

Mincomp's Corner

March, 95



I really couldn't think of any one theme to write about, so instead I will just write down a collage of whatever pops into my head.

Piston rings, not much ever get said about these important little things. I personally like to use Total Seal Gapless rings, both on race and street motors. As the name implies, they have no ring gap, well kind of. Actually, only the second ring is gapless. It's too bad they can't develop a gapless ring that will work in the top groove, but they haven't as of yet. The basic concept of this type of ring is pretty simple. If there is not a gap, there is no place for the oil or compression to pass by. The gapless

ring design actually works best with a crankcase negative pressure system, but this is not legal in most forms of racing, except for Drag Racing. (Those of you who have noticed a hose running from valve cover to a check valve on the exhaust, that's what that is all about.) Gapless rings are available to fit most pistons, but because of the size limitations of the gapless design, some racing pistons with extra thin rings will have to have the ring grooves machined wider. In the end it is worth it. On a race prepared motor, I have found that they have quite a long life. Depending on how much racing is done in a year, they can last up to two or three seasons. The Total Seal oil control ring is also quite a nice design. It does an excellent job with a minimum amount of tension on the block.

Fuel cells and fire systems in Vintage Racing? It's about time! I remember showing up at a Vintage Race at Willow Springs in 1987 with a Mini that I had built with an SCCA legal roll cage. It had a fuel cell and fire system, and they tried to stop me from running the car stating that it was not in the spirit of the rules. Rules my eye! I asked if they wanted me to leave my helmet off also and that was the end of the discussion, they let us run.

Most fire systems come with only two nozzles. I buy a third one, mount one in the engine compartment aimed at the carb/exhaust, mount one in the driver's area, and mount the third in the fuel cell area.

When mounting a fuel cell, be sure it's mounted securely, and don't cut corners by using rubber fuel hose and clamps; use steel braided hose with proper hose end and fittings.

Mincomp Race Report:

My first race of the year was a Double National at Phoenix Raceway, January 14-16. Saturday started quite well. Right out of the trailer I was pleased with the way my car was working. Joe Huffaker driving the Foretech Mini, and I qualified side by side, in the middle of an oddly grouped bunch of cars. Joe and I were having a great race, even though we were both having some difficulties, I with an oil leak that was getting onto my brakes and tires, and Joe having an ignition problem. But we were still having a heck of a good time, until I shut my engine off. My oil pressure was just not right. During the second race, with the second engine, I had the same problem; I seemed to have developed an oil pick-up problem. Instead of the oil pressure rising with the RPM, it would get lower. Not the correct theory!

I'm still working on the situation at the moment, and I should be able to report on it in greater depth next month. But for now, I'm off to firebird for a National race this weekend, so I hope to have some positive things to report next time!

Bill Gilchrist