

2011 Fall Mt. Ascutney Hillclimb by Dave Burden

At the spring event I made a promise that it would not snow at the fall event. The overnight temps got within a few degrees but with clear skies there was no chance of frozen precipitation. Fortunately Hurricane Irene skipped over Mount Ascutney so no major cleanup was needed before our event.

Diane and I decided to get an extra night of camping in so we went to the hill Thursday evening with the Winnebago and hillclimb trailer. This gave us a jump on getting things set up on Friday which was nice.

We had 43 entrants with 4 first timers at the hill. Both days were sunny and clear although a little bit chilly. Under the guidance of Drew, the new wire crew got the hill all set up Friday afternoon. Almost 30 of the drivers registered and were teched Friday evening as well which helped things move along Saturday.

We had all the check points staffed by 8am Saturday and with only a minor wire issue had the first fam run head up at 8:40am. There were a few mechanical/electrical DNFs in the morning, but we squeezed in 2 runs before lunch. We planned on two more runs after lunch as well. However, the hill decided against it. Mike French had an off with his Toyota powered Midget on the 3rd run which brought out the wrecker, but we were able to get that run completed. George and I figured we would go for a 4th run but it was not to be. Peter Gaugenti found a space between two trees to park his Evo which called an end to the day. The cars might have been damaged but everyone still seemed to have a good time.

We rewarded the workers on Sunday morning with hot chocolate, hot coffee and doughnut holes for their long hours on Saturday. Again, we had workers all set bright and early and had the fam run started by 8:20am. The run group B double drivers agreed to ride along in the run group A fam run which eliminated the need for the second one. This probably saved us half an hour which turned out to be very useful.

We had one incident in the first timed run, right at Check 4. Joey was okay, but his Skeletor didn't fare as well. We broke for lunch after 2 runs and got the workers back up on the hill without much of a delay. During the 3rd timed run Josh Dennis got his uncle's Maxed Out Dodge loose above Check 7 and went off. It looked worse than it was, just front end suspension parts, but it took some time to extract and bring it down. But, as is normally the case, fewer cars are running Sunday afternoon than registered Saturday, and the time we gained in the morning, we fit in a 4th clean run the close out the weekend.

We restocked all the checkpoint backpacks as needed and set up 3 new ones for use at 1A (turn 6), 6A (turn 21) and 7A (turn 28). Our plan was to fill these locations, if we had extra workers. We only staffed 6A on Saturday. These locations will simply have a handheld radio, backpack and fire extinguisher for quicker response to incidents in their area. Hopefully we will have the workers in the spring to fill them.

Big thanks to the wire crew for their help all weekend and for George Young on control and Denise Patten as control relief as needed. The workers were great and allowed us to get the cars running early each day. Dave Estey took some great pictures of the cars and had them printed for use in the trophies which are a big hit with the drivers. Also a big thanks to Drew for covering the extra cost of the photo-etched dash plaques featuring Sim's Corvette.