

THE Z EDLINE

July/August 2000

Z-FEST August 27, 2000



• NEW BIGGER LOCATION! •
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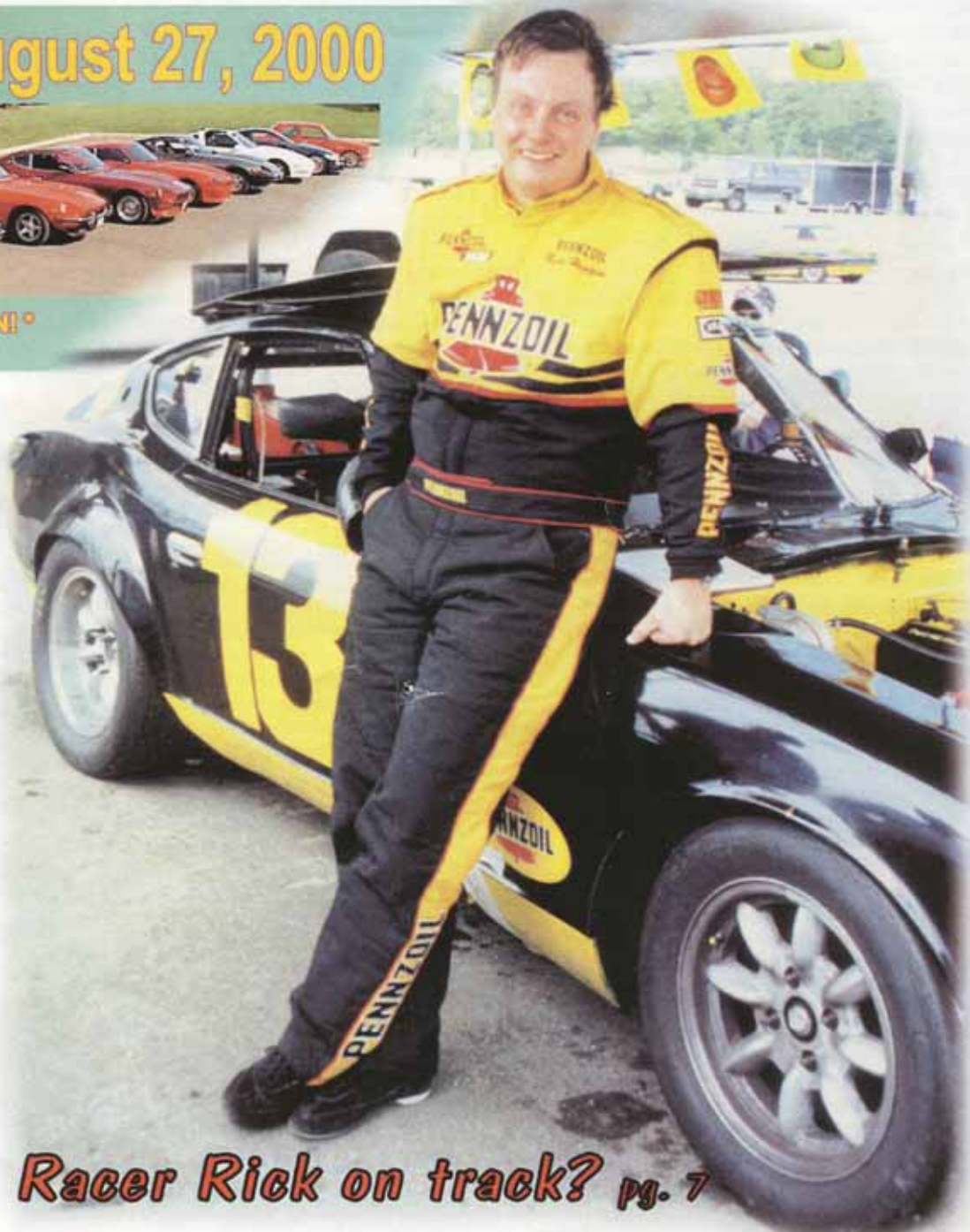
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ONTARIO
Z-CAR



ONTARIO Z-CAR OWNERS ASSOCIATION
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A VINTAGE RACE WEEKEND AT MOSPORT FOR THE ONTARIO Z-CAR TEAM FROM LONDON/ CHATHAM

JUNE 30 – JULY 2, 2000

FEATURING: 1971 Datsun 240Z (formerly SCCA - E production & vintage car)
"RacerRick" Higgins, Driver
"Awesome" Bill Dawson, Co-Owner
Malcolm Haylock, Crew Chief
Robb Bichener, Head Mechanic
Kyle Bichener, Mechanic's assistant
Melanie Bichener, Official Photographer

