

Tire Rack Teen Street Survival School

Anthony Tabacco

Last year, over 5,000 teenagers died nationally in motor vehicle crashes, making it the leading killer of young people in the aged 16 to 19 bracket. The Tire Rack Street Survival School is a national non-profit program supported by both the SCCA Foundation and the BMW CCA Foundation, whose goal is to provide a safe environment for teens to learn the skills they'll need to stay alive behind the wheel.

On April 24th, The-Region-That-Knows-How hosted its inaugural Teen Street Survival School at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.

The first graduating class of 25 teens (who are also now First Gear SCCA members) was mentored by 39 Region volunteer members from every aspect of our club. The students' initial disposition, a mixture of teen early morning sleep deprivation and skepticism at the parent-enforced attendance, evaporated instantly as the first exercise, threshold braking practice, got underway. Progressive grins and wide-eyed attention became, as the day went on, the universal expression as the teens realized they were learning and doing things in a car that were beyond the skills of most-probably including their parents.

The in-car part of the program consists of exercise sets beginning with threshold braking, emergency lane change, weight transfer offset slaloms, object avoidance and wet and dry skid pad practice. The in-car program is balanced by class lectures to reinforce and explain what is happening out on course, why it is important, and how it will relate to everyday situations on the road. The program stresses the positive, that being an inexperienced driver is not the same thing as being a bad driver.

The day could not have happened if it had not been for so many local businesses that donated goods and services to support us. We are grateful to Quick Rents for our classroom tent, Hurricane Electric for our furniture, Starbucks for their life-saving coffee, LeMans Karting for hosting our meetings, and Mama Mia Pizza for feeding hungry teens, parents, and instructors.

The Region will be hosting the next Tire Rack Teen Street Survival School on Saturday, June 19, again at Candlestick Park. If you are interested in registering a teen, you should do it online at the national site (www.streetsurvival.org). The cost for the day is a bargain at \$75, which includes a nice lunch. Parents are welcome to attend and observe. If you are interested in helping out as a volunteer/instructor, you will find it a most rewarding personal experience, and one that will leave you with the genuine sense of helping make the world a safer place.



Student Jack Michel and Instructor Rick Gaan review proper tire inflation.



Testing the limits of control, safely.



Instructor Steve Kupper and Student Maxwell Maynard.