



BFC Micro Racing Series 2004 Season Preview



The Boys of Winter Have Returned

It's that time of year again when the men are separated from the boys in all out wars on the track. Over the break new teams have formed and old chassis are replaced with fresh ones. Here are the break downs on the asphalt warriors.

R&H Racing

A new season ushers in a new chassis. Dropped into the mix is the Romack and Hester supported Acura NSX team. New cars and a dark horse rookie driver Mihir Sanghavi will have tons of surprises in store this season. Romack is coming into his own and Hester has nurtured last year's narrow loss to old teammate Aland Santamarina into a flurry of preparation and conviction that is bound to have Nismo looking over the shoulder in fear. This is the team to watch!

Nismo

Aland Santamarina's victory over Russ Hester in the final points kept the Nismo management chomping at the bit for a repeat. Santamarina is ready and his level of preparation can only be rivaled by that of Michael Schumacher. He lost Russ Hester to BP/Toxic Lemon last year midway through the season and has replaced him with racing newcomer Tim Dutton. Nismo wants a repeat, but is strong arming Santamarina to be more of team driver and help Dutton in the lower ranks. Can this new team gel? Santamarina certainly has the respect of his new teammate. "Everyone wants to drive with this guy; he is the consummate driving professional and can win under any circumstance." Dutton commented.

LATE BREAKING NEWS: Santamarina just signed SCCA veteran Frank Adams to a single season contract. Santamarina jumped at the chance when Nismo freed up funding to bring a third driver on board. "With the addition of Frank to our team, they might as well make the trophy for the manufacturer's cup now." Santamarina said at the press conference.

Toyota

Last year's Most Improved Driver, Ken Morrison is heading the TRD team this season after revered veteran driver Gary Stephenson left to Corvette. No rookies for this squad, just all pro with Bill Lucas planning to show the series what he really can offer. After a slow start last year Morrison is hoping that his disciplined off season can turn some bad luck into opportunity and that Lucas's disappointing season will just history as he enters his hallmark season.

Honda

Keith Schloer's 3rd place in last year's points during his rookie career garnered rave reviews from Japan. His Honda/Acura team is ready to mix it up with Nissans. With that came extra funding that allowed Keith to recruit Porsche SCCA driver TG Marsden into his ranks. TG is a skillful driver with smooth lines and smart strategies so his rookie debut will likely be as successful as Keith's. Can Keith impart setup knowledge to TG that will have seeing black & white checkers?

Corvette

As always the sponsorship dollars are elusive for this team who is living paycheck to paycheck and engine to engine. Gary Stephenson's new stable contains last years C5's and Stephenson can put up with only so much. His patience is growing thin with all of the piston slap and transmission issues GM is providing. Most of his team came with him from Toyota so he as assembled a top notch crew. Add to that his new rookie class driver Reggie Barnes who is coming off of a championship GT Series win in his Mazda LM and you have a force to be reckoned with. The Corvettes have struggled with technical issues even before the racing has started. Can they avoid the

gremlins during the series and gain ground on the Nissan domination? If you ask Barnes, the answer is clear, what Nissans?

Things are kept interesting this time around because series organizers secured additional sponsorship from engineering powerhouse Bowles Fluidics Corporation. Thanks to their support the drivers will enjoy repaved courses that meet national and international racing standards. The catch: No one has ever driven on the new course surface so tire and suspension setup in the Pro ranks will mean the difference between first and second while the Rookies will have to be quick on the learning curve to save them from leaving paint on the guard rails.

There you have it. The addition of the Rookie class has deepened the field, the manufacturer's points will be contested by all, and all of the favorites have returned. I have my guess what will happen, but you will have to wait for my race reports to see what destiny has in store. Driver's meeting is Thursday, November 4th at 12:30pm where surely gauntlets will be thrown.

Now it gets Interesting

Hate to break the news but there are the rules to consider...

Pro Class – Anything goes..., but

- **Any** car modification is allowed that fits within the body. However, race organizers reserve the right to restrict modifications upon review.
- No major body modifications that provide an advantage over other competitors are allowed.
- Battery packs cannot be modified. 4 batteries, as supplied by BFC (or equivalent NiMH), are to be used.

Rookie Class – Don't worry we have parts cars

- No modifications, period.
- Toe-in adjustment by way of the steering bars in the suspension kit is the only allowed modification (ask your team leader if they have extras for use).
- No major body modifications that provide an advantage over other competitors are allowed.
- Battery packs cannot be modified. 4 batteries, as supplied by BFC (or equivalent NiMH), are to be used.

The pros on your team are there to offer help, tips and parts. Use them to your full benefit, because after the 22 races from last season they tend to learn some tricks.

Racing – Now the fun begins

- Races will be held every other Friday, starting November 12th.
- 2 timed individually run laps will serve as qualifying and will dictate starting positions for the main event.
- Qualifying will be held the Thursday before the race during lunch.
- Heat races may be required if more than 6 cars are racing. In which case the top 3 from each heat will move on to main event.
- Heat events will be 10 laps in length. Main event will be 20 laps.
- Drivers from the other event must serve as course marshals.
- Until a lap counting system can be purchased, lap counting will be done via tape recording and laps will be counted after each race.
- Controllers and cars that are not being raced must be turned off while others are racing. Guilty parties may be penalized points if they do not comply.
- Points will be awarded as follows:
 - 1st – 8 points
 - 2nd – 6 points
 - 3rd – 4 points
 - 4th-6th – 2 points
 - 7th+ – 1 point
- Manufacturer points will be tallied as a direction summation of team Pro and Rookie points combined.

Drivers are responsible for their own 9V battery to use in their controllers. Low battery power may cause a weak signal and loss of control of your vehicle. Replace the battery as frequently as you would like.

Track design, setup, and tare down are everyone's responsibility. As always I am happy to write up the post race reports, but need help in insuring the lab is cleared for the track and all batteries are fully charged for race day.