

Podium Newsletter

May 2011



Welcome to the Podium Club!

The information found at www.antiquetractorpullguide.com is like no other information out there. The tips, tricks and secrets of successful tractor pulling are designed to improve your performance at the next tractor pull, while having more fun at the same time.

Hitch Design – Lighter & Easier to Adjust

As shown in *The Antique Tractor Pull Guide*, hitch geometry is extremely important, as is adjustability. Often times, there are just as many different hitch designs at a tractor pull as there are tractors. Many folks choose the easiest way to create a hitch, or find a design they like. At a recent pull, I found a new hitch that really caught my eye. The hitch shown below was created by legendary Mark Valentine of Othello, WA and has all of the right features integrated into it. It's tucked neatly under an Allis Chalmers WD owned by Jim McMinimee of Outlook, WA. Let's take a closer look at the design.



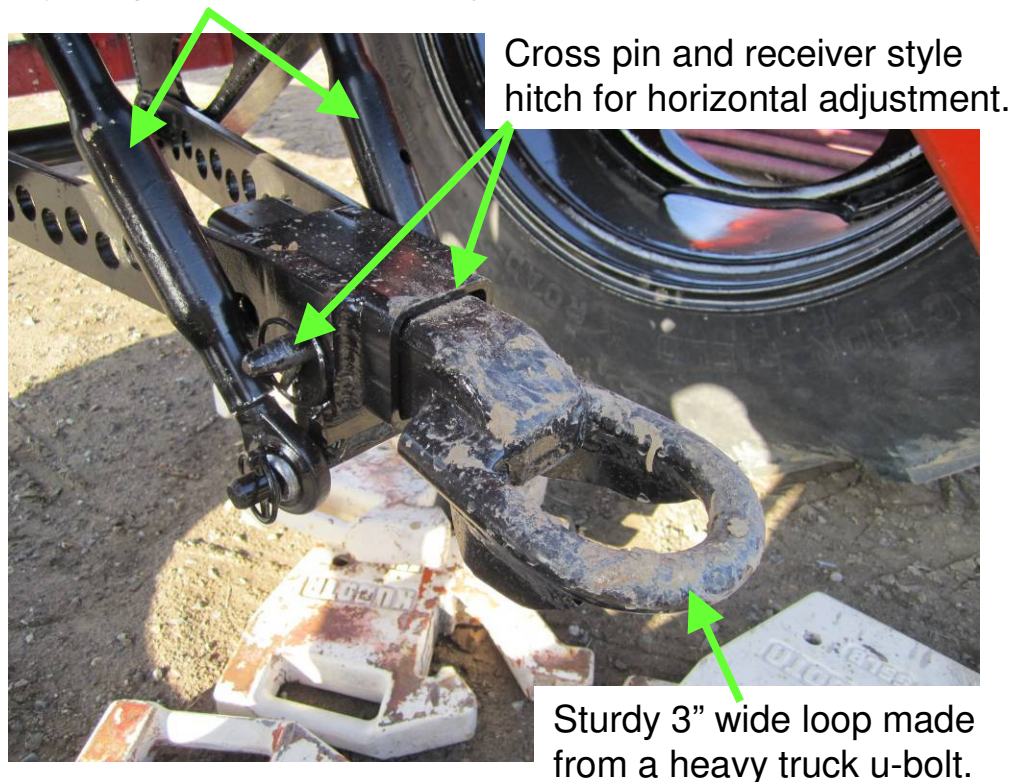
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Hitch Design: Lighter & Easier to Adjust (cont)

One of the best features of this type of hitch is that it is easily adjustable both vertically and horizontally. Even better, it's possible to adjust this hitch **using minimal tools, and without crawling under the tractor**. The advantage to easy hitch adjustment is that it can be done on the fly – on the scale, in line staging to hook, or between classes.

Category 0 top links for vertical adjustment



The category 0 top links are used for adjusting the hitch height. They are made for 5/8" diameter pins. The reason the hitch adjusts with minimal tools is because once located, the locking nuts on the top links should be tightened with a wrench to keep the hitch in location (lock nuts shown on next page). Horizontal adjustment can be done without tools by simply removing the lynch pin, pulling the cross pin, sliding the inner tube and then reinstalling the pins.