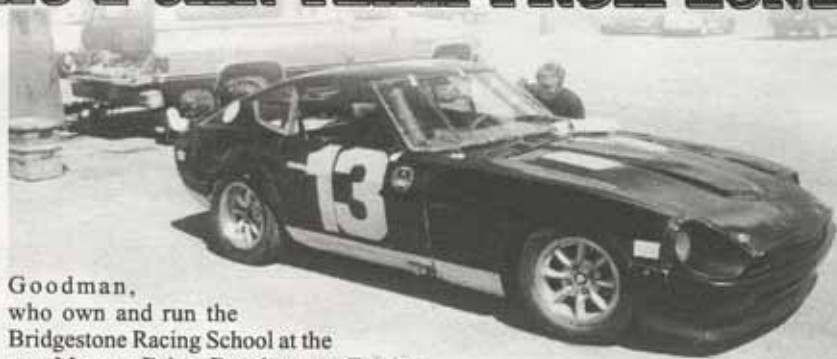
Thursday June 29, 2000

The saga begins on Thursday night when I left Windsor to pick up the racecar, trailer and truck in Chatham at Bill's house. The final mechanical work was being completed, by the time we loaded the racecar on the trailer and I got underway it was 10.30pm. Bill had to go to work on Friday; he would join us Friday night.

It didn't take long for trouble to occur. As soon as I got onto highway 401, at Hwy 40, the 401 is under construction and down to one lane for 15kms east of Chatham. No sooner had I got onto 401 than we came to a stop! We sat for about 15 minutes, I asked the trucker behind me what was happening, he had a CB, and told me there was an accident up ahead that they were in the process of clearing. Great start to the weekend! Eventually, around midnight I arrived at Rick's for the night. The alarm went off at 4.30am! Oh that hurt! We were on the road heading for Mosport before 5.30am.

Friday, June 30, 2000

We arrived initially to visit Melanie, my daughter, who is working for Brett and Charlie



Goodman, who own and run the Bridgestone Racing School at the new Mosport Driver Development Track at 9.00am.

We then went to VARAC race registration and then into Mosport to find a pit location. We found a nice pit location in the lower pits, below the new washroom, on a piece of asphalt. We initially had to clean the car and put our new numbers on the car, Number "13" and prep it for scrutineering. Scrutineering went okay, except Rick's brand new, custom painted helmet, was found to be illegal! (a Simpson factory mess-up!) So our first job was to borrow a helmet for Rick.

After checking the racecar's vitals, RacerRick was sent out after lunch for his first practice session, on the newly changed 2.4 miles of Mosport's twisting, undulating racetrack. On his return the news was not good, the car was almost undriveable, lap times exceeded, two minutes!

So Rick and myself had to go to work, the rest of the crew was not due until Saturday. Once underneath the car we found many problems. The front and rear struts were loose, the coil over spring adjuster's had backed off, due too many miles on the trailer, the car had been to lapping session's at Shannville and most recently at Waterford Hills. Due to the adjuster issues, the car had no suspension and behaved on the track rather like a Go-kart! Hence the reason it was undriveable. We decided to eyeball the spring adjuster height. About 3 inches in the rear and two inches front, this was to be our starting point. Hose clamps were added so the adjusters could not back again. We also took some front sway bar out, moved the adjustment out two notches.

Back on the track for the last sessions of the day, the car was better but still bad, our times were down in the mid fifties now, still a long way to go. Rick was not a happy racer! One of the problems the Hoosier tires we were using were over three years old, kind of stones, you might say. Good news here, because Bill was bringing new tires which were installed for the rest of the weekend's activities.

Saturday, July 1, 2000

Saturday morning we did some more adjusting

on spring heights, sway bars, after we measured the ride height, (before and after load) following the suggestions of Robb our head mechanic, this proved to be one of our key adjustments. Tightened the loose nuts holding in the strut cartridges. The clutch slave cylinder was replaced with a borrowed one from Tom Bork. A colder range of spark plug was installed, for the races on Saturday. The race was okay, running better, lap times in the high 40's, a 20 second improvement from were we started!

We also found that the rear anti-roll bar (sway bar) was binding, which was causing the rear end to be very twitchy in the turns. The last race on

Saturday was the one-hour enduro, which included a mandatory 5-minute pit stop.



Greg Stage had his 240Z there co-driving with him were Ron and John, all of whom are OZC members. Also present was Tom Bork, from Buffalo, New York with his immaculate 240Z, his co-driver, Paul is an ex Barber-Saab driver. Bill Dawson and Diane Dale purchased this black and yellow Datsun 240Z from Robbie Bork, Tom's brother, over this past winter.

Our car with Rick doing all of the driving ran flawlessly, We managed to get into the Mid forties during the race, Greg and Tom's 240Z were lapping in the mid to low forties. Rick had trouble with gearbox and could only get 4th and 5th in the competition box, a real detriment when coming out of Moss's and corner 10 onto the front straight. The car also finished the race with a huge vibration in it. The clutch was inoperable. So back to work we went for Sunday morning.

Sunday, July 2, 2000

Robb and I spent most of Sunday morning under the racecar. The driveshaft was found to have way too much play in it at the gearbox tail shaft.

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Rick at speed



VINTAGE continued from pg. 7

We changed the driveshaft for a spare, after having to shorten the nose, because it was about 1/4 inch too long. We tightened the loose motor mounts, from the big vibration. Re set the front and rear anti roll bars, added less bar to the rear and more to the front, lowered the rear ride height by 1/2 inch. Adjusted tire pressures all around. Once again we were ready to race.

