

Invitation to Autocross

Spring is coming - let's join the first autocross event of the season with the Tri-Lakes Sports Car Club on Sunday, March 18th, at Motlow State Community College (6015 Ledford Mill Rd. Tullahoma, TN 37352).

We will meet at the Lavergne Hardee's near I-24 (508 Waldron Rd., 37086), at 8:30, and caravan the 55 miles down to the event, taking off at 8:45 sharp.

The autocross is at the college campus. Maps and directions will be provided in case some of us get separated. After the event we plan to take twisty/scenic roads, via 129 & 431 thru Lynchburg, Petersburg, Belfast, Lewisburg, Franklin, and back into Nashville, about 75 miles. We will get back about 4 o'clock.

The Tri Lakes Club is ideal for first time Autocrossers, and super fun for veterans and spectators as well. They are a very laid back group, friendly, informal, and welcoming to all. There is always a cross-section of cars, usually about 30. Always Miatas and Mustangs, vintage cars, purpose-built race cars on trailers, some big sedans, maybe a rental car, maybe some pickups. It's really all about the driving experience. The club follows Sports Car Club of America rules. They have been doing this for many years and have a terrific course laid out every time - very clearly marked, and with automatic electronic timing, including a large display, so you can instantly see your times improve with each run.

If you have never autocrossed before, this is the perfect time to try it. Everyone should drive in an autocross at least once if they can - they will learn more about their car (and themselves) in 6 minutes on the track than in 6 years on the highway. You will be astounded at what your car can do, and by how much better you drive with each of your runs. (Drivers all get 5-6 runs). The autocross (also sometimes called 'solo racing') is a race against the clock where your competition is mainly against yourself. Finishing times are grouped by SCCA car classes, so you can compare your times to other comparable machines. The course varies slightly each month, but normally has about 12-15 turns, including hairpins, sweepers, a slalom, and very short straights. Times will be in the one minute range. This kind of driving favors light, nimble cars, and even if you have 600hp, you will not exceed 40mph.

Only a single car is on the course at a time, and there are no obstacles except for traffic cones, so it is completely safe.

There is a \$20. fee per driver, and you will need to sign a release form. Each car gets a quick safety/technical inspection, (no dripping oil, bad bearings, loose batteries, etc.) and the club has loaner racing helmets.

All loose items (floor mats, tools, hub caps, etc.) will be removed before running. Bring a sack lunch and some drinks (the campus is pretty deserted on Sundays, but

there is a store about 5 miles away if you need to get anything). It's a good idea to bring some bag chairs too. If time allows they often do some fun runs at the end of the day. Spectators are encouraged, and passengers are allowed on the runs as well (all free of course.) In case of heavy rains the event will be cancelled. (see below)

Contact me, David Swanger, at 615-428-9267,

or at davidmichaelswanger@icloud.com, with any questions you may have.

Please let me know if you think you are wanting join in the fun, and I'll put you on the list & keep you informed if there are any changes to the schedule or a weather cancellation.