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Major Brown Jr. in a VW Jetta leads a Mazda RX-7 in his first Time Trials at Pacific Raceways on July 15.

The time of your life



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Time Trials participants head down the main straight at Pacific Raceways.

Time Trials reveals secrets to happiness

BY MAJOR BROWN JR.
Special to NSCN

Since this was my first time on Pacific Raceways at lapping speed, it goes without saying that I had a blast. I had driven several parade laps in the past but I soon realized it only helped me to know the direction of the course!

The ground school was a big help in preparing me for the day. Chief instructors Dave Conover and David Jackson provided some great insight into the course, including the location of each bump. The school was a bit overwhelming but I was a studious



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“The track was both intimidating and exhilarating,” said Time Trials novice Jeff Dunning, above. “But the SCCA prepared us with ground school and a driving coach for two laps.” Below, Dunning gets some cool-down pointers after leaving the track.

student and spent a few hours viewing videos the next few days. When I arrived Friday, I felt prepared but a little leery of the concrete walls and short run-offs areas (when compared to Bremerton).

I don't have a fast car but it's fast enough to get into trouble. This allows me to hone my skills, yet hopefully avoid a major catastrophe if I miss a braking point or totally blow a corner. This happened once going into turn 2 but I was able to whoa it down enough to make the turn. Whew!

I've only been a member of SCCA for a few years and my only regret is that I didn't join years ago. Like most people, I wasn't aware that the only requirement for getting started in Club Trials was to complete a PDX and get signed off to drive solo. Although I participate with other car clubs, I have the most fun at SCCA events. Initially I didn't like the idea of timed runs as I thought it spoiled



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the fun. Now I can't wait to review the results after each session.

As I've read and heard continuously, my fastest times are never when



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Major Brown Jr. heads down the front straight at Pacific Raceways in his first Time Trial. Below, Time Trials entrants line up in the hot grid before entering the track.

I'm aggressive with the car. Instead, my quicker times always results when I'm smooth and somewhat relaxed. I've also found that a wet course forces me to be smooth since

the alternative is an off-course excursion or a date with the concrete wall! Of course, after Jackson threatened to display a pink flag for slow cars on Friday, I immediately dropped my

time by over three seconds. Just demonstrates that the right motivation works, too!

Somehow I always seem to be in the right place at the right time. When I took PDX a few years ago, Conover was my instructor. At each event, he makes a point to stop by to say hello and see how things are going. On Friday morning, he offered me to ride along while the cones were set out. When we made our first run, I was in the car behind Dave so I simply had to follow him to practice the correct line. Hmm, either I'm getting a lot of attention from the chief driving instructor because I need it, or Conover is a true professional. I think the later.

Big kudos to Tom, Sherri and the rest of the staff (especially the flaggers) for all the work they do. Organizing any event is never easy and it takes a lot of work. As participants, we simply enjoy the fruits of their labor. I sincerely appreciate their efforts and I know others feel the same. Thank you, SCCA.



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