



July 28th, 2008

ACTON RACING TEAM CHARGES THE DARK MORE FREEDOM 250 NIGHT RACE

After a long day of waiting, the **Acton Racing Team** was eager to approach the start line for the **M.O.R.E Freedom 250** night race in Barstow, California. At 6:30 PM, with a wave of the green flag, driver **Scott Johnson** hammered the throttle in **Jeepspeed 1737** to gain an advantage over fellow competitor Bob Standage in the side-by-side start through the main pit.

Once onto the course the team settled into their race strategy. Having performed a slow crawl through the course earlier in the day, owner/driver **Mike Acton** made the critical decision to "go 75%" on the first lap and allow their competitors to identify and succumb to the brutality of the environment. This strategy was paying off as five other **Jeepspeed** were sidelined in the first 10 miles.

Watching a quarter of the field fall from the hunt in the first 30-minutes encouraged the team. The adjustments made to the **Sway-a-Way RaceRunner** shocks were paying off with a very smooth ride over the bumps and woops, and allowing the pace through the first leg of the course to be very fast.

After checkpoint 1, Scott continued to follow the 75% rule down the high-speed sandy section by Slash X actually closing the gap between them and the next Jeepspeed Wrangler now in sight. All of a sudden the front passenger side wheel made a crunch sound and the vehicle was jerked right off the course into some scrub bushes, coming to a complete stop perpendicular to the track. Attempts to move under the Jeeps own power proved fruitless.

Upon exiting the race truck it became clear that the wheel knuckle had snapped off the axle. With the initial prognosis being grave, the team focused their energy on getting the vehicle completely off the racecourse so not to become a speed bump for a trophy truck. Thanks to help from spectators and pit crew from other sidelined race teams, the **Acton Racing Jeepspeed 1737** was dragged to a side road for further diagnosis.

After a more detailed evaluation of the axle it became obvious that the weld had failed. This was a manufacturing defect with no penetration between the metals that connect the axle pieces together. The team had no way to predict this type of equipment failure and simply experienced bad luck, but it was fixable.

Determined to repair the axle and get back on the course, Scott got a ride to every camp in the area looking for a welder but came up empty. Being on the backside of the racecourse and in between pit areas, there was no radio communication and almost no cell reception. Mike and Scott were able to get a message back to the rest of the team at the main pit to bring the rig out and attempt repairs. Another 90-minutes later and **Jeepspeed 1737** was slowly being driven backwards onto the rig with the steering knuckle ratchet-strapped and chained onto the front end with hopes of getting back on the course.

Now having gotten the Jeep onto the trailer and in transit back to the main pit area, the team became fully aware that their participation in the **M.O.R.E Freedom 250** was over. It was impossible to complete all four laps in the time left once a welder was located, the front end taken apart and repairs made, everything put back together and then restart lap one from main pit. The team needed five hours and didn't have it.

After vacillating highs and lows, extreme optimism and then the ultimate reality of the situation, the team called it a night. In the end the **Acton Racing Team** had a promising albeit short race, stopped dead in their tracks by an unforeseeable equipment failure, with not enough time to complete the race after making repairs. The entire **Acton Racing Team** was disappointed but took solace in the fact that no one got hurt, and that the repairs were minimal going into the next race.

Mike and Scott would like to say special thanks to **Trent McGee** of **Daystar** for all that he has done as a sponsor and for the new **Daystar 1000 Series Off-road Lighting** system – the only off-road lights for the **Acton Racing Team**.

The Acton Racing Team would like to thank:

Our wives – Aimée Acton and Maria Johnson

Our crew – Michael “Pit Viper” Horn, Paul Ketrick, April Arford, Zeke and Jenna Acton

Clive Skilton and Michelle Nelson of Jeepspeed

<http://www.jeepspeed.com/>

James Clements of Mojave Off-Road Racing Enthusiasts

<http://www.moreracing.net/>

We would like to thank these manufacturers whose products we not only use, but also believe in and recommend to our family and friends:

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