

MSU Engineering Club Races into Third at Ohio Competition

Deep in the Ohio woods, 76 handmade cars careen through mud pits, launch over hills, and skid through dust.

I'm at the edge of the fence, chair abandoned behind me, and screaming with the rest of the crowd. To my right, my family, ahead: the track.

Jolly, the pride and joy car of the Michigan State Baja Team, makes another lap around the track.

The four-hour endurance race is the last of the events in the Baja SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) Ohio competition. Teams from Canada to Mexico are here: each with their own hand-built car.



Our driver is Jackson Rayer, a team lead. Somewhere in the event he's to be switching with the second driver, but for now the dust is in the air and the adrenaline is high.

Four hours, fifty-two laps. This final event, the endurance race, is simply about how many you can do in the allotted time. Every second counts.

The College of Engineering has created a new building for clubs like these. Its creation is bittersweet— the cage where over a decade of cars have been built is gone, red bull monuments and team paraphernalia removed.

Jolly was the last car built in that old building, named after the road outside their front doors. As you watch it speed across the track, this final effort is almost tangible.

When it's over, the herd of spectators sprints out to meet their people. Rayer stumbles out from the main tent.

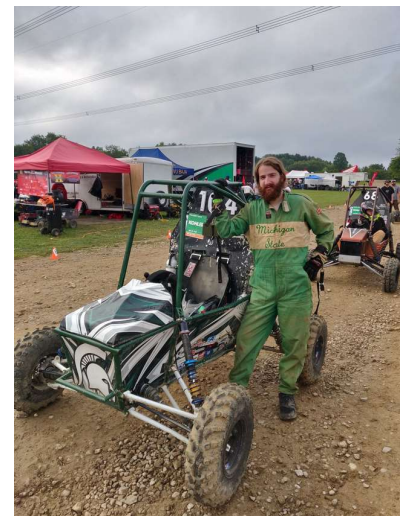
"We never swapped," said Rayer through jittery teeth, "Our communications died on the second lap— and I was just doing so good, I didn't think to stop."

He'd been in that car the whole four hours.

He's barely upright now, his teammates laughing behind him.

Then he tells us the results. *Third*. MSU placed third.

This is the first time the MSU team has achieved placement in endurance in ten years. The last car to be built on Jolly Road... and they placed. *Jolly placed*.



Even now, the feeling lingers. The excitement, the pride for both Rayer and the incredible hard work of the team. It's an assurance that, despite everything happening in and around MSU, our faculty, alumni, and students alike can be secure in the knowledge that their Baja team is worth rooting for.

Go green.