

AZ SCCCA

Pylon Press



2019 Fall Series Event # 3

Last Event Synopsis



Another sunny day was provided for a great day of auto cross racing. The weather was in the mid 80's, the course both challenging and fast and the breakfast burritos tasty. A good time was had by all the over 100 entrants.

Driver tip 3- Tip Technique

Ace solo driver **David Schotz** has volunteered a **3- Tip Technique** for getting around the cones quickly.

- 1. Utilize a short line around the course.**
Part I of his approach was discussed in the previous edition of the Pylon Press.
- 2. Brake early!** Brake earlier than you might think necessary allowing you to get in tight to the inside gate cone.
- 3. Stay tuned!** *There one more tip – maybe the most important component of his “Tight Line Technique”. It will be included in the next issue of the Pylon Press!*



Happy Holidays



Clifton Ragland brought a most interesting historic classic to the event. A stunning **1969 Lotus Europa**. These babies were really hotties back in the day and were great performers. This car has received more than just a few modest upgrades. Clifton is on hand fellow who spent the past 5 years working on this car which he described as a 'basket case' when he acquired it. Modifications include the installation of a 2009 Toyota V-6. This motor is the high performance 3.6-liter model 2GR. This power plant feeds a MR2 tranny and puts out 290 hp at the rear wheels. At a curb weight of 1600 lbs! This Lotus is a rocket with a power to weight ratio that rivals some supercars. Featuring Wilwood brakes, and a custom designed suspension, it is one quick and fun ride.

If you have everything under control, you're not moving fast enough!

-- Mario Andretti

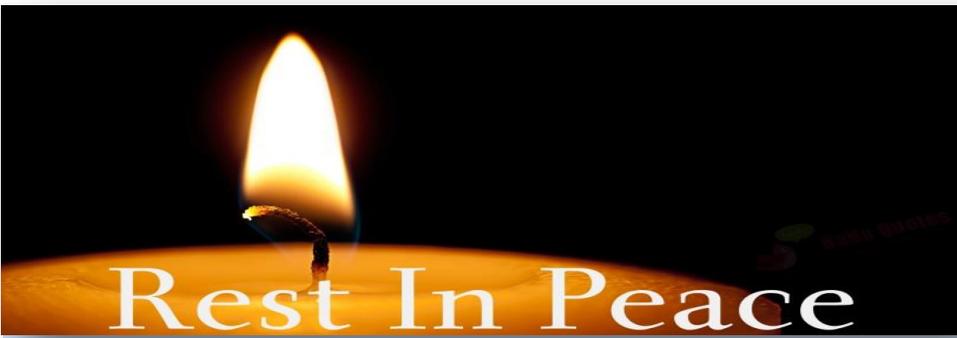
Pylon Quiz

Autocross offers many challenges to the driver. Please identify the correct answer regarding this demanding sport.

Answer True or False

1. If time at an event is limited to choosing, though car preparation takes president over knowledge of the solo course.
2. A quality solo school will yield more productive performance development results than entry into multiple autocross events during the same general time period.
3. A high horse powered car, such a Dodge Viper, will most generally beat the solo course time of a nimbler and well sorted out smaller car such as a Miata.
4. Mental preparation for an event is clearly less important than a good equipment inventory.
5. The auto crossing sport requires more refined and demanding skills than track racing.
6. Drivers either have basic inherent skills for auto cross or they don't, and no amount of practice will change that fact.
7. Auto crossing is like riding a bike, you can take a long layoff from the sport and regain your former level of performance quickly.

Answer on last page of Pylon Press



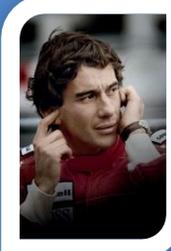
Rest In Peace

Tribute in memory to Don Roberts

We just learned recently that long time auto cross ace and track racer **Don Roberts** passed away last August at the age of 82. **Don** and wife **Sharon**, who is still an active SCCA auto cross participant, were married for 50 memorable years. Don was a lifelong resident of Phoenix and had a very long and distinguished career in SCCA Solo and track racing events. His achievements included a win at the 1968 SCCA Road Racing Nationals in a **BP Cobra**, (the first and only **Cobra** to win at this event), and more recently his first-place victory in 1990 at the Solo Nationals in DSP.

Don's history with the **Cobra** he raced in '68 is a fascinating one, in that, he bought and sold the Cobra 4 times before his passing in 2019. Don was a great guy – always cheerful with big smile and an engaging conversationalist. On the race track the thing I recall the most about Don's driving was how he would somehow slip effortlessly by the pack and seemed to gain on other drivers with such style and ease.

***Don, here's hoping you have been reunited one final time with your beautiful Cobra in heaven!
We will miss you buddy!***



“On a given day, a given circumstance, you think you have a limit. And you then go for this limit and you touch this limit, and you think, 'Okay, this is the limit'. And so you touch this limit, something happens and you suddenly can go a little bit further. With your mind power, your determination, your instinct, and the experience as well, you can fly very high.”

— **Ayrton Senna**, a Brazilian racing driver regarded as one of the greatest Formula One drivers of all time.



Thanks to

Kevin Venisnik

for playing an integral part in the internal operation of the SCCA Solo program in AZ for several years. The purpose of this interview is to give the Solo community a bit of insight and appreciation as to what goes on behind the scenes to put on a Solo event series.

