



SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY.

BY ANDREW D. WEYMAN

Question: How can racing be made safer?

Answer: The Stand 21 Safety Foundation's 4th Annual RACING GOES SAFER Seminar at the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach presented on Saturday, April 18th, 2015 from 9am-noon at the Long Beach Convention Center.

Safety, safety, safety. You hear about it all the time. As a driver you accept that racing can be a dangerous sport, but how can you mitigate the chances of a catastrophic crash? You rely on the cocoon of strength and integrity provided by the powerful machine surrounding you, but what about the variable of your most vulnerable and valuable asset? I'm referring to you, the driver. The seminar focused on all aspects of safety, and I hope you'll be able to take away a few meaningful lessons after reading this.

Yves Morizot, President of the Stand 21 Safety Foundation is obsessed with safety. Hey, let's face it, the more of us out on the track, the more potential customers for Stand 21! But the Safety Foundation is a lot more than that. It is truly dedicated to making racing safer for all of us. The seminar panel consisted of a diverse group of experts from various areas of motorsport. When I was contacted to be a panelist representing the Porsche Owners Club, I was both very flattered and a little bit intimidated.

Don Taylor, Secretary of the Foundation, introduced Yves to the crowd of over 100 attendees from all disciplines of motorsport. Yves, known for his ability to talk passionately about any subject at hand, did not disappoint. He was informative, entertaining (and sometimes difficult to understand) as he moved seamlessly from English to French. All part of his charm. Don displayed his skill in wrangling Yves and skillfully

transitioned to the first speaker, Larry Dixon.

Larry is a three-time NHRA Top Fuel Champion who refers to himself as a "stunt guy." It's hard to believe that he first used a HANS device in 2001. He survived a crash at 300 mph during a Memphis competition in 2000 when he sustained forces of 109g and significant injuries. He was lucky. Better prepared in Gainesville in 2015, use of his 7-point harness, the addition of side panels on the vehicle frame and improved roll cage padding kept him better protected as he traveled 400 feet after the nose of his dragster disintegrated. Check out his crashes on YouTube. His use of safety equipment speaks for itself.

Mike Hurst, Technical Manager of the SFI Foundation, spoke specifically about the importance of appropriate undergarments. Mike was involved with significant testing of cotton and polyester shirts while worn under driving suits. While wearing an SFI 3.2/5 driving suit, it takes a mere 10.8 seconds to sustain second degree burns. With a Nomex undershirt, you are protected for 16 seconds. Polyester or cotton shirts and underwear will stick to the skin when heat-stressed. Peeling them off means peeling off your skin with them. Ouch. In short, wear Nomex undergarments. They'll save your skin. Also to be considered are Nomex bras for women drivers. The fabrics and under wires used in conventional bras can be extremely dangerous. Women can be custom fit for Nomex bras and they are highly recommended. Mike mentioned there are no statistics to support the belief that balaclavas covering the mouth are better than those that don't but it is widely accepted that they most likely offer better protection for the lungs.

Mike also touched upon fraudulent labeling of FIA and SFI rated garments. It is a huge problem.

Be sure to buy from a reputable source. Lastly, proper alignment of harnesses is critical. Properly installed, three-inch webbing breaks at 10,000 lbs. Three-inch webbing that is out-of-alignment breaks at 2,500lbs. That is a huge difference when involved in an on-track incident.

Dr. Edward Potkanowicz, Assistant Professor of Exercise Physiology at Ohio Northern University, addressed the challenge of human thermal regulation. In other words, heat stress. The heat of competition is the stress that you, as a driver, experience. The hotter you get, the faster you get hot. Dr. Potkanowicz covered the many effects of heat on driver performance including the functioning of the cardiovascular system, energy metabolism, as well as psychomotor and cognitive processes. Pre-event hydration is critical. Consuming beverages that contain salt or eating salted snacks help the body to retain water. Whenever possible, hydrate during the event. Post-event, replace electrolyte loss and be sure to rehydrate. A good indicator of proper hydration is clear urine. Dr. Potkanowicz distributed urine color charts to be used as a reference guide to keep track of hydration. Additionally, it has been shown that wearing long underwear helps keep you cooler. Make sure it's Nomex!

