

We're experiencing a typically gorgeous trade wind day today here at Kalaeloa Raceway Park. It's definitely a good day for some sunscreen and probably a good day to have an ample supply of refreshments. Thankfully the vendors are always prepared with an assortment of food and drinks to choose from, but if spectators prefer they are allowed to bring in coolers (sans alcoholic beverages which are not permitted) which is always a plus.

As I make my way from my van to the tower I hear them announce Tom Brown against Paul Giovannetti, the cars start, line up then off in a roar. Announcer for the day, Mike Kitchens, announces in excitement the reaction time of Paul's unlimited rail #556 as a .006/sec (which is very nearly perfect) and it was evidenced by a glimpse of the orange car leading the black car as they flashed between two storage containers located between me and the track. I pause for a moment, knowing the two cars might pass me in a moment as they make their ways down the return road and back to the staging lane. I had intended to give Paul a "thumbs up" for his reaction time, but his car was intercepted by his pit crew and stopped several hundred feet short of me. Tom was rumbling along the asphalt return road so I we gave each other a nod of acknowledgement and I basked for a moment in the perfume of the exhaust fumes trailing behind him.

A few more unlimited cars run as I make my way carefully to the starting line including Tim Ing in the full bodied Camaro, Junior Alimoot in Wicked and Koa Grace's black rail. Time trials, which had now just ended, had apparently run smoothly again from what I could tell, but I do find out there is a problem with the #3 Wicked of Jr. Alimoot. I stop by the time slip booth on my way to the tower to say "hi" and he informs me of an oil leak on the car. He said he ran well in his initial passes, but the clutch seemed to slip on his last pass and he's concerned that he has a leaky main seal which likely will put him out for the day. The tear down he did later in the week proved there was much more damage than just a seal.

We always start with the "Unlimited" class in Bracket 1. Intended so that the fastest cars get a smooth track with sufficient sand at the starting line which makes for safer racing it's the fastest cars that go first. The track naturally gets rutted and pits develop at the starting line in

each lane where big paddle tires throw the sand back in huge rooster tails as the cars launch off the starting line. The Unlimited class is made up of tube chassis cars with custom bodies and staggering power to weight ratios. You'll find blown and naturally aspirated rails and shorter pipe buggy type tube frame chassis with four and eight cylinder motors. Some with turbos or nitrous or blowers, and you'll see full bodied sedans, custom fabrications and roadsters. Today the class is intended for cars faster than a 5.00 elapsed time (ET)

Bracket 1 round 1 As I had said; this class is intended for cars 5.00 seconds and faster. Eliminations start up with what sounds like a few VW powered vehicles driving into the staging area. The rails usually get pulled to the staging lane by the tow vehicles, but the buggies are able to drive there under their own power. From up here in the tower I get the benefit of all of the radio chatter as well as a good view of the track. Lacking is my ability to chat with competitors and get direct feedback at times.

First up to the line come the #1122 of Koa Grace; who has dialed in at 3.88. He's drawn the #7902 normally piloted by Ashley Brown, but today it's being driven by Tom Brown who's dialed in at a 3.98. Tom lines up first in the ranch lane, leaves first and gets to the finish first.

Next is Paul Giovannetti driving the rail #556 in the ranch lane against Iwalani Medeiros in the orange V8 buggy #8164. Paul gets a great start and gets to the finish first while Iwalani veers over to the right side of the lane and may have needed to peddle it. It looked like a close race, but we find out that Paul got to the finish line too quickly and he breaks out.

Now up is Turbo Ferreira in the yellow and black #50 Tinker Toy running a 4.50 against Tim Ing in the #726 Camaro at a 4.80. Ing lines up first and it takes a second for Turbo to stage. Tim cuts a good light and gets the win by a decent margin. I can't help but think that Ferreira had a problem with the car. It had been a good effort by the 50 team just to get the car to the line after motor problems in time trials, but the car didn't look as fast as it had in time trials.

Next up is Bracket 2 and today they need to run between 5.01 and 6.0 seconds. Some vehicles are similar to the unlimited class with tube framed cars like the buggies, but many are trucks, jeeps, and sedans in this class and all of them need to be towed by trailer to the race track.

Bracket 2 Round 1 First up is the white Toyota truck of Bobby Perkins in the #7369 and the ever improving pipe buggy number 55 of Brant Kam. Kam gets a good launch with the buggy and it's got the wheels in the air through 3 gears and appears to win convincingly, but breaks out!

Next is Manuel Moisa Jr. in the red Tonka Toy #12M. Manuel gets a bye run and runs his typical ear splitting and very fast pass.

Bracket 3 is formed of all cars 6.01 seconds and up. There are still a few racecars and trucks, but now they are mixed in with the mostly street legal sedans, jeeps and trucks. Some of these are really fast vehicles still, but with the mixture of street legal "stock" vehicles there's sometimes a big difference in dial in times and it makes running against a staggered tree that much more challenging for what is in some cases a class of more novice drivers.

Bracket 3 round 1: First up is the White Chevy truck #283 of Nathan Cadiz against the angry bird buggy #575 driven by Chuck Almeida. At the start the truck appears to never move, but apparently had crept forward and stopped and draws a red light. The lights rarely err so maybe when he crept forward and stopped he had moved a little to far to correct his error. Either way the win goes to Almeida.

Next to the line is Chuck's daughter, Holly Almeida, in "The Huntress" Toyota truck #57 against Candy Smith in the #000 Suzuki Jeep. Holly runs really well, but too fast and breaks out. The track gets its normal maintenance grooming by the starting line workers using rakes in between rounds as the crew try and keep the starting line in as good of a condition as it can to minimize the need to use the heavy equipment.

