivers all dove in as deep as they could. Goto tried to go to the inside, Shige tried to block him. When the smoke cleared all three cars were still on course, with Shige in the lead, followed by Goto, then Westmore-