Ed Becker, Executive Director and Chief Engineer of the Snell Memorial Foundation discussed crash helmet standards. The Foundation was formed in 1957 in memory of Pete Snell, who died in a crash while wearing the standard helmet of that time, little more than a leather cap and goggles. He stressed that a safe helmet should provide proper head protection, taking into account impact (load spreading and stopping distance), flame resistance, visual field, frontal head restraint (e.g. HANS), fit comfort, and operational utility

(communication, ventilation). Be sure to keep your helmet liner in good condition and replace your HANS tether after significant on-track contact. Replace your helmet following an incident involving impact. Protect your helmet from being dropped. Most approved helmets can maintain their integrity after a fall but it's also possible to compromise the helmet's strength. Replace your helmet after five years of use. The difference between SA 2010 and SA 2015 helmets is very slight. For most applications, SA 2010 is acceptable and bargains can be had on SA 2010 models. Mr. Becker closed by saying that racing is dangerous and there are no guarantees.

Hector Cademartori pointed out that drivers are required to follow FIA safety rules for the La Carrera Panamericana Race. The race is run on public roads and weaves through many remote locations. It's been run since 1988 and usually has about 100 drivers competing for a podium finish. Five safety cars drive among the racers to spot trouble. Helicopters patrol the more remote mountainous areas and are outfitted to perform medical services if required.

Martin Christensen, off-road racer and owner of All German Motorsports, started out riding motorcycles and went on to race cars. He pointed out that something as simple as the proper location of a mounted fire extinguisher or a fuel cutoff switch can make a huge difference in keeping a driver safer. The fire pull placement should be accessible to both the off-road driver and the navigator. It's also a good idea to practice getting out of your racecar to simulate an emergency escape. Practice taking one deep breath and getting out of your car before you need to inhale again. Plan to stay in your car after a crash unless it's on fire. Mr. Christensen also demonstrated proper helmet removal after an incident involving impact and possible injury. Using the new, unique to Stand 21 Lid Lifter balaclava with side-pull design, he was able to remove a helmet without any stress to the wearer's head, neck, or spine. It is fully SFI and FIA approved and in stock at Stand 21 in Costa Mesa. I highly suggest purchasing one when your current balaclava needs replacement.

Indy driver Oriel Servia, now driving in Formula E, shared that he was involved in a 2001 crash at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. He was not wearing a HANS device and was very, very lucky. Upon impact, he heard a crack in his neck and had an intense headache that progressively got worse. It turned out that being tied too tightly to the body board during aerial evacuation caused his intensifying headache. He recovered quickly and is grateful for his HANS every time he gets behind the wheel of his racecar.

"Nitro" Joe Powell brought a unique perspective to the seminar. Both funny car driver and track EMSC, he's seen it all. He drives a 200mph funny car, and his EMS team have provided emergency medical and fire suppression services for multiple racing organizations. Noting that most significant injuries occur on track rental days, more structured organizations like the POC enjoy safer on-track events. He, too, emphasized staying in your car after a crash, unless the vehicle is on fire. Request that EMTs stay with you awhile after an incident, even if you choose to say that you're okay. Stay fit, healthy, and use the best safety equipment available.

Dr. Jacques Dallaire focused on prime performance and distracted driving. Dr. Dallaire specializes in using the mind to maximize performance. How you think and process information influences how you drive. Make fewer mistakes and you won't have to rely on your safety equipment. Your best driving performance is a combination of your skill set and your mindset. Your results are dependent upon your talent, skills, experience, commitment and effort as well as factors you cannot control, i.e. equipment, regulations, weather and competitors. Stay focused on the process, not those things out of your control. The mind can only process one thought at a time. Multi-tasking is a shift in processing. Imagery travels the same neural pathways as actual movement. Your dominant thought determines your emotions and performance. The key isn't to focus more; it's to focus correctly. Remain in control. Ask yourself, what are your qualities when you do your best work? Use those qualities on the track.



Over half a century ago, Yves Morizot established Stand 21 in the city of Dijon, France. His vision made Stand 21 the world leader in head to toe, made-to-measure racing gear. With 150 employees worldwide, Stand 21 products are hand crafted within its own factories, exceeding the most rigorous safety and medical standards required by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile.

I had the opportunity to address the crowd and share my passion for the POC. Making the points that we focus on driver development and racing, I stressed our safety record and various levels of competition: Performance Driving Series, Time Attack and Club Racing. The Porsche Owners Club prides itself on providing a safe, fun experience on the track. Our corner workers and safety crews are top-notch pros. We are constantly reviewing and revising our safety requirements. Technological safety systems integrated into newer cars are becoming more sophisticated with every model year. They are designed to keep occupants safer. Keep in mind that even with all that science and technology, the one big variable is you, the driver. Bring your best game. Stay focused on your performance. Be sure your safety equipment is in good repair and up-to-date. You are responsible for your safety and that of your fellow competitors. Look out for one another, put your foot on the throttle and have a great time! ●

