

Red Bull GRC By Joe Sage

We have never met a Red Bull event we didn't love—from wet cardboard Flugtag fun, to adrenaline-pumping high-speed Red Bull Air Races, to a variety of motorsports. It is beyond amazing what an enthusiastic, visionary and flat out fun CEO can do with the proceeds from selling a lot of very special red sports fluids.

We first caught wind of the Red Bull Global Rallycross heading to Phoenix in a propitious but happenstance manner: we were taking our turn in the Volkswagen Golf R on the track at Texas Motor Speedway (see Texas Auto Roundup feature in this issue), and VW gave us a right-seat ride-along, who turned out to be none other than rally champion Scott Speed. (Knowing this, we invited his specific point-by-point instruction at speed, then swapped seats with him for a number of even more memorable laps.) He mentioned he'd be in Arizona before long, for an event.

Next thing we knew, we were invited to join Speed and Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross (VARX) teammate Tanner Foust for the 2016 season's

inaugural Red Bull Global Rallycross races at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park, to get a look behind the scenes—and take some hot laps in the GRC's highly modified 600-hp rally cars (all right seat for us, this time with Tanner Foust at the helm).

Saturday: Round 1 GRC Supercar
Two-time Red Bull Global Rallycross champion Tanner Foust kicked off the 2016 season with a victory at Red Bull GRC Phoenix, the series' inaugural event, at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park. The Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross driver held off Bryan Herta Rallysport's Patrik Sandell and Chip Ganassi Racing's Brian Deegan for the win.

"I like the track!" Foust said after capturing his record-setting eighth Supercar victory. "It's a real Jekyll and Hyde kind of a track. You've got the road course, where you need to be real buttery smooth, and you've got that chaotic gravel when you are coming over the jump with tire stacks at 80 miles per hour. So there is a lot of the fun factor and technical spots!"

VARX dominated the preliminary rounds, with Foust and Scott Speed winning two heats apiece. From there, Foust won the first semifinal over the brand new Honda Red Bull Olsbergs MSE entry of Joni Wiman, while Speed held off Sandell to win the second semifinal. In the main event, Foust led from flag to flag, withstanding early challenges from Sandell and Speed to establish a comfortable lead. A late-race issue ended Speed's podium hopes, dropping him from second to fifth.

New manufacturer Honda put both of its Civic Coupes in the main event, with Joni Wiman finishing second in his semifinal and Sebastian Eriksson placing second in the last chance qualifier. Wiman, now in his third year with Olsbergs MSE, earned a sixth-place result in the event.

Sunday: Round 2 GRC Supercar
Tanner Foust extended his Red Bull Global Rallycross career win record by taking Sunday's GRC final in Phoenix. Foust took the ninth victory of his Red Bull GRC career over Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross teammate Scott Speed.

As with Saturday, the Beetles were dominant

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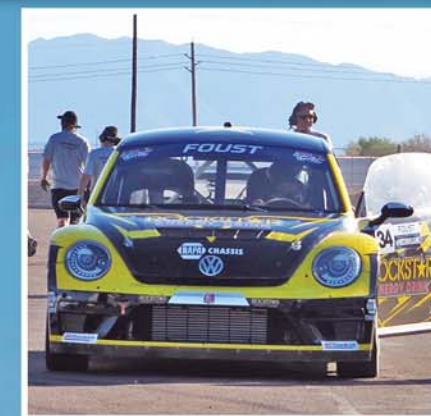


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Two-time Global Rallycross champion Tanner Foust had a perfect season-opening doubleheader in Phoenix: the quickest time in each qualifying session, and wins in each heat, semifinal and both main events. Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross (VARX) teammate and GRC defending champion Scott Speed won all his heat races and semifinals, and second place on Sunday, putting him in second place in the points standings behind Foust.

TANNER FOUST is a three-time US rallycross champion, has four X Games gold medals and holds two Formula Drift championships. His world records have included the Hot Wheels Double Loop Dare, a 66-foot loop-the-loop, the indoor speed record for TV's *Top Gear USA* and a 332-foot ramp-to-ramp Hot Wheels truck jump at the Indy 500. His race experience includes open wheel competition, the Pikes Peak Hill Climb, rally racing, sports car racing, SCORE



in the preliminary rounds, with both Foust and Speed sweeping their respective heats and semi-finals. Brian Deegan, coming off a third place finish in Saturday's main event, won the last chance qualifier but only made his way up to sixth in the main event. In the final, Foust beat Speed in a drag race off the line and never looked back.

Honda took its first rallycross podium, in only its second race, as Honda Red Bull Olsbergs MSE driver Sebastian Eriksson placed third. Eriksson, last year's runner-up, held off Saturday runner-up Patrik Sandell in a thrilling battle that lasted for the entire 10-lap final.