Now we see Tatum Bautista in the Jeep Cherokee #213 against Buddy Kupau, but the #80 isn't his normal steed today and rather than the blue Jeep we are all accustomed to seeing he's brought out his rather a big Chevy truck. At the start Tatum red lights so Kupau, who dialed in much slower, will move forward.

Bracket 4 round 1 and it's the bike class now and here you find quite a bit of diversity in vehicles. There are (what appear to be) relatively stock motocross bikes that range from 125cc to 450cc. Some with off road motocross tires and others with paddle tires (paddle tires have

specially cupped ribs perpendicular to the rotation of the tire that dig in to the sand and help propel the vehicles, both two and four wheel, forward). There are also quads in all varieties in this class from the tricked out stretched chassis to the "off the showroom floor" type. The bikes and quads are very fast the competition is always close.

First up is the tricked out #7Q of Chad Wilderman against another highly modified quad #72 piloted by Isaac Hodslen. Both of these quads are "Yamaha Banshee's" I hear the announcer comment over the PA. at the line the #7Q wins by a large margin after a great start.

Next up is bike #629 of Henry Maile Jr. running a 6.29 dial in time against the #27 of Peter Wong. Henry breaks out by what looks like a huge margin and should have peddled it to slow himself down, but I don't think he realized how much of a lead he had or he would have backed it down.

Now to the line come the #17 in the ranch lane and #5 in the tower. At the start Brant Kam in the #5 veers left something fierce towards the center line and gives the opportunity to Scott McCully on the #17 to move on.

There's a bit of a pause while the round 2 competitors get a chance to line themselves up and the track is still in decent condition so a grudge race format is announced over the PA for cars who didn't move forward. Meanwhile the kids line up on their bikes and quads for a few runs. The kids always are welcome to the raceway park and are allowed to run for free. It's a great way to introduce keiki to the sport of racing, make for a more family oriented event for participants as well as filling short down time moments for the track.

The Park takes the opportunity to groom the starting line in each lane. Grooming usually takes about 20 minutes of spreading and consolidating and finally leveling the sand, however the track seems to be holding up well and the entire rack isn't in need yet.

Bracket 1, round 2 Tom Brown is driving wife Ashley's dragster #7902 in the ranch lane and Iwalani Medeiros in the #8164. Iwalani would be leaving about a second early from the tower lane based on their dial in times. Tom stages first then Iwalani pulls up and nudges the car forward to a full stage. Iwalani is off and it's an excruciating wait for Tom Brown who redlights pretty bad and Iwalani gets the win.

Tim Ing in the White Camaro #726 gets a bye run tower lane. He runs a 4.91 on a 4.80 dial in and the pass looked confident. Now that was much better than many of his previous runs and the car looked like it went in a straight line for once.

Bracket 2 round 2 This is the final for Bracket 2. Perkins in the #7369 vs. the #12M of Manny Moisa Jr. Perkins stutters for a second at the start and runs well to left of the left hand lane. Never lifting he gets pretty close to the concrete barrier, but keeps off it. Moisa Jr. gets the win, but it was a decent race and too close at the finish to call from back here at the starting line.

Bracket 3 round 2 Chuck Almeida in the Angry Bird #575 stages first in the ranch lane and Candi Smith pulls the Suzuki Samurai #000 up in the tower lane. At the start Chuck unfortunately red lights by a tiny margin giving the win to Candy.

Finally up is the big Chevy truck of Buddy Kupau proudly displaying two giant flags at the back of the truck for this, a bye run, in the tower lane.

Bracket 4 round 2 First up for the bike and quad bracket is the #72 with a 5.65 against #27 running a 4.85. Isaac Hodsen is on the #72 picks the ranch lane. They're both staged now and the lights blink down staggered due to the difference in times. Hodgsen leaves first, but loses as he red lights. Peter Wong, as is typical for him, is going to be in the finals again.

Finally for round 2 it's the #17 Scott McCully who's dialed in at a 5.70. He gets a bye run this round and elects to run the tower lane into the final.

Bracket 1 round 3 This is the final round and the #726 of Tim Ing is still dialed in at a 4.80 and Iwalani Medeiros in the #7369 is at 4.95. It's a red light for Iwalani by a meer.005 and a solid pass down the left side of the ranch lane over by the wall for Tim Ing for his first final round win, congratulations! Tim later confides that it is better to be lucky than good, but also admits that he's lost races this way before and is happy to get the win however it may have happened. To be honest with you; Tim we feel is a bit too modest here as the fact is; today he made the fewest mistakes of the drivers in his bracket and by doing so walked away with the well deserved victory.

Bracket 2 round 3 Finished already in round 2.

Bracket 3 round 3: Candi Smith in the #000 running a 5.88 against Buddy Kupau in the truck #80 running a 8.00. Flags a blazing Kupau leaves first and the lights at the starting line say he wins after they both break out. Buddy had apparently broken out by less and wins although they could both be heard peddling the throttle at the finish line.

Bracket 4 round 3 It seems that for the last few events the #17 of Scott McCully and the #27 of Peter Wong have met with each other in the finals. McCully has the opportunity to redeem himself after Wong got the better of him at the last event. McCully leaves the line first in the ranch lane and Peter Wong, appearing uncharacteristically to be having some trouble at the line, needs to back out and loses by .1 second.

There are to be no trophy dashes today so this concludes the racing early in the afternoon allowing time for competitors and workers to get home a bit early for quality time with their loved ones.

See the website's points standings for additional information.