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NASA TEXAS, 2005 ROUND 1 Season Opener – Motorsport Ranch

Weekend Racing Recap March 5-6, 2005

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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

18 March 2005

TEXAS MARCH MADNESS!

The 2005 NASA TEXAS AI/CMC Season Opener was a record breaker!

American Iron and CMC cars converged on Motorsport Ranch in Cresson, Texas for the start of another NASA Texas American Iron and Camaro-Mustang Challenge season. Both racing series in Texas continue to experience 100% growth, with many new drivers and cars showing up to join in the action. With the biggest V8-racing grid in Texas to date, it was a weekend to watch!

MSR WEEKEND RACE SUMMARY:

- + 4 AI/CMC **sprint races** toward championship points (20 minutes each)
- + 1 practice session and 2 qualifying sessions (15-20 minutes each)
- + 7 total **race group sessions** and well over 2 hours of track time!
- + 7 American Iron cars
- + 1 American Iron Xtreme car
- + 8 CMC cars
- + 5 Competition Licensing students in the Friday license school!
- + 13 Mustangs
- + 3 Camaros – 1 in AI, and 2 in CMC!
- + 2 CMC pole position winners for the weekend – **Team Ginsberg/Tanner** (Sat), and **Team Covini/Breitenbach** (Sun).
- + 2 AI pole positions held by the same racer- **John George 2X**
- + 2 AI winners for the weekend - **John George 2X (Sat)...Mike Patterson 2X (Sun)**
- + 2 CMC winners for the weekend – **Team Covini/Breitenbach 2X.....Eric Varner 2X**
- + **New AI and CMC track records set!**
- + **Carnage** was huge this first event after a long winter – two CMC cars damaged, one AI motor ventilated, one CMC head gasket blown, one CMC cylinder head cracked, two fuel pumps, one oil cooler, one brake line, one stripped caliper, one engine fire, one Mass Air sensor problem, two clutches, and ABS issues on two AI cars.
- + **Weather** was the big question of the weekend – cool temperatures, overcast and threatening skies, with light sprinkles on Sunday.
- + **Consistent top lap times** were lowered from last year – 1:26-1:27's for CMC and 1:22's for AI
- + **An unfortunate incident on Friday** was uplifted with the return of a damaged CMC car to action after an all nighter of repairs by many people and a fantastic weekend of racing!



The largest American Iron and Camaro-Mustang Challenge grid yet in Texas. From L-R – John George (AI #23), Mike Bell (AI #16), and Richard Pedersen (AI #91). Image by Lewis Tanner.

FREAKY FRIDAY – NASA Texas held an all day **licensing school** for all the new racers. **Steve Kent (CMC #1), Jeff Brooks (AI #101), Corey Rueth (CMC #13), Nicholas Runyon (CMC #79), Lewis Tanner (CMC #5) and Glenn Landrum (CMC #70)** attended in the quest to complete working on the licensing requirements. Many of the AI/CMC veterans such as **Adam Ginsberg, Eric Varner and Mike Patterson** used this day to shake down their cars and their rusty skills after nearly 5 months of no track time. **Neil Breitenbach**, from Tampa, FL used this day to learn his **teammate Todd Covini's** car, as well as learn a new track during test and tune time.

The track time agenda was filled with very **constructive exercises and practice sessions** such as side by side lapping at speed, standing & rolling start practices and pass/be passed exercises to gain comfort levels. The day ran smoothly until the final session of the day – a 30 minute “graduation race”. Shortly after the start, **Eric Varner's CMC Mustang** blew a head gasket, and had to be towed in. During the restart, a student in an Factory Five Racer (FFR) went wide coming out of Big Bend, shot across, left the track, then reentered the track and came to a stop. With nowhere to go, the FFR was hit broadside by the recently completed CMC #70 Camaro which was built from the ground up and driven by **Glenn Landrum**. That caused the FFR to spin around, and get hit in the passenger side by the **Kent/Liebke #1 CMC Mustang** entry. All 3 cars were significantly damaged. The Kent/Liebke entry would unfortunately not return to racing this weekend. This incident was a testament to the safety gear and procedures employed at **NASA**, as well as the quality construction of **Factory Five Racecars**, as no-one was hurt .

