



Peed's Ups, Downs, and a Few Flips

I have not updated you all on the past rock crawling events and there have been several since my first event in Oroville, CA. There have been 2 more W.E. Rock Events and 3 Cal Rocks Events. The 2nd W.E. Rock event was in Tucson, AZ on another manmade course. The car was fixed just before leaving for the event. The engine block needed to be repaired from the Oroville event and it took longer than expected and promised. There was no time to test it before heading down to AZ. After our long journey in the RV to Tucson, Nick and I were ready for a successful weekend. Unfortunately things didn't go as planned. We started our first course to find out we could not make it past our first gates due to a toggle switch malfunction which caused the car to stall and not start again. Nick and a very generous spectator that knew a thing or two about cars offered to help fix the switch. Nick wired everything together and we were back! On our second course I got a little throttle happy and got stuck between a rock and a hard place and ended up on my side, therefore not finishing the course. On our third course we did really well but it was a long course so we were unable to make it to the finish in time. Things were not going well for us on the first day. On day two we began our first course to realize that our hydraulic steering pump gave out and it probably did so from day 1. Nick and I tried to turn the steering wheel together and it would not budge. We had to forfeit the rest of the day due to the fact that we did not have a replacement. Repairing it required going under the radiator which is hard to get to so it would have been a long repair. We had no choice but to watch the rest of the event before heading home.

The first and second Cal Rocks events came which were both right behind the Mustang Ranch. This natural course was very difficult with lots of big drops and challenging courses. With Nick spotting for Jesse, I had to start fresh with a new spotter. Mike Schaffer who, as you know, spotted for Bill offered to spot for the first event. He and I did great on our first day and headed into day two in 3rd place!!! Half way through day 2, Mike realized the rear lockers were not working. We finished well with a close roll over which I saved and the crowd went crazy! I landed on one tire and almost flipped on my lid but throttled out of it safely. It was a close one. We finished 7th out of about 10 competitors. On the second Cal rocks event, Schaffer was unable to spot so Bill volunteered. At first I didn't know how well that was going to work out but realized I needed a spotter. Why not? On our first course, we were short on time and we both had the jitters. We both got rushed and after a little miscommunication and panic, I ended up rolling down the hill. Almost 3 rolls and BAM!!! My lid hit a huge rock that ended up breaking two welds on the top of the chassis. With help from a few welders and a competitor

that had a welder on site, I came out with a sore neck but ready to go again. After we got that out of the way, we ended up doing really well with only timing out on two courses. Not bad for his first spotting competition and our first time working together. We ended up tying for 6th place out of 12 competitors!

The 3rd W.E. Rock Event took place at Donner Ski Ranch. This was also a natural course with great courses. The rocks here were no joke with huge drop offs and big climbs. One bad mistake could send you rolling down the hill. The first course was a huge climb where you had to stay in the throttle to get over. The car was not acting right from the moment we took it off the trailer. I thought it just needed to warm up since it was chilly that morning and there was still a lot of snow up there. Unfortunately, it never warmed up and never worked the way it should. When it was idle it sounded great but as soon as I gave it gas it sounded and felt like it would stall. We never made the climb because we had no throttle which caused me to go on my lid. No harm done though. Nick and his dad worked on the car thinking it might be a fuel pump or pressure issue. After using all of our break down time we had to forfeit the next two courses. It still would not work properly. Nick and his dad tried everything to fix the problem. The best we could do is feather into the throttle and then it would actually go. Nick had an idea to switch and I should spot for him. I figured why not! It wasn't like we were doing well and I should see the car from the outside anyway. Holy #@%, I got a new perspective and developed a lot of respect for the job of a spotter. I thought my lungs were going to pop. I was stacking rocks and climbing up and down the mountainous terrain. Nick did really well handling the car considering its condition. We did time out but we got through 3 gates smoothly. That course was a lot of fun and exciting to mix it up. We found out later that the computer in the car needed to be tuned to the high elevation that we were at in Donner.

This last weekend was the 3rd Cal rocks event and it was at Donner too. Previously, Jake sent the computer chip back to the manufacturer to have it tuned for high elevation. After that, Nick and Jake tested the car at that elevation and it seemed to work just fine. I of course did not have a spotter again for this event. Friday, just before the event, Mike Aiello agreed to take the spotter position. He definitely knows his way around the car and knows just how it works, but this was his first competition. It was hard for me to put my trust in yet another spotter but I knew he could handle the car. After our first course, we hit a couple cones and came out with a 20. I told Mike, "If we stay on all fours and never flip, I can't complain." He did what he could to make that happen. We stuck to that motto throughout the weekend. No turnovers and finish courses. There was only one course that we did not finish so I thought we did really well for our first time working together. We ended up placing 7th out of 12. Jesse ended up winning 1st place. Congratulations Jesse!!!!

On a side note, I got a few compliments on the trophies from competitors and fans who noticed in passing. Great job on the trophies to our production team! They seem to get better and better for each event. It sure would be nice if I could have one to put on my mantle, but I obviously need to improve. Thanks again to all who came to watch and help throughout these events. Torchmate really knows how to be a team whether it be at work or outside of work, and people notice. This can only help make this company grow in positive ways. Have a great day! Sorry for the novel. I will try to be more consistent and update you for each event in the future rather than 5 at a time.