

RUSS Pavey and KEN Lowe Race Report



SLAMFEST Palmyra 13 July 2013

We 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 FINISH line.



Our crew of Pete Richards, Brett "Robbo" Roberts all produced a terrific effort and are hugely responsible for any success that we have.

2 July – Russ and Ken meet at Vic's place to work on the Corvette. Ken has to leave early to pick up some things before the shop closes at 5pm but the diff is almost completely assembled and ready to go back in. The engine has been leak checked and Ken took the fuel system off to put it back on the bench for a full check. We plan to meet back here in a couple of days to complete the service but lots of work to do in the meantime.

5 July – Russ and Ken meet at Vic's place again. Ken had a bit of a tinker with the fuel system he took away a couple of days ago and the diff goes back in the car. Once completed, the car goes back in the trailer for the trip north next week.

12 July – The relay to the airport begins. Pete, Robbo and Ken fly together as Russ is coming up later in the day. The plan is to get there and get the car out of the trailer and set up. The plane is two hours late. When we get to Mackay it has just stopped raining and due to the weather we decide to leave the car in the trailer so there is little to do expect socialize with other racers. Vic invites us to dinner tonight and we pick up Russ and Caroline at the airport and go to dinner with Vic, Ben and all there crew.



13 July – Race day and the weather looks awful. We walked the track yesterday as a preliminary inspection knowing it was not fully prepared yet. The tire machine was working hard scrubbing off all the oxidized rubber in preparation for the glue. When we arrived today we discovered the local track prep people had sprayed “Gold Dust” on the track which is just rosin. To explain we will have to take a little trip back in time here. When drag racing was still young, back in the mid 1960’s,



any traction aid was considered illegal. Actually you were kind of lucky if they swept the track at all. Back then there was no such thing as a tire warming and cleaning procedure (burnout). But when the touring match race competitors (kind of like SLAMFEST is today) would arrive at a local race track to present their show for the locals they could do things not part of a sanctioned event. Part of this show was they could use traction aids. The racer would have their crews sprinkle rosin down and then do the burnout through the rosin to increase traction but the car must be in the burnout marks or they would not stick. All the locals wanted to race there on that day as their car would go much quicker than ever before. Just like SLAMFEST is today. The fact is that rosin needs to be melted in to be effective; otherwise it is just a dust that actually impairs traction. On older tracks with surface cracks and bad track acne the dust will settle in the grooves and will be sucked up by the tires passing over them at high speed. Palmyra is such a track. After spending all day on Friday prepping the track the SLAMFEST track prep crew were a bit upset over what was done before they arrived on Saturday. Friction testing proved the point later in the day.

An observation of the track at Palmyra it is plain to see the left lane is smoother with less acne and cracks and initially looks like the preferred lane. When we went out for the test session, we were first one out, (not Ken’s idea) and we originally selected the left lane based on initial observations, but after several DY0 Alters in the left lane blew the tires off on the release of the transbrake button Ken quickly decided to switch lanes. He wasn’t sure about the right but the left looked pretty bad right from the start line. Our burnout in the right lane was scary as the car jumped right up on the tires, spinning them easily and producing no smoke!!! Not a good sign! Once the burnout was complete Russ rolled in to prestage, Ken washed the ice off the throttle butterflies with the antifreeze, then activated the data logger, the timing controller and charged the lock up on the clutch and then Russ rolled into full stage. Just to try to get the car down the track, Ken had a lot of timing out of the engine, and a heap of clutch out of the bellhousing and we agreed to launch the car at very, very low RPM (to our normal). The car moved out 1.33 seconds and blew the tires off. After Russ shuffled a heap of steering wheel through his hands and he kept it off the wall. Wow!! The ET was only a 5.67 at 83 mph. Usually the traction



improves as the day progresses and we were hoping to hop it up a little for the qualifying round.... That's not going to happen here today!!

For qualifying we are assigned the left lane. Ken takes out heaps more timing and clutch and puts more fuel in the engine. We are now at a place we have never been!! Ken says kind of jokingly "I hope it starts." We are paired with Zap and on the step of the throttle we go straight to the stripe and get a 4.26 at 171.12 number on the board. Zap gets a 4.31 for his effort. Our 4.26 is second in qualifying to Grant O'Rourke's 4.20 with the rest of the field spread out behind us. Chris Diggles commented on the public address system that SLAMFEST has become PEDALFEST. It was a huge challenge to get the tires to stick.

The awful looking weather makes a statement and gives us a quick shower and delays the show for a bit so the motorcycle stunt show entertains the crowd while the track is being dried. After the shower Ken wonders what the track condition is now. An inspection doesn't reveal much but here it is always better to go safe, safe, safe, just get it to the stripe under power. One of Zaps crew was walking past with a track friction tester and commented "I have been doing this for a couple of years now... and I have never seen numbers this bad!!" It was suggested he test the gravel road through the pits to see how good that was.

Our first round is against Kaporis and we have lane choice. Not sure either lane is better but we think we know the right lane, so we take it. Once the cars have completed their start line procedures we are in prestage and Ken has activated the car for the launch and Russ is waiting for Kaporis to come to prestage when there is a kaffull over in their lane. The blower belt is starting to smoke so they shut off and Russ goes into full stage launches the car for a 4.48 ET at 162.41 mph, and it took a lot of steering wheel do that and find the finish line. Turns out that Peter Kaporis blower belt idler pulley had stopped turning and the friction was generating tremendous heat. Often it is the proverable one dollar part that kills the dream. The first round is done and on to the second round for us.

Our next round is against Zap and we are looking forward to racing him. This race track has made it a challenge for anyone to get down and all of us are at a place in our tune ups where we have never been before. We are all in new territory and it is the team that can adapt that will go rounds. Don't forget to mention the driver will always have his hands full of steering wheel as well.

The rain has been threatening all day long and just as we push out to go to the staging lanes, now it makes good on its threat, and the rain starts with a sprinkle as soon as we push out, so we push back under the tent to wait, but it gets heavier and does not quit for over an hour. The sun is down now and there is no chance of getting the track dry so the party begins. The fireworks show starts and once that is over the band starts up. If you can't race might as well party. Everything is wet but the rain has stopped so at least we don't have to load up in the rain.



Sadly for the fans in the stands we could not complete the show, it was considered for tomorrow but the weather forecast was even worse for tomorrow. And it proved accurate. The bad looking

weather kept fans away and this race was not nearly as successful as the one two weeks ago at Benaraby. SLAMFET even spend \$10,000 putting up some temporary grandstands for the spectators with shade cloth across the top to protect them. This is making a commitment to the fans to give them the best possible show that we can do.



14 July – We have a little sleep in and we are up and on the way to the airport for the flight home, in the rain. Breakfast at the airport and an uneventful flight home, the best kind. We all say goodbye at Brisbane airport and Russ and Ken discuss picking the car up from Vic's place on Tuesday. We might as well get some maintenance done in prep for the next race, which will not be for some time yet.

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