With approximately 12 hours to go before the Round 1 racing weekend to begin at 8 AM on Saturday, many cars had major issues to contend with in order to make the show. During a top-end engine teardown, **Eric Varner** not only found the blown head gasket on his CMC Mustang, but he also discovered a broken valve as well. The **Chris Lyons** AI Mustang (formerly owned by AI Champion **Elliot Fisher**) lost his clutch. In the helping hands category, CMC-pilot **Adam Ginsberg** made a round trip run to his house for his spare set of cylinder heads for Varner and to pick up a clutch for Lyons. **Glenn Landrum** contemplated his weekend luck over dinner until nearly 9:00 at night until the coaxing of friends and the help of **Lou Giglotti** empowered Glenn to make a go of it and repair the new CMC Camaro. **The Mosty brothers** as well as racers **Mike Bell, Len Zazzarino, Mitch Landrum and others** helped out with the ailing cars so as to get everyone back out on track. **Varner, Lyons and Landrum** spent the majority of the night repairing their respective cars to get them ready for action on Saturday – it was an all-night thrash but all were successful. The **spirit of Texas AI/CMC racing** and camaraderie was alive and well in the MSR pits.



Eric Varner's CMC #17, disassembled, waiting for spare cylinder heads to arrive. Image by Eric Varner.

SPECTACULAR SATURDAY – qualifying and practice went off very well. 15 minutes before the start of qualifying, **Glenn Landrum arrived** with his CMC #70 4th gen Camaro in tow, to the clapping hands of the entire AI and CMC group in the paddock. The car hardly looked any worse for wear, considering it's front clip damage on Friday. **Corey Rueth's CMC Mustang** cut a brake line during practice and lost his entire brake system, forcing him to miss qualifying for repairs.



Corey Rueth (CMC #13), working to repair his brake system. Image by Adam Ginsberg.

In American Iron, **John George** took the pole position with a 1:23.316. **Mike Bell** was close behind with a 1:23.853, **Mike Patterson** with a 1:23.907, followed by **Richard Pedersen** (1:25.586), and **Chris Lyons** (1:29.880). New AI racer **Jeff Brooks** (AI #101) qualified with a 1:28.319 in his newly acquired former Maximum Motorsports shop car.

In CMC, **Adam Ginsberg** set the pole with a 1:27.352, followed by **Neil Breitenbach** (1:28.319), **Nicholas Runyon** (1:28.588), **Eric Varner** (1:28.781), and **Glenn Landrum** (1:31.996).



Glenn Landrum's repaired CMC #70 Camaro being rolled off the scales by Len Zazzarino (left) and Michael Mosty (right). Image by Adam Ginsberg.

SATURDAY'S RACE #1 – gridded one of the largest fields to date. The order for AI had **John George** (#GR23) on pole, followed in qualifying order by the other AI drivers. **Marshall Mosty** (#67) gridded in AIX. In CMC, **Adam Ginsberg** (#5) took the pole position over the other CMC drivers who gridded in that order.

Both American Iron and the Camaro-Mustang Challenge have new drivers for 2005 – in AI, **Jeff Brooks**, piloting the #101 Maximum Motorsports-suspended white Mustang hatchback, was gridded up for his first race ever. In CMC, **Nicholas Runyon** (# 79), **Glenn Landrum** (#70), and **Corey Rueth** (#13) gridded with the field, but as rookies, were required to grid at the back for four races. **Marshall Mosty**, driving the first AIX entry in Texas, had fuel delivery issues.

As the green flag was dropped for the rolling start, it was immediately evident the entire Pony Car field had gotten faster from last year. The top AI drivers began a furious duel, showing how door-to-door racing is done in Texas. Bell fought off Patterson in an attempt to stay close to the #GR23 Mustang, and managed to keep the #8 Camaro in his rearview. **Chris Lyons, David Donovan and Jeff Brooks** raced hard, keeping the AI leaders in sight. Brooks missed a shift, and blew up his clutch, taking him out.

In CMC, the battle for the lead was equally fierce. **Ginsberg, Breitenbach and Varner** all clamored for asphalt space, knowing the new CMC drivers were very close behind! The #2 and #17 Mustangs managed an early race pass on Ginsberg while caught up in traffic. Within a few laps, Ginsberg caught up and eventually passed Varner, who continued to have engine troubles.

Rueth and Runyon began what turned into a weekend long battle between Blue Oval and the General – lot's of close racing! Landrum, contending with a new car, stayed close to the rest of the CMC pack, all with laptimes within a second of the leaders!