A big improvement was found by our driver and for the first time all weekend he had a good race, we wound up third in class close behind the Z'eds of Tom (Paul driving) and Stage. Rick's lap times dipped into the low forties. I think we finished about 6 or 7 overall in the group 4 race.

Paul driving Tom's Z'ed set the fastest time of the weekend for a Z'ed at 1' 40.66". Stage's car was not far behind. Our fastest lap was around 1'42", our car suffered from a "legal" 2.4 litre motor which is built to SCCA - E production rules, stock front brakes, 280 disc's on the rear, SU carbs, 1/2" lift camshaft etc. (Stock lift is .480") Rick's superb driving made up most of the difference. Those of you who have seen Rick drive the Can-Am Astur will understand what I mean about his driving abilities.

During Saturday's Enduro, Rick had a long dice with a Lotus Super 7, (1600 dohc) driven by an older gentlemen from the USA. Rick had his line shut off, rather severely on more than one occasion, if it hadn't been a vintage race Rick might have employed some other tactics. (Dale Earnhardt style)

The final race of the weekend was for all closed wheel classes, for the Harewood Acres Memorial Trophy. For those of you to young to remember, Harewood Acres was the converted airfield that served as the main racing venue in Ontario, prior to the opening of Mosport in 1961. Harewood Acres racetrack was located near Cayuga, Ontario.

Because many competitor's, including Greg and Tom had gone home, the Lotus Super 7 was on the pole and Rick in the Black and Yellow #13 240Z was on the outside front row. There were about 25 cars in the field. We had made a cou-

ple more adjustments to the car, but the clutch was barely working, so much so that Rick had to start the car in gear, apparently with the comp gearbox you need a special, longer throw out bearing.

The race started well, Rick kept even with the Lotus through turn one, on the outside, so he was in perfect position for turn

two, for Rick to take the lead coming out of turn 2. Rick kept the lead for the first several laps with the Lotus buzzing at his bumper. The Lotus accelerated quicker and had better braking, the Datsun had better top end speed, plus Rick's home track advantage, meant he could carry more corner speed to offset the faster and more nimble Lotus.

This lasted until they started lapping slower cars, unfortunately Rick caught some traffic approaching corner 9, Rick had to back off slightly, the Lotus took full advantage and started to pass Rick coming out of 10 and finished the pass on the front straight. Rick then followed the Lotus for a few laps. Rick made his pass for the win, by making a daring outside pass at corner 2. Many team and club members who watched the race from corner 2 observed this. This was the pass of the year, very similar to Villeneuve's infamous pass on Michael Schumaker, when Jacques won the World Championship.

With one lap to go the Lotus made one more bonzai pass attempt on the front straight, trying to dive down the inside, but Rick out braved

nouncer, for the last few laps in the control tower. Robb was almost jumping over the pit wall each time Rick went by in the lead, with the little red Lotus 7 all over Rick's bumper. The last lap of the race was Rick's fastest of the entire W/E, consequently Rick was able to finish about 100 yds ahead of the Lotus. Rick was not going to be beaten on his home track this day!!

At the end of the race in our pit stall there was extreme excitement, euphoria, and many well



wisher's came by to congratulate a beaming Rick, on his great drive and race. I don't think he has stopped smiling yet (Tuesday).

What had started as a disaster early in the weekend ended with great success. This was due to a lot of hard work by the team members and other assorted volunteers, who contributed, time, effort, sweat, some spilt blood and some lost temps, but in the end team-work paid off. It shows you should never give up no matter how bad the situation looks.

The only disappointing note was that no Eastern OZC members came out to Mosport. Everybody that didn't come missed a great weekend, the weather was perfect the entire time which in itself is unusual at Mosport. Once again the OZC represented by Rick and Greg, Ron and John equated themselves very well. Overall the 240Z's performed and were driven magnificently all weekend. Greg's 240Z and Tom's had some great dicing throughout the weekend along with their co-drivers. Tom Bork's 240Z had the most amazing sound as it shifted at about 7500 rpm on the front straight, Bill and I on the pit wall, looked at each other everytime and just smiled after Bork's car flew by us with the exhaust note echoing off the surrounding countryside. What an elixir. Now back to reality and work!!

Author; Malcolm D Haylock.

Pictures, courtesy of Awesome Bill and Rick Higgins.

After the incident



him and kept the lead all the way to the checkered flag! It was the best race of the weekend with spectators and officials cheering throughout the race. There was more passing unseen by your intrepid reporter during the race between the Datsun and the Lotus. I did see some side by side action on the back straight leading into corner 8 from the control tower.

Melanie and Kyle had a great view of the action and for photography at corner 9 for this last race. Robb, who I left on the pit wall when I went to visit with Glen Butt, the track an-

Membership EXPIRING? If your membership expires September 30th, **you can save alot of work for those involved if you pay before it expires!** You can check your renewal date by looking at either your membership card, or the upper right of the address label that got this Zedline to you.
- Thankz in advance.