

Mincomp's Corner

January 21, 1994



So what about the run-offs, I don't know where to start with this report other than to say it was a miserable situation for both myself and the Fortech team. (But a great Mini and Team Mini Mania happening as fellow Team Mini Mania member Richard Krause won the event!) My week started on a good note. Sunday test day and Monday practice. I was turning OK times considering I was learning the new track configuration. However coming into the pits on my cool down lap I was trailing oil from a hole punched in the front of my gearbox!

The double trick bolt that holds the idler gear assembly together broke and got kicked out the front of the gearbox by the #4 connecting rod, not a problem, just an inconvenience!

Tuesday went well as I remember for the qualifying session I installed the motor I anted to run in the race and went out to qualify. Well I got to turn 5 where the engine seized the exhaust valves in the guides. Now this is a problem that I had earlier in the year with this motor but thought it was found and fixed! Well until now anyway. We did some work on the head and went out for Thursday's qualifying, got to turn 5 on the first lap and this time it broke a cam belt! On the next lap the Fortech Mini had a coming together with a GT4 car and did a major amount of damage to the Mini, I went up to survey the situation and told Mike that if he needed help, he knew where to find me! I then went back to my pits to work out my personal nightmare!

Well, to make a very long story short, we both made it to the race. But now it's raining and Richard Krause and his Mini are on the pole. Bill Cooper and the Fortech Mini are 2nd and I'm starting dead last! And it's still raining!! The rain is not coming down real hard but the track is pretty wet. Unlike the lead two cars that are starting the race on slicks, I chose to start on rain tires. I have been criticized by a few for this decision but my reasoning was such: the lead two cars were the only ones I was concerned about and all the others separating us were just moving obstacles separating me from my objective. I figured they were going to race nose to tail on any dry line that should develop and thus to get to the front I would have to race off the line and thus in the wet! I still stand by my decision and would do it again. In the race I got 4th place by the 5th lap. On the 6th lap, the third place car (last year's winner Jeff Wirth) was right in front of me. On lap 7 I retired from the race with a broken pushrod! Krause and Cooper battled to the end with Krause making the least number of errors! Worth finished second and Copper 3rd.

Richard drove a great race and my helmet goes off to him! He came and he won! It was really great to see Richard drive with the fire that he did. He brought the Mini back as the National Champion marquee!

On to next year!

Bill Gilmore