For the Saturday Trophy race, the AI podium had **John George 1st, Mike Bell 2nd, Michael Patterson 3rd**, followed by **Richard Pedersen, David Donovan, Chris Lyons, and Jeff Brooks**. In CMC, **Neil Breitenbach placed 1st, Adam Ginsberg a close 2nd**, and rookie **Nicholas Runyon** taking his first podium finish in 3rd, followed by **Eric Varner, Corey Rueth, and Glenn Landrum**.

SATURDAY RACE #2 is typically inverted, but there were some minor issues with timing and scoring which would prevent that today. To get everyone out on track quickly, the grid was filled using the qualifying times from the first race. **Jeff Brooks** was unable to make AI grid due to a blown clutch. He would, however, get it repaired for Sunday.

Right from the wave of the green flag, the AI racers charged hard to stay in front. **John George's Griggs-suspended GR23** was out in front, with the rest of American Iron hot on his bumper. Mike Bell obviously got some seat time in the off-season, and drove to the new AI lap record with a 1:22.179!



Mike Bell (AI #16), lifts his inside front tire while keeping Mike Patterson (AI #8) and Richard Pedersen (AI #91) in his back window. Image by David Garland.

The CMC cars worked equally hard –**Adam Ginsberg** led from the flag for several laps, with **Neil Breitenbach, Eric Varner, Corey Rueth, Nicholas Runyon and Glenn Landrum** close behind.



Nicholas Runyon (CMC #79) and Corey Rueth (CMC #13) battled all weekend – Blue Oval against the General! Image by Lewis Tanner.

Breitenbach attempted an inside move on **Ginsberg** at the entrance of Rattlesnake which resulted in fender to wheel contact causing them both to spin. This incident took Ginsberg from 1st to 5th in short order and allowed **Eric Varner** to take the lead, and not look back. With little time left, Ginsberg managed to carve his way thru the field to take back some positions. **Rueth, Runyon and Landrum** all proved they could race with the top CMC drivers from last year – their lap times were within a second or less from last season.

The finishing order for AI was a near repeat of race #1 - **John George 1st, Michael Bell 2nd, Michael Patterson 3rd, Richard Pedersen 4th, Chris Lyons 5th, and David Donovan 6th.**

CMC had Eric Varner 1st, Neil Breitenbach 2nd, and Ginsberg 3rd, followed by Nicholas Runyon, Corey Rueth, and Glenn Landrum. The contact between Neil Breitenbach and Adam Ginsberg was found to be a racing incident however a **1 race probation** was placed upon Breitenbach for the subsequent contact.

SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER – was held with the entire NASA Texas racing crowd at 7 PM. A scheduled **2004 recognition & awards dinner** was planned for the participants as everyone headed to the track office building for 2004 season trophies and food. Beef stew, drinks and some Spec RX-7 entertainment (don't ask) was followed by more pit thrashing in the AI/CMC paddock to get ready for Sunday's races. Brooks was able to repair his destroyed AI clutch in time. The **Mosty brothers** continued to work on their fuel tank issues and **Todd Covini** arrived late from previous engagements to greet the weary racers and see them all snuggle into their truck beds for sleep. (So that is why they call them "Snug-Lids" huh, **Chris Lyons!**)

SUNDAY MORNING QUALIFYING - took place under threatening skies – many folks wondered if the rain from Friday would return. AI qualification was fast – **John George** posted a pole-position time of 1:22.901 vs. **Mike Bell's** scorcher of 1:22.921 – just .02 off!! **Mike Patterson** made suspension changes Saturday, and roared back with a 1:23.836. **Richard Pedersen** posted a 1:25.746, AI rookie **Jeff Brooks** with a 1:25.962, **David Donovan** with a 1:26.013, and **Chris Lyons** showing a 1:26.745. AIX-pilot **Marshall Mosty** posted a 1:26.676.

CMC was knocking down the record times as well – **Todd Covini**, taking back driving duties of the #2 Mobil 1 Mustang from teammate **Neil Breitenbach** scored pole with a 1:26.243, **Eric**

Varner at a 1:27.486, **Glenn Landrum** (1:28.196), **Lewis Tanner** in CMC #5 experienced brake problems partway thru, posting a 1:28.346, with **Corey Rueth** (1:30.194). **Nick Runyon** was having transponder issues, and did not post a time.

