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RACER LETTERS

THE EDITORS ARE NOT BOUND TO AGREE WITH READERS' OPINIONS

RACER welcomes your letters, if sent via U.S. Mail or e-mailed to letters@racer.com. We don't like faxes, though.

UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

Thank you for Gil de Ferran's "Emotional vs. Rational" column (*RACER*, October). It describes a question of humanity that we all secretly (?) harbor daily. I could identify with his attempts to explain being "in the zone." I remember when it happened for me.

I was four years into motorsports and had experienced good progress. One day, while driving a particularly busy stretch of track I looked down for an instant, and somebody was doing all sorts of small, deliberate, steering corrections. I had this thought: "Who's doing that?" I was making no conscious effort on that part of the task. I was in the zone. It made me think of how I'd really explain the progress of driving. I came up with these four "states."

- 1) Unconscious incompetence (most of the street driving you see)
- 2) Conscious incompetence (your beginning track laps, most likely)
- 3) Conscious competence (lots of practice, but not commitment and immersion)
- 4) Unconscious competence (the delicious zone, most car control on "autopilot")

Maybe that explains it as best you can, without experiencing it yourself? I also quite agree that the go-for-it nature of qualifying brings the professional focus necessary to achieve that zone with some satisfying frequency. I'd add that hillclimbs provide a similar rush, as they offer calculated risks due to the similar "time-trial" nature and having to deal with "changing conditions," like qualifying.

Thanks Gil. You'll always be a champion to me.

Kim John Crumb
BLOOMINGTON, MINN.

RECORD INTEREST

In your December issue, Tony George was quoted as saying, "The fact is that no longer do the fans come out to look at new track records and escalation. They have in the last few years been focusing more on the bumping process."

The fact is no longer do fans come out, period. Continuing to take racing out of racing will not work. My point rests with dwindling attendance and television ratings.

WRITE NOW!

Your letter contributed to the March '05 issue of *RACER* could win you a radio-controlled Dash Acura RSX from HPI Racing. HPI's entry level R/C car comes pre-painted and ready to race. It's a great car to master the basics of R/C racing—and it's yours free if your letter is selected "most entertaining" by *RACER*'s hard-working editorial staff.



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MOST ENTERTAINING LETTER

OLD AND MAD ABOUT IT

Once upon a time, there was racing. People brought what they had to the track and lined up with each other and the flag dropped and they all went racing. Maybe the large advertising budgets require that everyone gets a chance to win evenly, but that is not what real racing is all about. People with the most smarts and, yes, the most money went the fastest and won. Big deal, that is life.

Now, we change rules daily to even the playing field, but that is not real life. It cheapens the sport. If Tiger Woods always wins, we don't make him use golf clubs from Kmart. We don't make the Olympic teams that win buy their shoes at Payless.

I am mad and I am not going to take it anymore. I will still watch a race sometimes, but I can't support what is happening to our sport. I know I am old and I was spoiled by Can-Am, etc., but why hurt the winners to make the losers happy? If I wanted to watch a support race like Barber or IROC, I could see it play two weeks after the fact.

Mark Willems
VIA E-MAIL

TV coverage does not help, as it also is taking the racing out of racing with in-car camera shots (which would be similar to watching a football play from a camera in the helmet of the quarterback) and various interviews that continually take the cameras off viewing the racing on the track.

The new qualification format should increase interest in qualifications, but I believe the fans will only return when new records or the potential for records and individual engineering ingenuity are allowed to return to Indy.

Ron Hawk
WAITSFIELD, VT.

MISDIRECTED COMPLAINTS?

In response to "Misdirected Passion" in the December issue's *RACER* letters, Paul Newman's remarks are in total order regarding Tony George and the IRL. Mr. Newman has not only been a good friend and loyal supporter of open-wheel racing through the years, he has also put his money where his mouth is. Mr. George has tried to destroy and bury the assets of CART, when it filed for bankruptcy last year, also changing his tone midstream on the issues of American drivers, road courses, and containing costs for the teams involved.

No open-wheel fan will be driven away by two millionaires sniping. A real fan will see things for what they are and choose a side. Thanks, Paul.

Jim Henson
AMBLER, PA.

FAVORITES AND FEARS

I enjoyed very much the interviews with both Patrick Carpentier and Jeff Burton in the December issue of *RACER*. They have been two of my favorite drivers since I started following racing in 1998.

I would also like to voice my concern for the ALMS and the Prototype class. A few years ago I would always watch the ALMS over Grand-Am, but I must say that Grand-Am puts on a much better show with the new Daytona Prototypes. I could not generate any interest this past season for the ALMS with only a handful of Prototypes. I believe they have a serious problem if they cannot get any major manufacturers interested and involved.

Rick Dudley
BOTHELL, WASH.

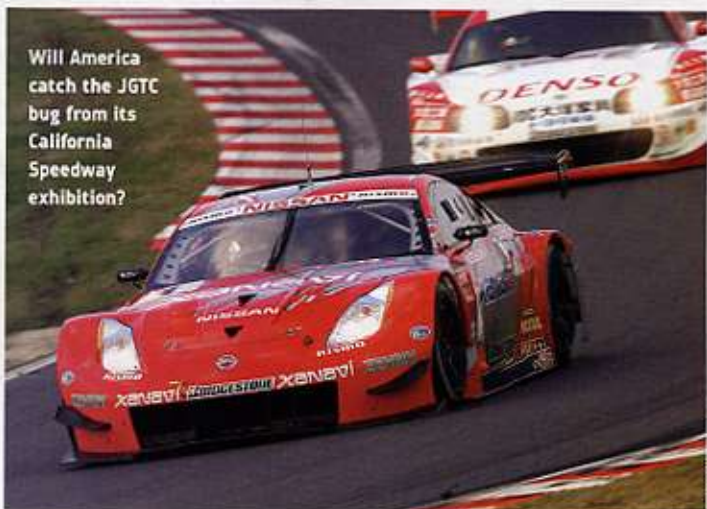
ADRIFT IN GLEE ABOUT THE JGTC

It seems like every car-related publication, especially the import ones, have been focusing their issues on the JGTC which is coming to California Speedway in December. People will catch the "JGTC bug" just like "drift fever" has caught on. You can't pick up a car magazine without seeing some story or article on the drift scene. Even the R/C car magazines have articles on how to set up your R/C to drift!

I can't wait to see the JGTC when it comes stateside. Please tell me that you are going to cover it!

Wes Pak
VIA E-MAIL

OK. Yes, we are going to cover it! -Ed. >>



Will America catch the JGTC bug from its California Speedway exhibition?