



# Pylon Press

SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA -  
PHOENIX AZ SOLO REGION

February 2023 – Spring Series #2

## Event Synopsis

Reported by Brian Miller,  
Pylon Press Editor

Where, other than Arizona, could you arrive at the track at 6:30 am with temperatures in the low 40s and by 2 pm have it sunny and beautiful 65 degrees? Great weather, great turnout, challenging course layout.

The **Bill Pribil** designed course was a combination of short high-speed sections followed by several sharp right angle turns. The pace was fast and rewarded staying on the line, braking firmly at the correct points and looking well ahead on the course. Times in the mid to low 40 second range were common, with a few sub 40 second times being posted by the top drivers.

Competition remains close in several car class groups. In the Sportsman Class, several drivers posted lap times in the sub 40 second range. Included in that highly competitive group were **Nick Sloan, Brian Peters, Doug Rowse, Jason Bucki, Jay Bulducci** and **Jeff Wong**. Doug's 38.510 time, in his Z06 Corvette, claimed the fastest time in the Sportsman class, with Nick Sloan winning the class with the best overall PAX time of 32.805.

Over in the STS group, a contest to watch is among four drivers posting times within a fraction of each other. **Kevin Rasmussen, Brent McCune, Dov Zazkis** and **Jorge Rios** all posted 44 second times that were within ½ second of each other! Total points competition in both these groups and other groups is very close and will be fun to watch as it develops in the next two upcoming solo events.



Police officer **Ben Beebe**, who served as our security officer at the February autocross event, serves full time with the Avondale Police Department. Ben is a car guy who owns a shiny Dodge Challenger performance model. It's great to have a security person who enjoys being at the event. Officer Beebe mingled with drivers, conversing and asking questions, watched the action on the track, and at the end of his duty time stowed his gear belt in his vehicle and hopped in a car entered in the time only group for a spin around the autocross course. Let's hope officer Beebe comes back as our security detail person, or perhaps when he's off duty some weekend, he'll enter his Dodge Challenger in an PASR upcoming solo event!

2023 Upcoming Solo Events  
March 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>; and April 15<sup>th</sup>

*Safety first, always!*



**Steve & Ben Surgent**

**Steve Surgent** and son **Ben Surgent** are "Drivers of the Month" for February. This father and son team both drove the families' beautiful new Metallic Blue **2022 BMW M3** at the event and never stopped smiling.

The story begins when Steve got interested in autocross the year before the COVID pandemic when he purchased an older Porsche. He thought it might be fun to take it to the track with his boys. They all ended up absolutely loving it. However, during the COVID lockdown Steve sold the Porsche due to all the restrictions imposed at the time. Yet the racing bug never left! Steve's youngest son, Ben, kept hounding him to get back onto the track because he was getting his driver's permit soon.

Steve explained his primary autocross aspirations are to simply improve as much as possible and have fun with my sons. On the other hand, Ben has much more compelling goals: He wants to outright beat his dad and older brother, Harrison.

Originally from the East Coast, Steve and his wife moved to Phoenix in 2001, started a family, launched a real estate and finance business and have been enjoying the good life. This racing dad recently purchased a **2022 BMW M3 Competition X-Drive** on his boy's recommendation. The car has proven to be a great all-around daily driver and track car, with amazing handling, making it plenty fast.

**Ben Surgent** placed 12<sup>th</sup> out of 21 entries in his class in PAX scores. Not bad for someone who just recently got their driver's permit and competed in his first autocross event only last month. With a huge grin, Ben beamed, "It was great to finally be able to drive! I was so nervous before my first run that my legs were literally shaking."

Both fellows have been impressed by the friendly and supportive reception they have received. Ben offers a special shout out to **Kim Kemper** for giving him rides in both his GT3RS and GT4, two of Ben's favorite cars!

Watch out! This trio will be driving in the March 5<sup>th</sup> event. While good sportsmanship is promised, a lot of family trash talk is guaranteed.

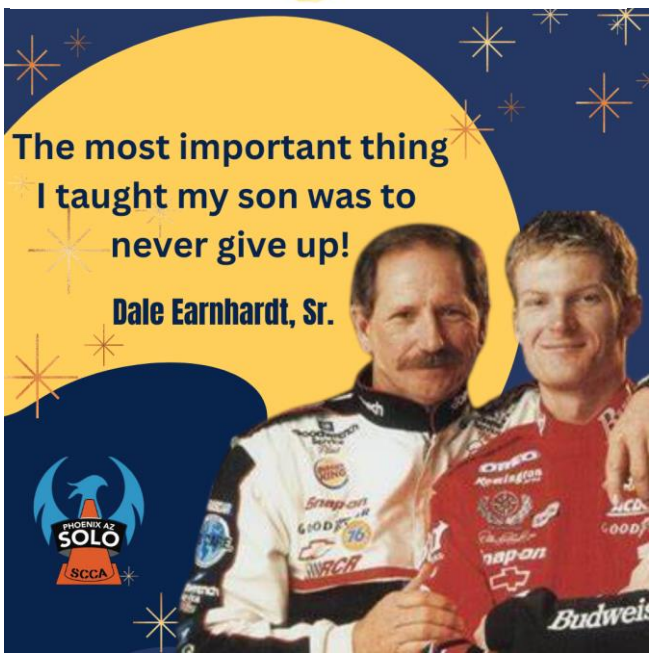
## RACING FAME



Once you've raced, you never forget it...and you never get over it.

