

September 12, 2006

Western Baja SAE 2006 Recap

The 2006 season for the Western SAE Mini Baja vehicle was an eventful season to be sure. The rules of the competition changed drastically this year requiring many new designs. One of the rule changes also involved the name change of the competition. From this point forward the Western SAE Mini Baja team will be named the Western Baja SAE team to reflect the change of the competition name.



The design of this year's vehicle was new for the most part. The whole process of re-designing a Baja vehicle began in July of 2005. Since then much has been accomplished and a completely new vehicle has been produced. Through the work and many hours of many students we have successfully built a reliable Baja with an excellent base for future years.

The most extreme testing of the team's design takes place at the competition each year. The competition that the team travelled to this year was in Elkhorn, Wisconsin which is approximately 45 miles southwest of Milwaukee, WI. This event featured 140 registered teams of which approximately 125 showed up. This is truly an international event with multiple teams from Brazil, Venezuela, Korea and a rookie team making the trip from France this year.

The event consisted of several events that gauged the design and the performance of the vehicle. However, before these events could begin the competition organizers held technical inspection to be sure that each vehicle entered in the competition had been designed and built properly and would protect the driver of the vehicle in the event of an accident on the track. Spectators were witness to the fact that these were well engineered vehicles as during the practice

2006 Mini Baja Midwest Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA Team Manager: Zachary Taylor Teams: 142 Overall: 56th Design: 58th Cost: 56th Acceleration: 90th Mud Bog: 30th Land Manoeuvrability: 84th Chain Pull: 50th Endurance: 71st
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lap two cars did complete somersaults. The drivers of these vehicles were inspected by emergency medical services and were deemed fit to continue racing. The vehicles were also re-inspected and no damage was apparent.

At the events the Western Baja SAE team performed as well as could be expected with a completely new design. The end results being 56th overall and 4th of 15 Canadian teams. One new event this year was the mud bog. This was a dreaded event for most teams as it was approximately 15 in. of thick mud that the vehicles had to drive through. The event was timed; however, many teams could not make it through. The Western Baja SAE shined in this event and placed 30th overall.

With a solid base this year the team now looks to the future for improvements. One area that must improve is the drive train system. This year's proved adequate for ruggedness; however, there has to be improvements in performance. The team is confident that these improvements can be made and has an interesting 4th year capstone design project being planned for this system.

