

2024 HOF Inductee – Michael S Robinson



It all started in 1988 when John Moyer invited Mike Robinson to work a corner at Pagoda Hillclimb. Luckily for the PHA, Mike was immediately hooked. He worked the corners at the Reading events for a season or two, and then at most of the other PHA hillclimb events in many succeeding seasons.

In 2004, John Moyer convinced Mike to co-drive his Austin Mini Cooper at Duryea Hillclimb. John may have regretted this, as Mike bested John's time by over 2 seconds at his very first hillclimb! Mike continued to co-drive John's Mini for the next few years, coming within 1/2 second of setting a class record in GTL on numerous occasions.



At Fall Weatherly 2008, Mike hillclimbed his first of five (at current count) Chevrolet Camaros in Street Modified (SM) – a white 1984 Camaro. He had his first top 10 finish in 2009 at Fall Weatherly, finishing 9th overall and 4.154 seconds out of first.

He ran so many Camaros over the years that I must digress for a moment and talk about all of them....

Mike ran the white 1984 Camaro until 2010, but unfortunately totaled this car at Polish Mountain HC 2010. He finished the remainder of the 2010 season in his Grey 1985 Camaro.

In 2011, Mike introduced his purple 1984 Camaro that he ran in E Street Prepared (ESP). He ran the car for the full 2011 season. In 2012 he continued to run the purple 1984 car along with his white 1998 Camaro that he co-drove with his wife Donna (also in ESP). They continued running the white 1998 until 2013 -- Donna had an off at Pagoda 2013, putting an end to the white 98. He



ran the purple 1984 off and on after that, but primarily ran his new 1999 orange Camaro (which was originally red) in ESP.

In 2016, Mike blew the motor on his 1999 orange Camaro at Spring Jefferson, so he ran the rest of the season in his purple 1984 car. In

2017, he brought the 1999 car back and ran it until an off at Fall Shenandoah in 2019. He finished the 2019 season in the purple 1984 car.





In 2020, Mike co-drove his wife Donna's 04 Chevrolet Corvette in Super Street Prepared (SS). He co-drove the Corvette until Pagoda 2024, when he brought the orange 1999 Camaro back out, now in Street Modified Xtreme (SMX).

So now that we have a better understanding of the different cars Mike drove, at least to date, let's go

back to talking about his driving record. If you recall, we started out talking about his first year in a white 1984 Camaro in 2008, when he had his first top 10 finish.



Mike set his first class record at 2013 Spring Jefferson in his white 98 Camaro. By the end of the 2014 season, Mike held the ESP class record for all events except Duryea (where he was only .645 seconds from claiming it). Mike did beat the Duryea ESP class record in 2015, but unfortunately for him, Mark Aubele was also running his 2014 Ford Mustang that year and took first place in ESP, beating the class record again by 4 seconds or so.

At Duryea in 2015, Mike joined the "under 2 minutes" club for the first time. He has consistently run under 2 minutes every year since then, regardless of which car he is driving. Also, he has missed less than 5 events since 2010.

Mike started co-driving his wife Donna's 04 Chevrolet Corvette in SSP in 2020, and by the end of 2022, he held the class record in SSP for all events except Giants Despair.

In 2024, when he brought his 99 Camaro back out at Pagoda for the first time since 2019, he finished 2nd overall, despite not having quite tuned the car in yet. He placed in the top 10 for the rest of the 2024 season, except coming in 11 (of 109) at Fall Weatherly.

Mike's driving record is impressive, to say the least. However, this is only part of the reason that he was inducted into the PHA Hall of Fame.

Mike has not only taken over Chief of Novices and Chief of Tech positions, but he has also run with them and made some major improvements. Note that both positions are full time at an event, yet he somehow manages to do both while also driving very competitively. Mike also realizes that he cannot do everything by himself and has trained people in both areas well enough that they can take over

when he is not available.



Between events, Mike is an administrator of the "unofficial" PHA Facebook Group. He tirelessly fields questions from those who are interested in participating, answering class placement and other technical questions. He also moderates inappropriate posts, approves new members, and generally helps keep the FB group sane.



In person, Mike is an ambassador for the PHA when at both PHA and non-PHA events. I suspect that many of the members of the Appalachian HC Series that attended PHA events in the 2024 season did so because of him.

Mike is also one of the key people that help with the technical updates to the PHA Supplemental Rules each year, serving as the chair on the Supplemental Rules committee, as well as various committees to explore specific rule changes.

His commonsense approach to questions that come up as the PHA Supps are updated is invaluable. In addition, he led the committee that came up with the new SMX class that filled a big gap in the PHA class offerings. Currently, he is chair of the committee forming the new rules to replace the Street Prepared classes.

In short, Mike Robinson is not only a top-notch driver but has also contributed to and continues to contribute to PHA in many ways. Beyond the Chief of Novice and Chief of Tech roles he fills, he is the face of the PHA to new recruits, and tirelessly helps all who ask for help. His work behind the scenes to help with the PHA supps changes has been and continues to be essential.

And his current 99 orange Camaro – well it is certainly one to be watching in the seasons to come!

