

# Lapping It Up

We're into the final leg of the One Lap of America - can our very own Big Chris finally take the class win?

Words: Chris Smith Photography: Chris Smith, Brent White, Bryan Humphries



Once we had the Mustang in the garage at NCM, I left Brent going over it whilst I took the scooter out on track for a re-con. The weather was great, everyone was in good spirits and the first session started. I literally gave it my all, some dubious braking points meant some "off the track time," no impacts or major drama but I cocked up; my bad. Tracey Ramsey in his 370Z trounced it, he came in first with the Swedes finishing second and us in third - I wasn't a happy bunny to say the least, and worse still Brent looked like someone stole his beer, he was pissed off. The afternoon session was just the same, I don't know what happened, but the result of the morning was repeated again. NCM, as per last year, seemed to be my Kryptonite, or maybe I just sucked that day...

The mood on the transit leg that day was sombre, I thought Brent was going to leave me at a lay-by after my epic fail, but that's the thing about a good friend, isn't it? After four continuous hours of piss-taking and basically telling me how badly I performed, like a friend does, he told me tomorrow

would be different. We got to Road America after a night's drive and the obligatory Bud Lite or two upon our arrival at our hotel was consumed.

I love Road America, it's truly magnificent. The course is for the nutty methanol-snorting racer - flat out, then brake like \*\*ck and hope your vehicle can manage the punishment. I was already fed up with the previous day and all of a sudden we needed

(Top left) A rogue Camaro joins the One Lap Pack. (Below) 280z with small black Chevy.

the points, we needed a good result. Bob Knoerzer with his hot GTR Nissan had travelled up with Todd Treffert in the black 911. Bob had blown his transmission at NCM, but Ty and Derek had "U-Hauled" the thing to Ty's shop in Illinois and changed it, working through the night. In hindsight, a shite result the day before wasn't as bad as some people's NCM troubles. The main thing was they got the car back to the



track and the boys carried on, a major fix in limited time, epic.

This track is sooooo fast, not for the faint-hearted and I have to say, I felt at home here. Basically you need to have something wrong with you to do well here in my eyes, a psychological issue or a lack of respect for your car and also yourself. If it goes wrong at Road America, it goes wrong in epic fashion! All I can tell you is the morning session was awesome, I hammered the crap out of the car and hit the rev limiter in fifth on the main straight, clocking over 150mph. The afternoon session was just as good - somehow I had found my legs and it all came together, and another epic run had put a smile on Brent's face as well. First in class both times, it was great! I felt bad about the hammering the car took, it smelt worse than a \$20 hooker at the end of a hard night...

We headed out of Road America with some of the other competitors and into town for a well-earned drink. Everyone was in great spirits, not because the times were good, but because car and driver were also in →



one piece. The Mustang needed a rest but the race wasn't over, we still had Great Lakes Dragway and Autobahn Country Club before the finish in South Bend. Jim Bob in the yellow C5 'Vette came in first in class in the Drag Race with Brent coming in second, Chris and Christian in the other Brenspeer car came in third - these boys were still hot on our heels, points were getting close. Shane Denney in the SRT8 Challenger attempted a burn out but didn't use the bleach box's moist conditions to break the car out. The weather was hot and traction was immense, and the only thing that burnt out was his rear end, blowing fluid all over the start line, a hero.

Autobahn Country Club was basically going to decide if we could pull this off and take the class win. Would the Swedish Mafia or Tracey in the 370Z or Jim Bob in the C5 pip us to

the post? Autobahn Country Club was upon us, so soon we would know.

I wasn't dicking around that morning, I did two laps on the scooter then hijacked Todd's push bike for some more research. The South Track was the first hurdle that morning, a fantastic facility and a great driver's course with more turns than straights, a far cry from Road America, and so was the morning's result: the Swedes came in first with Tracey in the 370Z close behind and then us. Not the result I wanted... nor Brent. We could still do this, but the question was, would we?

The North Track was the afternoon's offering, and I seemed to gel with this one a lot better. A lot of late breaking and throwing the car into the turns a bit harder than I liked seemed to do the job. I managed to hunt a GTS Viper down on the final lap which made us

smile - we came in first in class with the Swedish Mafia hot on our heels, and we were made up. I headed back to the pits and past the boys in the 911, they weren't smiling at all. I walked back with Brent and asked what was up. They had bent and sheared a half shaft - that's what nearly double the power does for you in the 911 world. Todd and Ty were out for another year without finishing, a real shame with only one day to go, we were gutted for them, and left Bob to console them. I think they murdered and buried him as Bob's bedside manner can be an acquired taste!

We set off to South Bend and kept checking the results on the website to see if we were good, at the point we passed another competitor's car at a "Titty Bar" (apparently a late lunch) we got the results... You couldn't wipe the smile off our faces, basically we had accumulated enough points that

(Opposite top) Mr American Top Gear Rutledge Wood, and Ty & Brent catching some rays.  
(Opposite bottom) Some of the crew at Road America, below that the Roush Mustang of Scot Chapman.



if I screwed up the skid pan in the morning and came last, we would still win! We pulled up back at the hotel we had started at a week before, then the drinking started. We ate, drank, and generally misbehaved, but hey ho, so did everyone. I woke up feeling like I'd been beaten with a stick, everything hurt, and my head was a mess. We headed down to Tire Rack for the finish event, some of the Brenspeer boys turned up and George had traded the dyno of the workshop for a BBQ grill, food flowed and saved us both from the previous night's antics. I put the Mustang around the track for the last time, I won't tell you where we came, but we finished... and with enough points for the class win!

All of Brenspeer's efforts with the car had paid off, and for me, well, I was a happy boy after chasing the win for this class since 2012. Brent and I took it in turns to drift and do burnouts in the car leaving just enough tread on the tyres to get us back to his house. My missus had flown in for the end of the event and we partied at Brent's house with friends and family for the

rest of the day and night - an epic end to an epic adventure. The Swedish Mafia came in second place which was amazing, giving Brenspeer the 1-2 finish, so a big well done to these guys.

At this point I would like to say thanks to the other competitors for making this event one of the best on the planet, and Brock Yates and his team for organising it. Also to the sponsors for taking care of us - Richard and Aaron at Gas Monkey, Tommy at 360 Wraps, Guy Nichols at Tru7, Continental Tires North America, Keith and Dan at Kedan Logistics, McLeod Clutches, Roush Performance and Kooks Headers, all of these companies and people helped us fulfil our ambition and succeed. Thanks to Chris and Christian for dropping everything and flying in from Sweden to experience the event and, last but not least, to Brent and his crew, for building a car that just keeps delivering the numbers and doing it without turning wrenches on it, you guys really know how to build a car, you really are the Mustang Gurus bar none. **ACM**