

Aurora in the Global Green Challenge 2009
Report Three
20 October 2009

37 degrees Centigrade. Today was more typical of Darwin approaching the wet season, hot with heavy humidity and not much wind. This was our last day in accumulating hours on the track, so all of our new drivers clocked up lap after laps. Over the last two days, each car has done about eight hours of track testing.



In torrid conditions, the Aurora team checks the performance of both man and machine, taking temperature readings using sophisticated technology.

On technical issues, both Aurora cars had work to do. Some of this involved changes to motor controller "soft start" circuitry, including how the main, low voltage control board functioned. Our control board expert James Kirk was back in chilly Melbourne, but the new, multilingual Aurora electrical team in Darwin sweated it out and worked their way through the complex circuitry and determined an acceptable design update.

About 15 teams are now based at the Hidden Valley Motorsports Complex, with the rest based at various locations around Darwin. They will be joining us here at the track over the next three days.

UNSW are still on the road to Darwin. Their blog suggests that they are still finishing their car while travelling across Australia. We expect to see them tomorrow.

One of the Aurora members from Adelaide, Christine Haydon, has been involved in rescuing one of the Turkish teams, whose tow vehicle rolled on the Stuart Highway. Their solar car is now safely in the pits here at Hidden Valley Motorsports Complex.

The top American team, the University of Michigan, also arrived. Once again they have brought their huge semi trailer, containing a full mobile workshop.



Teams take a break from the heat and enjoy lunch, each in their own way.

The international flavor of this event was on show during lunch. The Japanese teams sat in community with traditional Japanese food. The Turkish team relented and went for a nutritious McDonalds meal. Meanwhile at Aurora, Mary and Pauline turned out a wonderful chicken and salad lunch followed by fresh fruit and drinks. We even scouted the French teams, looking for exotic cooking, but could only find pasta.

In the afternoon, we had a welcome visit by our motor controller supplier Tritium. Most of the top teams now use the superb WaveSculptor motor controller, which in both Aurora cars has proven to be extremely reliable and efficient. We have always suspected that Dave Finn of Tritium to have magic powers, which were observed as Dave helped us improve our motor timing.



In the blazing afternoon sun, Aurora electrical experts continue their solar panel tuning work. By early evening, a welcome sea breeze arrives and removed the heat and humidity. At dusk, the Aurora electrical team members receive a brilliantly colored sky as reward for their day's good work.

The big event for tomorrow is Scrutineering, where both cars are scheduled to appear for inspection by the event organizers. The major emphasis is on vehicle and team safety; both the solar car and support vehicles will be checked for compliance.