

I Race my Car on three Wheels

By Jody Leder

I've found that casually saying, "I race my car on three wheels" normally grabs people's attention. By the same token, I've also found that saying, "I race my Corolla around cones" loses people's attention. Autocross is full of extremes. This can be seen from the cars, driver's performance, emotions (or at least mine if I didn't best my previous run), and even down to conversation regarding the events.

One of the most inspiring and extreme things I've ever seen was Thomas Bennet driving that green '93 Accord, doing Mach 3 through an offset box whilst having the body roll of a battleship, and then getting one of the faster times of the day. A surgeon's scalpel is dull compared to the extreme precision of John Montgomery, Garret Cogburn, Alan Bowers, or Lorin Mueller (there are way too many inspiring drivers to list here, honestly) making their cars dance only inches away from some cone that put spider cracks in my bumper. I could easily talk about how extremely proud I am of my friend, Tony, for the insane growth he's had as a racer and as a competitor. I could also mention the extreme kindness of Licia Schultz and Ryan Rink, and how they've taken me under their wings since even before my very first event. I could talk about the new friend group I now have because of racing.

On the tamer side of things, I could go on about how I need to have at least one Red Bull for every session I'm out doing course work, about the relaxed conversations I've had around camp during the cold nights at Willamette Pass, or about the friendly yet inevitable conversations to be had about the BFG Rival S1.5 vs the Potenza RE-71R. Even in the most mundane moments of autocross, there's always something to learn. At my last event at the Douglas County Speedway, I had a conversation with a gentleman about looking ahead and using landmarks as indicators of when to apply throttle/brake. My driving has improved exponentially since that conversation, and I think that you could say that's pretty extreme, too.

I could also happily tell you everything you've never wanted to know about a 98-02 Corolla, and how I've had mine in the family since I was 4, but I'm sure that's the kind of extreme we don't want in a newsletter. In the end, Autocross isn't just about the competition. It's about the bragging rights after you beat a car with a Kelly Blue Book value that's literally worth 20 times the value of yours. Autocross is about comradery, self-growth, and family.

When the brain reaches peak efficiency and hyper focuses on a single task, it's in a state that's known as "flow state." For me, I can't race well at all unless I'm able to enter flow state. With that being said, I can't enter flow state unless I'm stress free and can clear my mind of whatever is at hand to focus on the thing that's the most important - driving. The friendships and family I've made with the EESCC allow me to do that. If you told me that I'd be writing an article and would end it saying that I can drive faster because of the people I'm racing against, I would've thought you were crazy - yet here we are.