Kevin, Thanks for your time and your years of hard work on behalf of the AZ SCCA Solo Program. We appreciate you and the efforts of all the volunteer members of the steering committee that allow us to come out and have a great time zooming around well prepared and fun courses.

PP: How long have you been a member of SCCA Kevin?

Kevin: Since around 2002

PP: When did you begin auto crossing?

Kevin: I got involved in auto crossing in about 1999

PP: What is your current position on the SCCA solo steering committee?

Kevin: I am currently the Vice Chairman

PP: What other positions, if any have you held with the solo group?

Kevin: I have been the Solo Director, and Equipment manager, and Chief Course Designer

PP: What are some of the duties required to put on a solo series?

Kevin: You need efforts from several volunteer positions, Treasurer, Registrar, Timing and scoring coordinator, Chief of Tech, Site rental coordinator, Safety steward chief, Event worker scheduler, Chief driving instructor, and of course the Course design coordinator, to name a few.

PP: There is most likely a lot of work that takes place behind the scenes on event day. What are some of the more challenging pre event and event day tasks?

Kevin: The two main challenges to keep an event on time and moving smoothly are registration and course preparation. The course set up and waiver teams are on site before 6 am to get the site ready for use.

PP: How can event participants make your job and that of the steering committee go more smoothly?

PP: Are there things that we as drivers could do better to make the day go more smoothly?

Kevin: That's a great question! ***If drivers would always preregister on line it cuts down our time at the registration table substantially. Preregistration saves them money and allows us to move the event along on time!***

Also, please don't drive and then ditch your work assignment – it really holds up the event when people ditch or forget their work assignment or are difficult to find for their work assignments! Please, solo responsibly, show up for your work assignment on time! Additionally, if drivers could hang after the TO's and assist in taking down cones etc., it's very helpful.

Another very important thing: Any noise violation by one of our cars is recorded and reported to the County monthly. Please know that our landlords, the AMP officials can be fined heavily by the County for any noise violations. If we have three violations in any one day, our event is shut down, per our contract with AMP! So **please** be aware of your cars decibel level output and **don't guess if performance changes to your car will slip through the sound test.** If changes are made to your car, please run it through the sound test again.

PP: What if any are worker positions on the team that are unfilled currently? And who would you ask about vacancies?

Kevin: The best way to answer this is to ask steering committee members if you can back fill and assist them with their duties, so you can learn various jobs and perhaps fill those shoes in the future.

A Solo Champions Path to Victory

**By Brian Peters -- SCCA 2015 Driver of Eminence Winner
and Autocross champion many times over**



Interview #3

Brian, to date you have provided some very useful and insightful information regarding your development as a national level solo driver and journey to the SCCA Solo Nationals. Readers can, of course, review information in previous editions of the **Pylon Press** posted on the Solo website.

PP: How does one enter the annual fall SCCA Solo Nationals. Is there a qualification process or do you just sign up?

BP: Any SCCA member can register for Solo Nationals – **Just sign up!**

PP: Where are they held each year? And how far is the drive from Phoenix?

BP SCCA Solo Nationals have been held at the Lincoln Airpark in Lincoln, Nebraska.

PP: What are the various costs involved in participating?

BP: Costs are typically ~\$200 and that includes the two days of competition, paddock parking, and dinner to the awards banquet.

PP: Where would one find entry info?

BP: Entry information can be found at <https://www.scca.com/pages/national-championship>

PP: How would a driver know if they were ready for competition at this level?

BP: I personally feel that anyone that has spent a season or two competing at the local level could be “ready” to attend Nationals. Every person that makes it to Nationals will learn, grow, and come back a better driver.

PP: More importantly, what advice do you have for first time participants?

BP: First timers should go looking to learn and have fun. Highly recommend you co-drive to share expenses, experience, and have greater team support. Paddock with other local attendees and be sure to plan for extra days to acclimate with test and tune time. If possible, plan your first Lincoln trip with a Pro Solo campaign effort the same year. Qualifying for and running the Pro Solo Finale in Lincoln just days before Nationals is not only tremendous fun, but also a significant advantage to have you and your car dialed in for the National Championship days.

PP: Are there certain car brands and models that are favored in some of the classes? For example, I noticed that Corvette Grand Sports seemed to be very successful in SSR this year and Porsche GT predominate in SS.

BP: There are definitely certain cars that have better tire options than others for a given class, but typically there are a handful of cars in each class that float to the competitive top. Sometimes this is just perceived advantage, or sometimes the more competitive drivers just want to run what the other fast people are for even footing.

PP: What are some do's and don'ts you would observe for first time participants?

BP: Do make sure you ask your questions, coordinate with locals, schedule test and tune time, walk the courses until you have very specific mental plans, plan for extreme cold, heat, and rain, and most importantly be ready to have fun. Don't go with unrealistic expectations and don't go only thinking about your 6 runs (there's so much more!).

PP: Are there any other suggestions you can think of for first timers to the SCCA Solo Nationals.

BP: Be sure to approach any locals that have been and pick their brain. Depending on what you're looking to accomplish, attending Solo Nationals can be done on a reasonable budget. Sure, the more you invest, the better your position for success, yet going to Nationals isn't only about winning. About 1200 people seem to be attending every year, despite only 80 people coming home Champions.

PP: Brian thanks so much for your time and patience in this interview series, we appreciate you and wish you the very best in years to come. Be seeing you around at our great local SCCA solo events.

Answer to Pylon Quiz

There are actually no 'right answers' to this month's Quiz. What do you think?
Ask a friend how they answered them and compare your views.

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