

**SCCA – Opening Day NERRC and NARRC Regional  
New Hampshire International Motor speedway  
1.600 Miles  
Group 6 SRF –GTL- E, F< G, H production. SPU and Legends  
Sanction # 05-RD-133-S**

The pss/Paxar Monarch racecar qualified 3<sup>rd</sup> in class and 7<sup>th</sup> overall out of 31 listed competitors. This was a NERRC/NARRC opening day race, so there are several classes. There are 15 SRFs in which the pss/Paxar Monarch #97 SRF competes.

The concern with a mixed class is that the cars each have different cornering, braking, and acceleration, so a car may be faster or slower than you on a total lap, but can be the opposite in any given point on the track. Ultimately, this can and will be an issue.

We qualified behind Chris Caron and Dave Auer with a time of 1:15.52.

The day is beautiful. It is cloudless and in the high 60's, spectacular for a New Hampshire day in April.

We are waved onto the track and one of the other class's cars is a no-show. This causes some initial confusion as we are not placed where we had anticipated we would be. However, everyone adjusts and we begin the pace lap.

As we make the pace lap, I find myself behind 4 cars that are not in my class and directly behind 2 SRFs. The rest of the group of 21+ is behind us.

They run us through NASCAR 3 and 4 on the parade lap to insure that we all get a clear view of the starter's flag for the green. We will not use that end of the oval again. From this point forward, our race consists of turns 1 and 2, the slightly banked NASCAR oval turns. Next, we head for turn 3, a spur off the NASCAR back straight that turns in a fish hook and up the hill.

Turn 4 is the bowl, a steeply banked curving button hook to the left that you have to dive into. Turn 5 is the exit of the bowl, and turns 6 and 7 are slight kinks to enter and exit the short chute that runs along the ridge.

Turn 8 is the infamous flat reverse camber entrance to the downhill "channel" that brings you back onto the oval. Turn 9 is the difficult right-hander that transitions you from the external track, across the oval surface, and back to the infield track. Turn 10 is a kink that lines you up for turn 11's 90 degree left, and turn 12 brings you back onto the front straight.



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As we come onto the front straight, I have my left foot on the brake, my right foot on the gas, one hand on the wheel, and one hand on the stick. I can actually see the starter through the roll hoop of Chris Caron's car in front of me.

As I see the starter's elbow move, I am on the gas and pulling to the left. The earphones come alive with "green, green, green."

I am quickly out of 2<sup>nd</sup> gear and grabbing third. Chris must have been late to react. By the 1 marker on the straight, I have passed him. As I enter turn 1, I settle in the banking below Dave Auer, who has also passed Chris on the right.

My strategy is to keep even with Dave through turns 1 and 2 and to try to avoid the carnage of turn 3 which has become a staple of road racing at New Hampshire International. In approaching turn 3, all of the cars fight for position as they enter the heavy braking zone into a tight right hand turn. Everyone is on cold tires and brakes but hot on adrenaline.

I hold low to the inside yellow line between turns 1 and 2. This would be a bad spot under full race speed, but as we are still in the opening lap, I am not traveling that fast. As I clear turn 2, only the four non-class cars are in front of me.

One of the non-class cars in front of me is driven by Alan Dunklee, another by Jonathon Hauge. I am presented with the dilemma of trying to judge their uneven braking and turning speed.

I cannot see him, but I know Dave is to my right.

In my opinion, Dave has the better run as he is behind Jonathan, who is driving a faster vehicle. My intuition proves to be correct as Jonathan out brakes and Alan and Dave follow him into the turn in front of me.

I turn into the corner and follow Dave. As we start up the hill, I feel a tap in my right corner. I am unsure who has bumped me, but I stay on the throttle and the car straightens out.

We are out of turn 4 and cresting the hill. A quick look in the rearview mirror shows Chris's car spinning across the track. I do not look long enough to see the results.

Now is the time to try to get in front of Dave. I see his brake light go on as we approach the bowl and decide to make a late brake pass on the inside. I angle to the inside and brake lightly until I am clear of Dave. I pull the car low to protect the apex and the exit line. This places me on the wrong line and Dave's car will definitely not like this.



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I go to power and the car drifts around, throwing its tail to the right. I can't see Dave, but since I haven't hit him, I assume I have accomplished the task. I twist the wheel to right and stay on the power. The car corrects and I flick back to the center and drive out of the bowl.

I am now number 1 in class and it is only turn 6 of the first lap.

I complete the lap without incident, watching the SPU class battle in front of me.

I run through turns 1 and 2, and as I enter turn 3, I see the yellow flag. Now I know the problem back at turn 4 was a more than just a spin. Chris will not be back in the race. He was the car that tapped me and as a result he collected a car behind him and put them both out of the race.

I complete the lap under power, a slight cushion between my car and the one behind me. As I exit turn 2, the earphones crackle to life with a double yellow so I slow down and the crowd catches up.

We circle for 3 laps while they clean up the mess.

On lap 5 we go green.

I increase the gap to a comfortable margin between laps 5 through 12.

On lap 14 I start having a problem with Alan Dunklee. By this point, Jonathan's car has broken down and Alan is running number 1 in class. Normally he would be out of sight, but at the moment, he is barely pacing me. After every right hand corner his car stutters and burps and I nearly hit his back bumper.

Were I racing Alan, this would be good news. But his problem is causing me problems. He pulls away on the straight but he is so slow through the corners that he is actually slowing me down. After two laps like this, both Dave Knortz and Dave Auer are catching up, forcing me to make a decision.

I have two choices: pass and run in front of Alan or stay put and hope the race is over before I'm caught.

Being a true racer, I make the move in turn 3. I brake late and gain to within a car's length of Alan. As we head up the hill to turn 4 his car burps, and I move inside and pass.

We head down the hill battling for the lead. I pass him on the outside and as I exit the bowl and head into six, he is behind me.

But Alan's car travels swiftly in a straight line. As we run the ridge, he is gaining very quickly.

This is where I make my mistake.

Turns 8 and 9 are a set of esses with the lower body of the S turning downhill and off camber. The top part of the S is a bouncy right past a concrete wall over three different track surfaces. Normally the car will four wheel drift out of the top part of the 'S' as long as you enter it on a straight line with little steering input.

If you are not tight into that part of the turn you cannot drift out without steering input and the steering input will cause the rear to kick out.

Alan spooked me as he ran up on me and I thought he would go inside to regain the lead. I guessed incorrectly and was off the apex on the entrance to turn 9, which ultimately did not place me where I needed to be on the entrance to turn 10.

As I exited turn 10, the car's tail got light and as much as I try to catch it, it comes around and I spin.

I am treated to the sight of Alan, Dave, and Dave passing me. I had moved from first to 4<sup>th</sup> in three seconds.

It is depressing but this is racing.

The car rotates and is facing forward again. I place it into gear and go.

Now I am chasing and I have 4 laps to regain the lead.

On lap 16 I gain back some ground, but not much. I can see the Dave and Dave show behind Alan. On lap 17, Dave and Dave are being held back by Alan's stuttering car, and I realize I still have a chance. On lap 18 I have gained back a bit more, but still do not believe it will be enough. On lap 19 it seems remote, but not impossible. By lap 20 I am still 4 car lengths behind. I think only a suicide move will work until I come around the downhill on the infamous turn 9.

Apparently Dave Auer has decided he wishes to win the race. He makes an aggressive move in that takes him off track and I gain 2 car lengths. In turn 11 he makes another attempt, and again he goes off track. He returns to the track at turn 12 and we are side by side.

It is drag race to the end but I win by 7 tenths of second.

First race, second place, second in points

On to Lime Rock Park.