In the typical good natured fun of Texas AI/CMC, **some impromptu awards** were handed out during morning coffee for Saturday's "accomplishments". Chris Lyons was awarded with "**granny panties**" for being the first AI car to be passed by a CMC car. The granny panties were displayed off the back of the AI Mustang until the start of the race. In CMC, Neil Breitenbach was awarded the "**Bling-Bling Breitenbach Thing**" which he wore as a necklace for most of Sunday. The award presented by Team Ginsberg/Tanner, was a piece of corner marker light which flew from the Covini/ Breitenbach car during minor contact on Saturday afternoon between their cars. Everyone was a great sport about their new awards.



Chris Lyons (AI #12), Jeff Brooks (AI #101) and Adam Ginsberg (CMC #5). Image by Lewis Tanner.

SUNDAY'S RACE #3 - was the main event right after lunch which provided a long awaited **standing start**, again with the rookie AI and CMC drivers gridded in the back. The green flag dropped, and it was a roar of V8 power headed towards the entrance of Rattlesnake!

John George, caught in traffic, was passed **Bell and Patterson**. **Mike Bell** led for several laps, fighting off the onslaught of LS1 power from **Patterson**. A spin by a Corvette driver Kevin Mixon allowed the other AI cars to catch back up to the #16 Mustang of Bell. In CMC, Covini maintained his lead over the other CMC cars by chasing the AI Mustang of Richard Pedersen in hopes of presenting him with the next pair of **granny panties** for being passed by a CMC driver. The hard charging incentive along with the cooler weather paid off as Covini pulled off a new CMC lap record: a 1:25.802! **Ginsberg, Varner, Landrum, Rueth and Runyon** continued to hammer the MSR pavement in an attempt to catch up.



Todd Covini giving the thumbs up after taking the new CMC lap record. Image by Neil Breitenbach.

7 laps into the race, **Jeff Brook's #101 engine caught fire**, and forced a black flag. Prompt action on the part of the AI/CMC racers allowed the emergency crews to quickly douse the flames and save the car from major damage. The culprit was later diagnosed as a failed fuel injector o-ring. The Fire crews, fire extinguishers, fire suits, tow hooks and other safety precautions worked flawlessly in time of need. All the racers came into the hot pit until the track was clear.



*Mike Patterson in his LS-1 powered Camaro, waiting for the safety crew to secure the track.
Image by Hart Photography.*

Within 15 minutes, the track was cleared, and the pace car took the entire field out to finish this exciting race! The grid took the green, and roared off into the distance. With Bell still in the lead, George, Patterson, Pedersen, and Lyons charged hard. #GR23 came along side Bell, forcing him wide. That afforded Patterson an opportunity – Bell went from 1st to 3rd in two turns! Within another 2 laps, Bell caught George while the #8 and #23 were fighting for position – Bell took back 2nd place!



Bell keeps John George in his rearview mirror. Image by Hart Photography.

However, on lap 13, while chasing down Patterson's LS-1, the #16 car blew it's motor heading into Big Bend as the revs topped 6100 and pulling strong right after posting a new AI lap record. **Mike Bell's weekend was over.**



Piece of piston & ring landing which fell out of Mike Bell's engine onto the track when someone punched a hole in his block. Image by Todd Covini...parts find by AI racer and corner worker, David Carr.

CMC was fierce as well – with Covini and Varner ahead, **Ginsberg** made a mistake at the entrance to Rattlesnake, handing the 3rd and 4th place positions to **Rueth and Runyon**. After recovering, Ginsberg saw **Landrum** close in his rearview, and drove hard to keep the black Camaro at bay.

At the checker, the AI finishing order was **Mike Patterson 1st, John George 2nd, Richard Pedersen 3rd, with David Donovan 4th, and Chris Lyons 5th**.

CMC put **Team Covini/Breitenbach 1st, Varner 2nd, Rueth 3rd, Runyon 4th, Ginsberg 5th, and Landrum 6th**. However, during post race inspection, Rueth was found to be ~40lbs light in his newly acquired California car, and subsequently DQ'd. That moved Runyon to 3rd, Ginsberg 4th, and Landrum 5th. Another podium finish for Nicholas Runyon!!



Nick Runyon's bi-coastal CMC Mustang is found to be light on the scales in its first Texas event. Photo by Neil Breitenbach.



L-R: Adam Ginsberg, David Armstrong, and Todd Covini on 2 wheels. Image by Holly Donovan.