*Richard Childress*

American race car driver in NASCAR who became one of the wealthiest men in North Carolina



**The most important thing I taught my son was to never give up!**

**Dale Earnhardt, Sr.**





# CAR OF THE MONTH

Chris Demeritt



2007 LOTUS ELISE

Small, yet mighty, is the **2007 Lotus Elise** owned by **Chris Demeritt** who inherited the car from his dad when he passed around four years ago. Chris is the owner operator of the *CBD Speed Shop* and has done all the work on Lotus himself. The original Toyota engine has been replaced with a Honda k20 unit that produces 212 rear wheel hp and 155 ft/lbs. of torque. Chris has made numerous upgrades to the car including a Honda six speed tranny and a limited slip differential. Much of the British wiring has been replaced including fuse boxes, relays and fuses, making the car more dependable as a daily driver. The shifter lever was reworked as to eliminate any slop in the system and Chris also added a cruise control feature to the Lotus. A new Honda k24 engine awaits completion –it will be swapped out in the future which will bump the rear wheel hp to around 280 and torque to 200 ft. lbs. Now that may not sound like impressive power until you realize the Elise weight is just over 1800 lbs. Plus, Chris has plans in the future to add stiffer suspension springs, competition tires and sway bars for better autocross performance. We will all probably agree this is a very cool car and someone to watch throughout this series.

*The Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) is a non-profit American automobile club and sanctioning body supporting road racing, rallying, and autocross in the United States formed in 1944. Phoenix AZ Solo Region is authorized division of SCCA.*



## HISTORIAL —FACT—



*"Auto racing began five minutes after the second car was built."*

*Henry Ford*

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**"Nobody is born with a steering wheel or a gear shift in his hand. It's something you choose to do or you don't."**

*Mario Andretti*

**"Letting someone else drive your sports car is like letting someone else kiss your girlfriend."**



**Amrit Kalantri**

## New to Autocrossing?

written by Brian Miller

1. If you are new to Autocross, be patient with yourself. At first, the course may appear as a “random sea of orange confusion.” Breathe. The course comes into focus in direct proportion to your ability to calm your mind.
2. Walk the course multiple times before driving it; develop a mental map of the distinct sections in your mind. The more times you walk the course, the calmer and more prepared you will be to drive.
3. On your very first Autox, have an experienced driver or instructor ride with you for guidance and encouragement.
4. Talk to, study and ride with an experienced driver as often as possible and have them ride with you while you drive to help develop your confidence and competencies. Get a sense of the rhythm and pace of your car and for the sheer speed you need to go to be competitive. Once you feel it (the speed and rhythm) you can reproduce the feeling again in your proceeding runs.
5. Keep track of your scores between runs. If you DNF (do not finish) don't beat yourself up – it happens to almost everyone from time to time. Find out immediately where you went off course to avoid the same error on your next run.
6. If you really get lost on the course, just slow the car, gather your thoughts, find the correct direction with the guidance of the course workers and complete the course. Ya, you might be a little embarrassed – that's just part of this crazy sport.
7. Avoid the tendency to either be controlled by too much adrenaline, or by the fear of failure, by taking a few deep breaths and visualizing the course in your mind before each pass. Remember Autox racing is more like a ballet than a boxing match – Grace and finesse are rewarded vs. brute strength and jabbing at the pedals.
8. Attend a driver's school offered in your area to sharpen your skills and build your confidence.
9. While working the course as a course worker, study the technique of the better drivers. A lot can be learned by observing the cars on the course. Watch the lines the high scoring drivers are taking, and how smooth they are when racing between the cones.
10. Above all, remember every driver was an inexperienced beginner at some point in their motorsport racing career. It takes time to develop autocross skills. Meet yourself where you are. Be a novice, until you're not. Have fun and hang in there – it's worth it!

*It's hard to drive at the limit, yet it's harder to know where the limits are!  
The best advice: Push yourself and your car! Limits are almost always self-imposed!*



# Pylon Quiz



Below are six of the fastest cars in the world listed alphabetically. Try rank ordering the cars from the fastest to slowest – ranked by their respective 0-60 acceleration times.

1. Dodge Challenger SRT Demon
2. Ferrari SF 90 Stadle
3. Koenigsegg Gemera
4. Lamborghini Huracan
5. Porsche Spyder
6. Tesla Model S Plaid

**“A RACING CAR IS AN ANIMAL WITH  
A THOUSAND ADJUSTMENTS.”**

**MARIO ANDRETTI**



## Ranked by Speed

- #1 Koenigsegg Gemera = 1.9 seconds
- #2 Tesla Model S Plaid = 1.98 seconds
- #3 Porsche Spyder = 2.1 seconds
- #4 Ferrari SF 90 Stadle = 2.4 seconds
- #5 Lamborghini Huracan = 2.5 seconds
- #6 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon = 2.6 seconds

# EAT SLEEP DRIVE

The mantra of a true autocross driver

**YOU CAN'T BUY  
HAPPINESS  
HOWEVER, YOU CAN  
AUTOCROSS**

