

Where did it all start by Glen Collins

With a text from a mate of mine on Sunday the 4th of February 2018. My friend sends me a picture of a page in a magazine titled "Landspeed Racing Comes to New Zealand".

I quickly read through the page to see what it was all about and googled Landspeed Racing NZ.

Put a phone call into John Seccombe, but much to my disappointment found that the event was closed as it had a full roster of participants. So it was not to be. Went away drag racing that weekend.

Spoke to John a couple more times, then two weeks before the event I rang John again on the off-chance that there might have been some cancellations. John replied that there was a couple but he would get back to me. He did and a couple of hours later the entry forms arrived on my computer.

During the week I felt a little apprehension about driving the car at high speed, but got too busy to contemplate it.

I decided I would need a diffuser under my car a week before the event. Made a diffuser to take up the void left by the removal of the spare wheel carrier, which would apparently make the car unstable at high speed. Finished making the diffuser Saturday at lunch time.

After lunch on Saturday I headed off to Taupo to a friend's place. Arrived in Taupo and told my friend we had to be there by 7am. He assured me he knew where to go. Woke up bright and early and off we headed to Goudies Road. Arrived on site in due time. Met Matt Kingi at BP, he had my wheels. Filled up with gas and headed off to the track.

Once at the track I registered and the car was scrutinised. I fitted the wheels with new tyres. Then the wait began! I was still feeling apprehensive about this as I had not driven this fast before.

I was in Group B at the end of the pack as I was one of the last registered. Watched Group A race by. Man there was some fast cars and bikes in that group. My car was supposed to do 300 km/h from the Factory, but would I have a big enough run up was the question. Group A had nearly finished and the siren sounded for us to line up.

I dressed in my race suit and boots and got into the car and lined up. We drove to the southern end of the race track and lined up in our order. I watched as my fellow entrants disappeared down the track. Then it was my turn.

I lined up, turned on the GoPro and away I went. As the shift light came on at 6 ½ rpms I changed gear, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and then 4th gear. As I changed into 5th gear the 1 km signboard flashes past. Once in 5th gear I settled into a comfortable position and hung on. I kept my focus on the distant white line that we were to follow down the track. Correcting left and right I drove across all the bumps down the track. There's goes the 2 km marker, then came the 2.5Km and the timed ¼ mile section. At this point I realised I was going faster than I had ever driven in my life. Saw a group of people at what I thought was the end of the ¼ mile. I momentarily lifted off, the re-planted my foot as hard as I could. Watched the chequer board fly by as I completed my first ¼ mile at high speed. I slowed down to realise I had to accelerate again to get to the end of the 2.5km as I had slowed down too much.

Upon arriving at the end of the track I was greeted by the Officials and told to line up for my return run. While waiting for my next run, feeling very relieved that all had gone well, not knowing how fast I had gone, as I did not look at the speedo but was concentrating on staying on the track.

That was good fun, the fastest I have ever driven in my life. The car went nice and straight and handled beautifully.

Now for my return run. Didn't really to talk to anyone at this stage. Was just sitting in the car processing all that had happened and waiting for my 2nd run.

The second run came around pretty quickly. Fired up the car, lined up and off I went again. As I was blasting down the track in 5th gear, remembering what a friend of mine (Ben Kingi) had always told me about high speed driving – no sudden movements, no yanking on the steering, just gentle corrections as you bump along the track, to keep the car on the centre line of the road.

Got to the end of the 2nd time down the ¼ mile, I just kept my foot into it till I got to the pits so I could put a good show on for the people in the pits. Got to the end of the race and parked up with everyone else. Waited for our return to the pits to check out how fast I had gone.

1st run 280.15 km/h (on timed section)

Return run south – 278.59 km/h

Wow that was fast, not 300 km/h, but very satisfying. Started talking to a few other entrants and found most were feeling apprehensive as well. Group A had left at this stage so I went to watch all the cars and bikes racing by again. Time for Round 2

Headed back to the south end of the track. Proceeded with 1st race on Round 2

1st run – 281.88 km/h

Return run – 281.95 km/h.

Back to the pits and lunchtime. Had lunch and watched Group A return to the track. Watched cars and bikes go by again, checking on the speeds of the cars. The mighty Nissan had achieved 357 km/h on its return run in Round 2. Man that car is fast.

The motorbikes just looked scary as they were speeding down the track. You could hear the engine rpm increase and decrease as some of the bikes hit rev limiters, and the bikes Quickshifters would cause a backfire as they changed up a gear.

The siren went again for us all to line up, once lined up we waited for our turn to head out onto the track.

I was starting to feel a bit more comfortable with the high speed and the track. Took off down the track.

1st run – 281.08 km/h

Return run – 284.18 (must have been going well!)

On the return trip I turned on my GPS to check what speed I would be at the other end of the track. I kept my foot down after the pits, as I eased off I took a quick glimpse at my speed – 291 km/h. On the completion of my run I checked out my GPS and saw I got to 293 km/h. Wow that was quite quick.

Once back at the pits we were informed we would get one more run. We were going north to south on this run. At the start of the race I turned on my GoPro and my GPS. I thought “boy I had better make this a good one”. Off I went.

We were told not to launch too hard as they did not want us tearing up the road with wheel spinning off the line. Got off the line as quick as I could without a wheel spin, I was into 5th gear and accelerating at the 1km mark.

This run I netted – 284.79 km/h

I kept the hammer down even longer than the previous runs and didn't dare look at the speed as I was flying past the pits. Once at the other end I checked the GPS.

296.31 km/h

Not far off my goal of 300 km/h. Very satisfied with the cars performance.

Once back at the pits I felt very relieved that the day had gone so well and that I had not had any mishaps and neither had anyone else. Back to changing wheels and prize giving.

Well done to Darryl Dolby in the Nissan R35 GTR who has the fastest car. Well done Shane Dixon on the Suzuki Hayabusa, fastest bike of the day. Congrats to Mandy Dekker, fastest and only lady of the day. Thanks to all those who put the hard work in to make a great event.

Would love to come back next time.

My vehicle is a 1990 ZR1 Corvette with a LT5 engine. Mostly stock, this model car still holds a world record of 175.886 mph (281.41kph) for 24hr endurance race for production cars. My average speed both ways was 282.83 km/h. Not bad for a 28 year old car!!

Movies

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=gAbtWhhq5f0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVtmCmN4038>

Details

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevrolet_Corvette_\(C4\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevrolet_Corvette_(C4))





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