

John discovers the Miata Anti-dote

By Paul Paparella

This is the story of John. Back in days when the local mechanic still knew what a carburetor looked like, John was an avid SCCA racer. After years away from the track to raise his family, John decided to get back into racing. If nothing else, it would take his mind off of his wife leaving him for that tennis pro in a red Miata. So off he went to the next SCCA regional to check out the current scene.

John struck up a conversation with some racers in the paddock. “What’s the hot car if I want to race a production based sedan?” he asked. The response was “Spec Miata is about the most popular thing going.” Well, of course, John wasn’t too excited about that. “What else do you have?” he asked. “Well, you could try Showroom Stock Miata,” they answered. Not happy with the way the conversation was going, John walked over to the fence to watch the first race.

As it happened, the first group out was GT. After seeing the lead cars go by, he thought this was kind of interesting. At least it was, until a couple of GT3 Miatas came by, followed closely by a GTL Miata. That just got him thinking about how much money he lost when his former business partner skimmed from the top to buy a new Miata, then skipped town.

So back to the paddock he went to look around. John was never much of an open wheel kind of guy, but he looked at those too. Of course the first one he saw was a Formula Mazda. It had one of those annoying “zoom zoom” decals, just like the one on the Miata that the kid down the street drove, with the big boom box that wakes John up at 3 AM every Sunday morning.

Eventually he came upon some old timers standing around some cool old cars, like the ones John raced in the late ‘70’s. Turns out they were Production racers. “Tell me more about Production,” John asked, “I kind of like the older cars.” “John, we’ve got to be honest with you,” one guy said, “we love the old cars, too, but these days you need a Miata to win in E-Prod. “Or, if you don’t want to spend so much on the engine, you could run a Miata in FP.” “Those damn Miatas are everywhere,” he thought, and then remembered that the IRS agent who audited him last year drove one.

By now it was afternoon, and there were just two races to go. Starting to feel discouraged, John wandered over to the false grid to see who was lining up for the next race. As he approached the grid, seeing an interesting mix of cars from the 1970’s up through new models, John got his hopes up. Then as he walked down the line, he saw three Miatas in ITA, and five in ITS. One of them looked a lot like the car that ran a red light and wrecked John’s classic Alfa last summer.

Continuing down the grid, he passed one SSB Miata, and a couple in T3. The last one he saw was the same color as the one his daughter was in when she got pregnant. “I give up – I guess SCCA just doesn’t have anything for me,” he thought.

John went to the food stand for a late lunch, and then headed for his car, not wanting to stay for the last race. As he walked towards the parking lot, he noticed crowds of people gravitating to the fences. Then he heard the rumble of the pack as it approached the starting line. As the green flag flew, he heard a roar of V-8’s like he hadn’t experienced since the heyday of Trans-Am. He turned towards the track just in time to see the leaders approach Turn 1. “What the hell is that Mini doing in between that Stingray Vette and the Shelby Mustang?” he thought. Then he saw a couple of BMW 2002’s, a beautiful Jaguar, three MG’s and a Corvair. “Man, these are the kind of cars I remember racing with,” he thought.

After watching several laps of close racing but no bumping and rubbing, he realized these guys knew what they were doing, and were having fun doing it. He pulled out his stop watch, and saw that some of these cars were pretty darned fast, too.

After the race was over, he went back to the paddock and found a bunch of the guys from the race. They were all having a great time talking and laughing with each other, but were quick to answer his questions and offer him a beer. After hanging out with the guys for over an hour, John decided that SCCA did have a place for an old school guy like him, after all. The Northeast Division Historic Racing Group was just what he was looking for.

It wasn't until he was halfway home that it hit him. He realized that, besides being a great series, HRG was the only closed wheel race all day that didn't have single one of those damned Miatas!

This is a fictional story. Any similarity between the cars in this story and actual Miatas is purely coincidental. However, HRG is the real thing. For more information, look up HRG on www.nescca.com or www.historicracing.org.

NEDIV SCCA Historic Racing Group Schedule:

July 3-4 at Lime Rock (with VSCCA and Jaguar Club)
July 25-26 at Watkins Glen
August 22-23 at NJMP
Sept 19-20 at Watkins Glen
Oct 17-18 at NJMP