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TORCHMATE RACING OBLITERATES COMPETITION IN CEDAR CITY

You better take a picture because this does not happen every day – Brad Lovell

Some weekends everything comes together just the way it was planned. When the team hit the road for We-Rock Round #2 in Cedar City, UT of course they all wanted to individually finish on top, but could it come together for the whole team at a single event? Torchmate Racing fought hard, took many risks, and the results were what the team hoped for: Jesse Haines 1st Place Unlimited, Brad Lovell 1st Place Pro-Modified, and Bill Kunz 2nd Place Pro-Modified. A new benchmark has been set for the team which will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to surpass.

Jesse Haines went to work over two days against the top drivers in the unlimited class. We-Rock penalizes rear steering vehicles but the feature allows #199, and others like it, to pull off some amazing maneuvers. One small slip on the first day put Haines and Howard in 3rd but the competition was less than half over. While the pair remained in 3rd, they managed to close the gap on the leader to a mere 6 points. A lot can happen in the shootout and the pressure is always intense. Haines kept a cool head and put together an amazing run scoring a -15. It was all anyone could do to try and beat him and the closest was a -9 which put Haines in a tie for the win. This is as close as it gets and the rules state that the tie-breaker is the shootout course. Haines brought home his first win this year and set the stage for an epic Torchmate finish.

The points spread was not nearly as close in the Pro-Modified class. Roger and Brad Lovell were the only Pro-Mod team to finish all the courses on Saturday giving them a 24 point lead. Kunz and Shaffer, on the other hand, were running strong but grenaded a differential and were unable to finish a course. A lightning fast repair aided by the whole team got #28 back together and Kunz was able to stay in the lead group as the sun set on day #1.

Sunday was intense as a radio problem caused the #232 AMSOIL / Torchmate Ranger to hit a couple cones on the first run. This immediately cost the Lovells their huge lead and the hunt was again on. As 22 Pro-Mod teams rotated around the courses, the Torchmate sponsored rigs remained upright and between the cones. A strong effort by Kunz and Shaffer assured #28 its first trip to the finals. "I knew it was going to be tight," recalled Brad Lovell, "I was really worked up about a bonus climb that nobody had made. I was asking anyone and everyone if we should try it. We did and that is the only reason we had a lead at all. It was a good gamble." Kunz and Shaffer got low score on an astonishing three courses but the consistency of the Lovells gave them a slight edge going into the shootout.

The Torchmate lead was so great that Lovell and Kunz had the top two spots wrapped up before they even started the shootout. With nothing to lose, the only thing to be settled was a rivalry inside the team. Kunz entered the rocks and tried hard to slip through a daunting bonus. With no luck, he hit the cone but continued to work the machine skillfully through the course, once again setting the low score. The Lovells

only needed to repeat the run to end with a victory. While #28 beat them by two points in the shootout, the #232 AMSOIL / Torchmate Ford took home its second We-Rock win this year and a strong lead in the 2009 series. "We did well because everyone on the team worked hard and found a way to contribute," said Bill Kunz, "It is a great bunch of people and a great sport. I am really thankful to everyone out there who pitched in and helped us fix our car."

Torchmate Racing remains in high gear as the Brad and Roger Lovell prepare to race their first CHCA Hillclimb this weekend while the #7231 desert truck is prepped for the legendary Baja 500 in early June. Stay tuned for more exciting news from the massive 2009 Torchmate Racing campaign.

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