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Press Release: The Ridge Motorsports Park – July 12, 2015

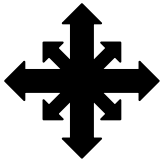
Hey! July 11-12, 2015, I flew to Washington to race in the 24 Hours of LeMons at the Ridge Motorsports Park. For those of you who are not familiar, LeMons races are restricted to cars purchased and prepared for \$500 or less and driven around racetracks for hours on end by pretty much any yahoo with a drivers' license. If this sounds like a bad idea to you, you are probably right. On the other hand, if it sounds like a good idea, I should probably introduce you to my co-drivers, Cameron Kurth and Mitch Baghdoian! Cameron and Mitch continue to sucker me into these LeMons races with the promise of lots of cheap track time. I suppose racing in LeMons is a bit like tequila, the first step towards recovery is to say, "I'm never doing that again." Against all odds, our \$500 steed held together and brought us home in second place while recording the fastest race lap!

For this weekend, Cameron, Mitch and I signed up to drive one of the most iconic LeMons cars, a race prepared Ford Model T. "Pretty" is not a word you would use to describe the Model T. However, relative to the 70 cars entered at The Ridge, the Model T is one of the faster cars and, as a result, we started the race with a seven lap handicapping penalty. LeMons weekends are not complicated by practice and qualifying sessions. You just show up, go out on track, drive around under full course caution and at some point the



organizers throw the green flag to start the race. Mitch and Cameron like to send me out first to work through any issues the car might have. With an up-to-date Tetanus booster and a mostly inactive self-preservation instinct, I rolled onto the track for the start 69th out of 70 cars.

I started finding issues right at the drop of the green flag when Mother Nature contributed to the chaos with rain moments after the start. Apparently, rain does not run off the flat windshield of the Model T and the team had not installed a wiper. As the rain was not too heavy, I continued for a few laps until the air cleaner decided it had had enough and jettisoned itself in the middle of the back straight, jamming the throttle wide open. I hit the kill switch and coasted back to the pits. The team removed what was left of the air cleaner and installed a windshield wiper. Actually, "wiper" is a generous term for the metal and rubber thing that waved back and forth in front of me for the rest of the race while it attempted to clear a patch about the size of an I-phone on the windshield. When the rain intensified, the inside of the windshield had more water on it than the outside, but I held on until I misjudged a pass attempt and was sent to the penalty box to feel shame. Mitch then took over for his first stint in the car and did a great job



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moving forward in the field on a mostly dry track. The light rain returned for Cameron's first stint. The combination of smoking and leaking \$500 dollar racecars and light rain created an extremely slick track surface, but Cameron kept the car on the paved part of the track before I got in for the final stint of the first day. I survived the first few laps until the track dried and then put my head down to chase down the leaders. I managed to get a couple laps back moving us up to fifth overall before running low on fuel. A late fuel stop would have cost us more time, so I limped the car around for the last few laps of the day.

LeMons racing is a unique social phenomenon. At the end of the first day, everyone gets together to trade stories, consume some beverages and repair the cars. I hydrated and met some fans who had found the mangled remains of our original air cleaner and were taking it home as a souvenir. Meanwhile, the crew went to work replacing the front brake pads because, apparently, I am still hard on brakes. A new air cleaner, 4 quarts of engine oil (Yes, 4 quarts!) and a full tank of fuel returned the Model T to its pristine original condition, ready for another day of LeMons competition.



Sunday dawned overcast, but remained dry the entire day. Mitch started the Model T and immediately found himself in a huge battle with the top three cars in the race. By the end of his stint, Mitch had moved us into the top three when his pace proved to be too much for the second and third place cars. Cameron took over and proceeded to run what amounted to a double stint when the team took advantage of a red flag to re-fuel the Model T. When I got into the car for the run to the checkered flag, we were still five penalty laps down to the leading car. Our only hope was to push the leader into a mistake or mechanical problems. I chased the leader hard, getting another lap back and setting the fastest race lap in the process, but was unable to overcome the deficit before the end of the race.

Overall, it was a great weekend at The Ridge. I had a good time at the track with good friends. Running the fastest race lap and bringing the Model T home in second place is a terrific result. All I have to say now is, "I'm never doing that again."



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