GRC Supercar Phoenix fast facts

Tanner Foust (#34 Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross Beetle) earned the eighth and ninth victories of his Red Bull GRC career while sweeping the weekend's doubleheader, allowing him to claim the all-time Supercar win record. He also became the first driver to sweep more than one doubleheader event in his Red Bull GRC career.

Scott Speed (#41 Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross Beetle) earned the 14th podium of his Red Bull GRC career with Sunday's second place finish. Speed now has eight podiums in his past 10 Red Bull GRC starts.

Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross (VARX) did not lose a heat, semifinal, or main event all weekend.

Patrik Sandell (#18 Bryan Herta Rallysport Ford Fiesta ST) earned the eighth podium of his Red Bull GRC career with Saturday's second place finish, becoming one of only four drivers (with Foust, Speed, and Brian Deegan) to earn a podium finish in each Red Bull GRC season from 2013 to 2016.

Brian Deegan (#38 Chip Ganassi Racing Ford Fiesta ST) earned the 12th podium of his Red Bull GRC career with Saturday's third place finish. It marked the first time that Deegan had taken a podium in a season-opening race since 2014, when he accomplished the feat in Barbados.

Sebastian Eriksson (#93 Honda Red Bull Olsbergs MSE Civic Coupe) earned the sixth podium of his Red Bull GRC career with Sunday's third place finish, also giving Honda its first-ever podium finish in its first season of Red Bull GRC.

Sebastián Saavedra (#77 AD Racing Ford Fiesta) made his Red Bull GRC debut in Phoenix with AD Racing. Saavedra is a five-time Indianapolis 500 starter and four-time Indy Lights race winner.

Unofficial points ranked the drivers as 1 Tanner Foust (125), 2 Scott Speed (100), 3 Patrik Sandell (94), 4 Steve Arpin (81), 5 Brian Deegan (79), 6 Sebastian Eriksson (67), 7 Jonie Wiman (41), 8 Jeff Ward (41), 9 Austin Dyne (36), 10 Rhys Millen (34) and 11 Sebastián Saavedra (3).

Manufacturer points stood at 1 Volkswagen (10), 2 Ford (7) and 3 Honda (7).

GRC Lites Recap

Every competitor drives an Olsbergs MSE-built GRC Lites car in this up-and-coming group. Miki Weckstrom and Conner Martell split victories in their Phoenix doubleheader—Weckstrom on Saturday in his first-ever GRC Lites start, and Martell on Sunday, holding off rookie Cabot Bigham.

On Saturday, polesitter Alex Keyes and Weckstrom each won both of their heats and shot out to the lead, with sophomore Collete Davis chasing until contact from Travis PeCoy and a resulting slide into a tire barrier eliminated her from podium contention. Keyes and Weckstrom traded the lead early, with Martell chasing until he took second, while Keyes ended up in third.

On Sunday, Weckstrom jumped to an early lead in the final as Martell and Bigham chased. Clever timing of the joker leg (bypassing the jump) left Weckstrom in third, behind winner Martell and rookie Bigham in third. Alejandro Fernandez came back from serious damage, but was disqualified by an overly aggressive maneuver.

Balance of 2016 season

The 12-race 2016 Red Bull Global Rallycross season runs through October, finishing in Los Angeles. The GRC Championship airs live on NBC and is available online live and on demand. For information, visit www.redbullglobalrallycross.com. ■



Baja and the Race of Champions three times. Foust is a host on *Top Gear USA* and does stunt driving for TV, commercials and film, including *Need 4 Speed*, *Bourne Legacy*, *Bourne Ultimatum*, *Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift*, *Dukes of Hazard*, *Red Dawn* and *Iron Man 2*.

SCOTT SPEED moved from eight years of karting to open-wheel racing in 2001, winning the Formula Russell title in his first try. In 2002, while competing in the Barber Formula Dodge and Star Mazda series at age 19, he won the Red Bull Driver Search and headed to British Formula Three, then to German Formula Renault and Eurocup championships in 2004. He made his Formula One race debut at the 2006 Bahrain Grand Prix, the first American to race in F1 since Michael Andretti in 1993. Speed later turned to NASCAR, driving for Red Bull Racing and two other teams in the Sprint Cup Series. He is the reigning GRC champion, having won for Andretti in 2015.

ANDRETTI AUTOSPORT, based in Indianapolis and led by racing legend Michael Andretti, competes in the IndyCar Series, Indy Lights, Pro Mazda Championship, FIA Formula E and Global Rallycross. The Andretti group has four IndyCar Series championships, two Indy Lights titles, one Pro Mazda championship, one USF2000 championship—and had won the famed Indianapolis 500 three times as of their GRC visit to Phoenix. The very next weekend, Andretti notched up their fourth Indy win, as Alexander Rossi made history as the second rookie ever to take the trophy—and on its 100th running. ■