



Chicago, May 28, 2009, NASA Midwest, Inc.

Putnam Park Road Course/May 16-17, 2009/NASA Great Lakes & Midwest Crossover Event

Putnam Park was full of stories from the 944 Spec drivers.

For the Putnam Park event, we welcomed Joel Karns to his first 944 Spec event in his early 944 – one of the first brought into the country and now more than 26 years old! This was also the first weekend for the new Bennington Motorsports ([www.BENMS.com](http://www.BENMS.com)) support trailer, which was put to good use, keeping all of the 944 Spec drivers on track all weekend. The cost was exceeding reasonable, and included free food and refreshments for 944 Spec Drivers. Thanks to Nick Miller of Bennington for making this the most enjoyable weekend possible! Thanks also to new sponsor “A Part Above” ([www.ApartAbove.com](http://www.ApartAbove.com)) who’s “Hard Luck” contingency was decisively earned this weekend!

Qualifying started dry, but quickly began to drizzle. Scrambling to get a hot lap in before the track was soaked, Eric Kuhns found a wet/oily spot, and then one of the few guardrails at this track to do his best “Dukes of Hazard” imitation, ending less gracefully however, by stuffing the nose in and ending up on his roof. Unbeknownst to him, he could have cruised home with the pole by over a second without that lap, but hindsight, as they say... Thankfully, Kuhns’ Hanksville Hotrods pre-bent rollcage ([www.hankvillehotrods.com](http://www.hankvillehotrods.com)) held up exceedingly well, as did the rest of the NASA-mandated safety system in the car. Kuhns emerged from his “endo” with out a scratch, bruise or sore muscle. In fact, he pressed the 944 Raceworks/Bennington Motorsports into service, racing competitively the rest of the weekend. Angel Blazquez used his new corner balance & alignment to good effect, earning him his first pole position. Series points leader Andy Berberich was second on the grid, and Ray Freundt third.

The race also started eventfully, with all the leading cars dodging spinning Miatas, but coming through clean. Freundt was able to get by Blazquez, and then battled with Berberich for a while, before Berberich pulled away to win his 3<sup>rd</sup> race in a row. Blazquez ended 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Karns 4<sup>th</sup>. Kuhns retired with a loosening radiator hose, causing overheating, but no permanent damage.

Saturday morning presented ideal conditions, and the top 3 drivers were under track-record times in qualifying, with the 944 Raceworks/BENMS rental car leading the way – a competitive ride! Berberich was able to up the ante for qualifying, posting some blistering times to claim the pole, followed by Kuhns, Freundt, Blazquez & Karns.

Sunday, Kuhns got a good start, and was able to get around Berberich by turn 1. The two battled nose to tail for 3 laps. Then Berberich took an opportunity when



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Kuhns was checked up by an overtaking car to “freight train” past Kuhns. Berberich then gradually opened up a lead, and Kuhns motored in to a second place finish, content to complete his weekend in one piece, and on the podium. Meanwhile, Blazquez slowly ran down Freundt, after having lost quite a bit of time in traffic on the first lap. Freundt was able to use his greater racing experience in traffic to keep Blazquez behind him for the finish. Karns finished out his first weekend in 944 Spec cleanly, and whittled down the gap between he and the leaders by more than 1/2 by the end of the event. He also got the tradition “Rookie bath” when he took off his “R” this weekend, with none other than Bryan Cohn providing the distraction!

This puts Berberich in his Kauth & Meyer sponsored car solidly in the points lead to date, with Kuhns, Freundt, and Blazquez all within 5 points, battling for second. Up next is a venue NASA Midwest hasn't seen for a few years – Blackhawk Farms Raceway. Rumor has it that Kuhns will return to his '08 National Championship car at that event. With Blazquez finding new speed, and '08 Regional Champion Ray Freundt driving hard, Berberich will have his hands full to continue his winning ways! See you then!

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