



Jesse Haines Sums Up the Past Month in Offroad

2010 has been one of the busiest seasons of my career. So far I have competed in 12 competitions this year with 2 different vehicles. Maintaining and prepping both cars for this season has been overwhelming at times. It's nice when everything goes as planned, but things rarely go as planned when you're racing 2-3 weekends a month.

July 30-31 - We Rock Western Finals in Tooele, UT

Okay, well technically it wasn't August, but close since it was a night event!

I've struggled to find a consistent spotter since moving to Nevada almost 3 years ago. This year has been a bit of a struggle to know who was going to be on the other end of the radio when I was rockcrawling. In my last Cal Rocs event I had a new spotter that I was planning to keep for the rest of the season. Just a few days prior to the We-Rock event in Tooele, UT I got word that AJ would not be able to make the trip to Utah. Since Creighton King from Maxxis Tires lives near Tooele, I asked him to find me a last minute replacement spotter. Creighton made a few phone calls and found someone to help me out. Creighton didn't just find "someone". He found me Craig Stumph, founder of UROC, championship winning driver, spotter, and all around rockcrawling legend! It had been 4 years since Craig had been involved in any kind of competition. I met Craig at the brand new Miller Motorsports event site just hours before the event. We seemed to be on the same page, and day 1 went well. We had a small lead after the first 4 courses of the weekend. Friday's courses were a little easy so course designer Lil' Rich Klein stepped it up on Saturday with some very challenging obstacles. We met the challenge, but so did some of the other teams that were going after the win. With only a 16 point lead going in to the shootout it would be a tight finish, but Craig and I were able to hold on for a 10 point victory! It was a fun weekend, and I heard Craig say many times throughout the weekend how good it was to be out rockcrawling again, how much he loved the sport, and how much fun this was. It was great for me to be able to give him that opportunity AND be able to win the event.

July 14-15 - Lands End Hill Climb, Grand Junction, CO

The Lands End hill climb was the 3rd event in the Ultra 4 series, and was hosted by the CHCA, who also hosts the Pike's Peak hill climb. The Saturday before the event consists of organized practice runs and time trials. The race takes place on Sunday, and each team is given 2 runs with only the best time being used. My time at the hill climb was very short lived. On my first practice run the car blew an oil line and the motor developed some serious knocking just a 1/2 mile from the top of the 5 1/2 mile race course. Just when I thought I had all of the issues figured out something like this happens. We were done for the weekend, and it wouldn't leave me much time to get the car fixed for the Ultra 4 Stampede that was 4 weeks away.

July 21-22 - Cal ROCS Finals, Donner, CA

Just days after getting back from Colorado I had to gear up for the last Cal ROCS event of the season. I spent the week working on my Ultra 4 buggy to get the motor fixed and was in the

shop until 2:30 am the night before the comp. I showed up late to Donner, didn't have time to walk the courses, and I really wasn't focused on rockcrawling. It showed in our scores that day. We ended the day in 3rd place, 28 points out of first. I went home that night and realized what was happening. I wasn't focused, and I wasn't driving like I wanted to win. I called my spotter on the way to the event site on Sunday and told him we were going to do whatever it took to come back and win! With each course we cut in to the 28 point lead, but with 1 course left we found ourselves still trailing by 9 points. We knew what we had to do to win and it meant attempting a bonus line that no one in our class had yet attempted. We pulled off the tricky, off camber bonus flawlessly, and when the dust settled we took the win by 11 points capping off a 39 point comeback! We ended the season in 3rd place for the series. We won 3 of the 4 events, but finished last in the other event after a huge rollover ended my weekend. I guess if you ain't first you're last!

August 28th - Prerunning/Testing for the Stampede

Although this wasn't any type of competition or event I wanted to share with you the amount of work that goes in to getting ready for some of these races. After the motor blew up at Lands End I knew it would really be a push to get the car back together in time for the prerunning I had scheduled for the 28th. First I had to pull the motor from the car and see how extensive the damage was. The motor was out of the car and disassembled the Tuesday after I got back. My transmission builder also suggested that I pull the trans so he could go through it, so that came out of the car as well. The bottom end of the motor was trashed. The crank was damaged, the block was damaged, and multiple rods would need to be replaced. It would be cheaper and faster to find another motor although I would still need to swap the heads and cam. I searched for a motor, but finding another one for cheap was not happening. I had to get a complete motor locally for \$1250. I pulled the new motor apart only to find that it was in terrible condition. I feared that I would be stuck with that motor, but the junk yard I got it from swapped it out for me. The second motor was much better than the first they gave me. I spent this past week reassembling the motor, installing the motor and trans, and prepping the car. I worked every night until about 12:30, then worked all of Friday night and Saturday morning to get the buggy ready with only about 1 hour of sleep. The car ran without issues through rock trails and desert Saturday afternoon. I'll continue to test and prep the car in the following weeks to get ready for the race on September 11th. The race is expected to be the biggest thing in rock sports this year aside from King of the Hammers. I'm sure I'll see some of you there.

Jesse Haines