SUNDAY'S RACE #4 – held the AI and CMC tradition of an inverse grid based on finishing order of Race #4. With threatening skies and scattered rain drops falling, some in the field switched to their full tread RA1 tires. Due to on track events beyond NASA's control, the schedule delayed long enough that the rains subsided and the day got long. When the checkered flag dropped on the dry track, many wished they hadn't switched to rain tires. The battle for AI supremacy was fierce between Mike Patterson's LG Motorsports LS1 Camaro and John George's Griggs Racing Mustang. In the end, Patterson ended up taking the win. In CMC Eric Varner put traffic between him and the other CMC drivers and was able to take an amazing win after replacing the entire top end of his engine just 40 short hours prior.



Eric Varner's winning CMC Mustang in post race impound after Race #4. Image by Neil Breitenbach

POST RACE INSPECTIONS – Saturday, the CMC field was examined for front suspension. No violations were found. On Sunday, the AI field was inspected for frame & structural issues. No violations were found.

Pilot Program- Dyno Tech Stickers- The Texas Directors elected to have windshield dyno stickers made up and installed for the 2005 annual inspections as part of a pilot program. The dyno tech numbers filled in on all AI & CMC cars with a Sharpie pen made it much easier for everyone involved for impound tech and scaling. Racers affecting their HP/TQ/WT numbers are expected to recertify and renew their dyno decals.



HARD LUCK AWARD- goes to Steve Kent and Rob Liebbe for building their CMC car as a team the entire off season with the anticipation of competing toward the CMC championship only to have a racing incident in Friday's practice take them out of the weekend contention.

CONCLUSION- A huge congratulations is in order to all of our rookies. Jeff Brooks, Corey Rueth, Glenn Landrum and Nicholas Runyon proved they drive with the top drivers, forcing everyone to stay on their toes!

NASA Texas AI and CMC racing is growing in 2005. The 2005 schedule is posted at www.nasatx.com.

TRACK RECORDS*

MSR	1:22.179	Michael Bell (AI)	03/05/05
MSR	1:24.98X	Marshall Mosty (AIX)	03/06/05
MSR	1:25.802	Todd Covini (CMC)	03/06/05
TWS	1:54:714	Wayne Manor (AI)	09/26/04
TWS	2:01:391	Todd Covini (CMC)	04/03/04
Hallett	1:26.478	Buddy Cisar (AIX)	08/14/04
Hallett	1:25.617	John George (AI)	08/14/04
Hallett	1:31.366	Adam Ginsberg (CMC)	08/14/04

** Track records only recorded from races in race trim.*

2005 NASA TEXAS AI CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

1	388	George (AI)
2	370	Patterson (AI)
3	330	Pedersen (AI)
4	300	Donovan (AI)
5	300	Lyons (AI)
6	250	Bell (AI)
7	104	Brooks (AI)
8	0	Manor (AI)
9	0	Armstrong (AI)
11	0	Dickey (AI)
12	0	Carr (AI)
13	0	Johnson (AI)
14	0	Mosty (AI)
15	0	Mixon (AI)
16	0	White (AI)
17	0	Love (AI)
18	0	Kuhn (AI)
19	0	Kinman (AI)
20	0	King (AI)
21	0	Ivers (AI)
22	0	Costas (AI)
23	0	Brannen (AI)

2005 NASA TEXAS AIX CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS:

1	308	Mosty (AIX)
2	0	Cisar (AIX)
3	0	Hahn (AIX)

*** AI points per NASA CCR rule 22.1 and AI rule 10
100 for 1st...90 for 2nd...85 for 3rd, etc.
4 points for qualifying Pole position

2004 NASA TEXAS CMC CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL SEASON POINTS:

1	395	Covini/Breitenbach (CMC)
2	390	Varner (CMC)
3	381	Ginsberg/Tanner (CMC)
4	375	Runyon (CMC)
5	365	Landrum (CMC)
6	277	Rueth (CMC)
7	0	Kent/Liebbe (CMC)
8	0	Zazzarino (CMC)
9	0	McComb (CMC)
10	0	Turner (CMC)
11	0	Mosty (CMC)
12	0	Tanner (CMC)
13	0	Bishop (CMC)
14	0	Casas (CMC)
15	0	Penney (CMC)

***CMC points per CMC rule 9
100 for 1st...97 for 2nd...95 for 3rd, etc.
1 point for qualifying Pole position

For more information, the following websites should be able to answer any of your licensing/rules/racing questions:

www.nasaproracing.com
www.nasatx.com
www.americanironracing.com
www.camaromustangchallenge.com

If you still have questions, feel free to contact the following at any time!

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