

RUSS Pavey and KEN Lowe Race Report



Summary of our Slamfest Heathcote Race

I want to start by saying a very big thanks to all of our sponsors who help us so much and we are very proud to take their message to the starting line.



Leading up to the race

Lots of hard work by all of our crew, Peter Richards, Brett "Robbo" Roberts and both of us, Russell and Ken. After the Winternationals we took a hard look at the data and found we had tire temperatures of over 320F across the finish line. We had always thought wheel spin across the finish line would manifest itself in the driveshaft data but alas this is not so, a large difference in wheel speed will show up as driveshaft data, but not a constant slippage. We decided we needed a new wing on the car. The suspension travel data coupled with the rear spring compression data tells how much down force we are getting from our rear wing and although it was significant, it was just not enough and simply levering the wing up more would trade down force for drag. In the photos you may notice the new rear wing on the car. Data from the Winternationals also led us to change the combination a little, subsequent track testing and results from this weekend confirmed we are on the right track there as well.



Getting ready for the race - New paint and applying all the stickers and lettering. Last of the sponsor stickers not yet applied along with drivers name and numbers.

Friday 20 January 2012

Up early and bolt to the airport, arrive in Melbourne, pick up the rental car and make our way to the race track. We arrive at the track and unload the car and set up. Ken and Russ walk the track to examine what we are going to have to race on. Start line and out 200 foot is all concrete and fresh. Although smooth it needs scraping which the track prep crew starts doing, the track gets a good spray and a rub with the new special track prep machine, the only one in Australia. With this machine track prep and clean up time is reduced by 75%. Some day this machine will be the standard for all good race tracks. Big news is that Slamfest is building a second one to even further reduce any down time to the show and be able to do initial track prep quicker.



This is a serious track prep machine >>>>>

The tractor that pulls this must have a lot of power to pull the counter rotating tires while driving forward.

Saturday 21 January 2012

This is going to be a very hectic and very long day.

On startup we discover our ignition control is non functional. ... and we don't have a spare, such is the nature of teams with small budgets. These Top Doorslammers easily make well over 3000HP, some even claim up to 3500 HP, for us that is just a number but what it does mean is that to make these cars move so aggressively even on good tracks you have to slightly reduce the power in certain spots to keep from "blowing the tires off" meaning excessive wheels speed which leads to the dreaded tire shake. Add to this the challenge a track that is quite good for the first 200 foot and then the next 460 feet quite marginal in places. That is a challenge all the Top Door racers face... with ignition control. And ours doesn't work!! Resorting to some good old 1986 technology and some good driving on Russell's part we overcome it as much as we can.

First pass is not mandatory but we need it to establish our new base line.

Yep we needed it... car went out 80 feet and smoked the tires. (Wish we had the ignition control)

Second pass is the first and ONLY qualifying shot. I love one shot qualifying. You just have to be careful what you bring to the starting line. Our modest 4.41 ET put us in fifth position. That put us against a good racer Maurice Fabetti in round one.

Third pass is our first round of eliminations and is against Maurice Fabetti. Chasing our combination a bit we stepped it up to a 4.21 which defeated Fabetti who ran a 4.38

Our fourth pass was the second round of eliminations for us. We had Gary Phillips, as a 15 time Australian Champion, a very tough competitor who had qualified with a 4.11 so we had to be on our game. After the burnout Russ rolled in to stage and Gary followed him in as well. When the Pro Tree flashed all the yellows, Russ nailed a .026 light which is an absolutely stunning reaction time in a 2750 pound car with a clutch on a Pro Tree. The green bulb is the go light, the red bulb is the go home light, and Gary's go home light was well lit up.

Our fifth pass was the final round of eliminations and was always going to be tough. But the fact is, that none of the rounds was easy as every racer there was a world class competitor. In this round our opponent was current Australian Champion and record holder in both speed and ET, John Zappia. He had a better ET the previous round which gave him lane choice and he put us in the right lane which didn't bother us too much as we had seen some quick numbers run in the right lane. Wish we had our ignition timing computer operational right about now....

Once staged when the Pro tree flashed all of its yellow bulbs at once again Russ was away first and the cars were door handle to door handle at the half way point, it was a hell of a race and Russ had a hand full of steering wheel as the car drifted to the center line but the Zap machine got to the stripe (finish line) first. You could hear the yelling and clapping of the people in the grandstands. It was a good show and they appreciated it.

For those of you who know Heathcote is not a large track and does not have a large client base to draw from, but the crowd on the day was huge. We had spectators lined up three deep all day, with the team spending their time servicing the car while Russ spent the time speaking to the fans, even taking time to sit a few kids in the seat and take some photos. The car park was overflowing and all the seats in the stands were full and the lineup for food was ten wide and fifty deep. Russ went to get us some food and I thought we were going to have to send out a search party for him. The Slamfest series is a huge success.

After the presentations we went back to work on the car doing maintenance and getting ready for the next race. It was about 1am when we shoved the car in the trailer for the night.

Sunday 22 January 2012

Up not so early and Russ cooks breakfast for all, then we pile in the rental car and return to the track to finish up some maintenance, reload the car and tools and head for the airport.

Arrive there to find our flight has been cancelled and we have to make other arraignments. Book another flight with a different carrier for five hours later. Don't ya love sitting in airports.

Monday 23 January 2012

Ken is on the phone getting some new parts on order so we can strap them on before the next race in Portland Victoria at the South Coast Raceway on 4 February 2012. All of you are welcome to come and join us for a great weekend of drag racing.

TELEVISION Coverage

The race was filmed by AVE and will be on SBS soon. I don't have the schedule yet as it has not been announced. Please check the television schedule for air times.

For some video of the car launches go to http://www.kenlowe.com.au/video_page.htm and scroll to the bottom.

I have to apologize for not providing some action photos of the car but our small crew was so busy doing racing maintenance and talking to fans we didn't take any. There were plenty of cameras pointed our way as you can see the flashes in the videos but we didn't want to hold up the sponsors report for them to come though.

Next races

4th February 2012 Portland Victoria, South Coast Raceway

18th February 2012 Tasmania