

Push-it-to-the-Limit Series, Event #2: The Rain Dance

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An auto-slalom in Mississauga means an early departure when you live outside of the Toronto area. So, it was somewhat premature of me to chuckle with glee when it began raining hard during my drive to the second Push It To The Limit Series (PITL) event.

The harder it rained, the more the traffic slowed down on the 401, and the more I'm sure I took on the gleeful expression of the Grinch when he hatched his plot to cancel Christmas.

Rain rarely cancels an event—in fact, I've yet to see a cancellation due to weather conditions—but it does give the lower horsepower cars an advantage. When it comes to slippery conditions, my car, an Insight, really shines.

So, I braved the wrath of others as I wandered around the paddock in the drizzle, whistling and cheerfully bellowing, "rain event!" to anyone that would listen. Frankly, it's a miracle that no one stuffed me in the trunk of a Miata.

We started the course walk, and discovered a very long course layout. The course required two passes through section one and included the Mazda Sportscar Owner Club's classic straightaway *before* the double-loop, for a twist. Compared to a typical layout, the course was more or less in reverse.

On a second course walk, we noticed a committee rearranging sections: not a good indication. Three course walks later, with the layout changing on every pass, we gave up and stopped walking. We came to the conclusion that we would just have to take it slow on the first run and figure the course out that way.

The problem with what felt like constant redesign is that the clock was ticking, and the event start became later and later. With over 100 drivers, as is typical with a PITL event, and a long course, we figured that it was going to be a day with few runs and lots of waiting.

As it turns out, we were correct about the waiting, but the course-by-committee ended up resulting one of the best designs most of us had seen in the Hershey Centre lot! It was a fast, flowing course, with enough tricky bits to keep us engaged. In other words, it was worth waiting for the event's late start.

PITL events are often testing grounds for competitors in the Ontario Regional series, who are busily breaking in new tires and checking out modifications. The new Kumho ECSTA V710s are *the* tire of the season. To listen to some, you'd swear these tires do everything but make your breakfast.

It's pretty obvious who has them, when you observe the expressions of disbelief on faces in the paddock. "You can do incredibly stupid things, and then just steer around cones," one competitor, Cliff, enthused—though I doubt he was advocating mistakes on course as a competitive edge.

We start to wonder exactly what Kumho did to those tires... magic anyone? Surely there's a catch?

Noon rolled around, the pavement started to dry up, the umbrellas went away, and the times began getting faster. There was audible relief that the rain had stopped: and since my own times also picked up, I couldn't really complain.

As you can see in the results, the battle of the Mazdas—rather logical, given the event host—raged on, but the top 10 times of the day were dominated by the Ryerson University and University of Waterloo formula SAE drivers. If you saw

one of those things zip around a course, you would have no surprise at that outcome.

Event #2 featured a modification for the record books: after a long search, Guillermo A. finally managed to track down and installed a rear sway bar on his 2000 Honda Insight. Following in Jay W.'s footsteps from Event #1, Guillermo finished his modifications Friday night and then got up bright and early to try them out at PITL.

The bar in question is a Shine SRS rear sway bar made for VW A4 Golf, Jetta, and Beetle. Designed for cars weighing over 3000 lbs, it works specially well on an 1880 lb Insight. So well, in fact, that a driver can produce instant "lift throttle oversteer" on demand when driving at the limit.

Not shabby at all for a 73 hp hybrid!

As usual, many thanks go to the Push It To The Limit Series sponsors.

Top 10 Times of the Day

#	Num	Name	Car	FTD
1	112	Dave D.	2005 Formula SAE	48.974
2	136	William C	2005 Formula SAE	49.785
3	0	Adam M.	2005 Formula SAE	50.975
4	124	Graeme Y.	2005 Forumla SAE	51.398
5	30	Aaron J.	Formula SAE	51.933
6	73	Paul K.	1991 White Mazda Miata	51.986
7	97	Jeff W.	2001 Blue Mazda Miata	52.231
8	83	Ron P.	2001 Yellow Lotus	52.916
9	81	Mike A.	2000 Blue Subaru Impreza	53.650
10	28	Darryl D.	1991 White Mazda	53.776

Class Winners

A Stock: Robert T., 2000 Black Mazda Miata, 55.746

A Mod: Derek B., 1990 Red Mazda RX-7, 54.179

B Stock: Hanif P., 1995 Red Honda Civic, 56.547

B Stock Plus: Taylor B., 1997 White Acura Integra, 54.804

B Mod: Mike A., 2000 Blue Subaru Impreza, 53.650

C Stock: Shane L., 2005 Infiniti G35, 58.845

C Mod: Paul K., 1991 White Mazda Miata, 51.986

D: Dave D., 2005 Formula SAE, 48.974