

1989 Chevrolet Camaro

SCCA A/S Race Car

History

In 1989, Chevrolet offered a high performance option for Camaro's intended for street use. This option, the IROC-Z, included an upgraded engine, engine oil cooler, 5 speed transmission, four wheel disc brakes, limited slip differential, and 16 inch diameter wheels. This race car came with the IROC-Z package (Note: the Z/28 name was dropped after 1988, and was referred to as simply the Z in 1989.). This Camaro is also equipped with the 1LE options: Aluminum drive shaft, PBR front calipers and associated spindles, and 16 inch alloy wheels.

Stanley Bernstein purchased the IROC-Z early in 1989. He contracted with McGee Motorsports, at Sears Point International Raceway, to prepare the Camaro for SCCA racing. McGee Motorsports fabricated a roll cage, installed the required safety equipment, and performed all the performance upgrades allowed under the SCCA GCR's. McGee Motorsports completed the preparations in July 1989.

On July 29, 1989, an SCCA technical inspector scrutinized the Camaro. The Camaro passed inspection, and was given an SCCA Log Book. That same day, the Camaro competed in its first SCCA race. For four years, Bernstein competed in SCCA events with the Camaro. These SCCA events included regional and national races.

In 1994, David C. Smith purchased the Camaro from Bernstein. On March 12, 1995, Smith competed in his first SCCA event in the Camaro. The SCCA technical inspector made an entry in the Camaro's log book indicating that a camcorder had been installed and approved.

Smith upgraded the car according to the SCCA GCR for A Sedan race cars. These upgrades included custom headers, Autometer gauges, and a Butler Built racing seat. From 1995 through 1999, Smith raced the Camaro in SCCA events. In all, Smith competed in 27 SCCA events- all in the A Sedan class.

In 2000, Smith purchased another race car. Smith offered the Camaro for sale. On January 8, 2002, the current owner purchased the Camaro. The current owner continued to race the Camaro in the A Sedan class in SCCA events.

On April 27, 2002, during the current owner's second race in the Camaro, the engine expired at Buttonwillow. The carburetor, intake manifold, and one head were salvageable. The remainder of the engine was junk. Robello Racing built a new engine for the Camaro. Robello also provided a new flywheel and clutch. With the engine out of the car, there was an opportunity to bring the Camaro up to date with respect to the rules of the SCCA.

Episodically, the SCCA changes the rules for preparation of race cars. For example, for 2002, the SCCA allowed the, failure-prone, five speed to be replaced by a four speed Richmond T-10 transmission. In addition, the factory torque arm could be disconnected from the transmission case. McGee Motorsports, at Sear Point Raceway, performed these allowed upgrades.

In June 2002, the Camaro was back together. The new engine, clutch, and transmission combination would prove to be bullet-proof. On June 28, 2002, the Camaro return to the track at Laguna Seca. The Camaro ran well, albeit slightly hot.

For the remainder of 2002, the Camaro was flawless. The Camaro won the 2002 A Sedan Championship in the San Francisco Region of the SCCA.

The Camaro did not race in 2003.

The first race of 2004 was a Double National at Thunderhill. During, the off-season, track officials moved the booth that houses the sound checking equipment. For the first time, the Camaro struggled to meet the 103 dB sound limit. Various techniques to lower the sound pressure resulted in diminished horsepower. After the event, The owner installed a new Moroso muffler and a turndown. With this set-up, the Camaro easily meets sound limits and makes good power.



In 2004, the owner installed a new Fluidyne radiator with an integrated oil cooler / heat exchanger. The first race with the new radiator was May 1, 2004 at Buttonwillow. The climate at Buttonwillow in May is warm, but not hot. The Camaro still ran warm when idling around the paddock. The owner performed some carburetor and ignition tuning, with success. The engine now ran cool under all circumstances.

In the off-season, between 2004 and 2005, the owner re-plumbed and re-wired the Camaro and installed new gauges. These gauges included an exhaust gas temperature gauge. For 2005, the SCCA allowed shock absorbers with remote reservoirs. The Shock Shop provided special Ohlins shock absorbers for the rear of the A/S Camaro. These shocks, along with new Hyperco coil springs, were integrated in the rear suspension of the Camaro.

In 2005, the Camaro continued to perform flawlessly. The Camaro again won the A Sedan Championship in the San Francisco Region of the SCCA.



Photo: Chuck Koehler

In 2006, the Camaro competed in one SCCA event. On April 23, 2006, the Camaro won its class at Laguna Seca.

After the engine and transmission were replaced, in early 2002, the Camaro has not missed a lap. The car has finished 16 consecutive events, as well as numerous test sessions, without mechanical problems. During that period, the Camaro won the SCCA A/S Championship in 2002, and again in 2005.