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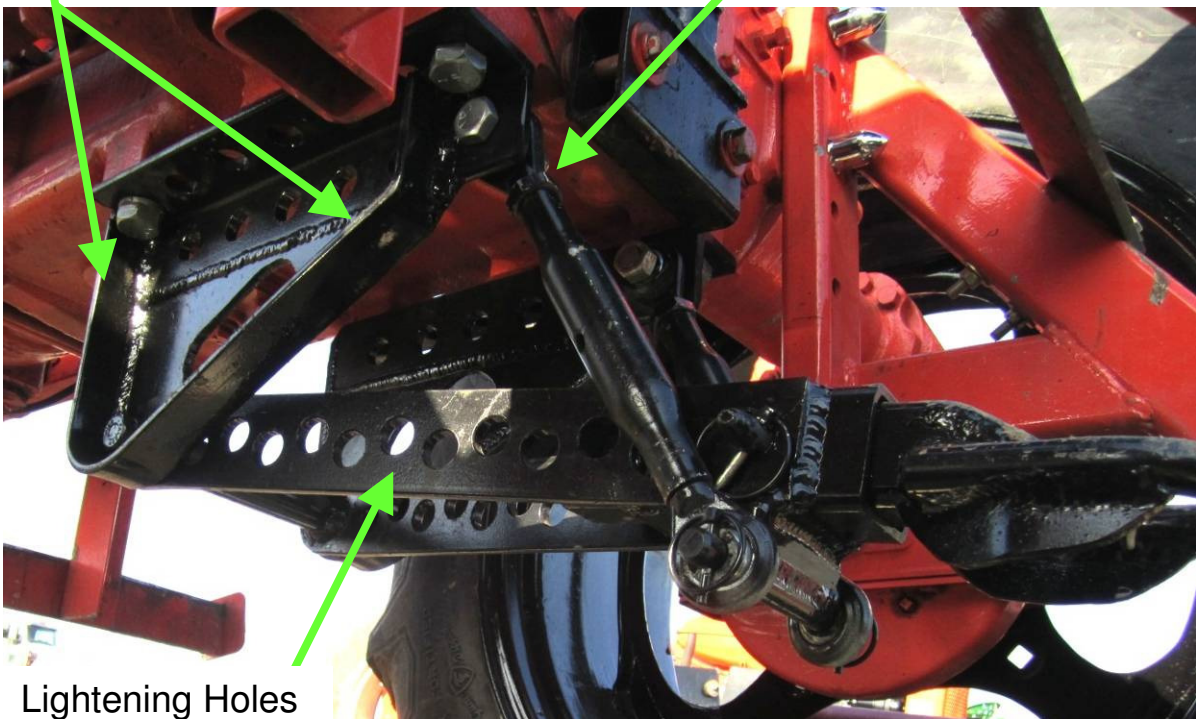


Hitch Design: Lighter & Easier to Adjust (cont)

Notice how the hitch is built with relatively light weight steel – ¼” thick and less. Strengthening flanges have been added to the supports to make them more rigid. And finally, holes have been drilled to take weight out of the hitch. Fitting a hitch like this under an Allis WD may be easier than other tractors because there is more area to work with under the tractor with its drop axles. This tractor pulls 3500-4500lb classes.

Strengthening flanges

Top link lock nut



Lightening Holes



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Pull Prep: Case 400

The Case 400 was showcased in the last newsletter and now it's time for it to hit the track. A few modifications were made first, however. In order to be more competitive, the tractor had to go on a diet. For now, removing the large hydraulic/pto unit from the back of the transmission, changing wheels, and losing the fenders will lighten up the machine considerably. For this a new back transmission cover was fabricated from a piece of sheet metal. The hubs are M&W aftermarket style made for a 3" axle. The wheels were found at a local salvage yard and are 16.9-38 Goodyear Power Torque tires mounted on 16" wide rims. These rims and tires are probably temporary though, since the tractor must be pulled in a 6mph class per local rules with this large of tire. Eventually, a set of 15.5-38s will be put on this tractor to pull in 3mph classes.

Hydraulic/pto unit

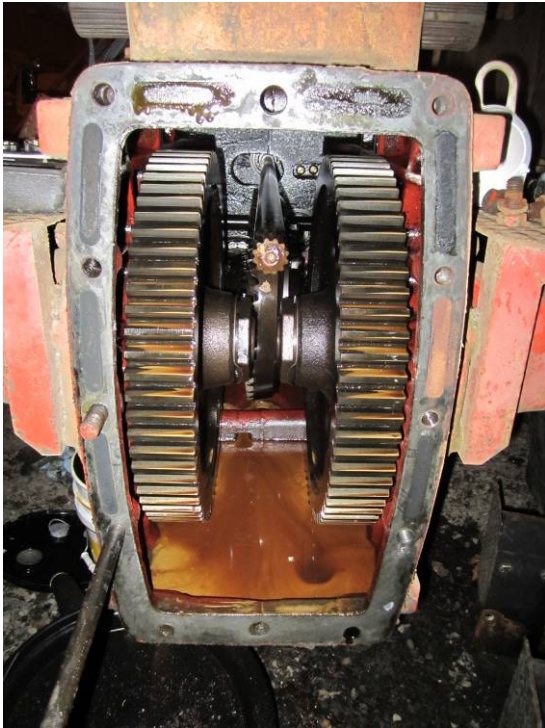
Baby Monitor



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Pull Prep: Case 400



Bull Gears with unit removed



300lb unit

New back cover installed, hitch in place, wheelie bars installed. The wheelie bars are from Denny's Carb Shop, \$200 plus shipping.



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Pull Prep: Case 400



Ready for wheel swap



M&W dual hub, 3" axle (same as MM U)



16.9-38 tire and rim

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Pull Prep: Case 400



Tractor with new wheels



Original drawbar used that had other pieces of metal welded to it in the past.



Detail of hitch

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Pull Prep: Case 400

So how light did it get? When weighing in at the Benton County Fair Spring Pull, it was just over 5200lbs with me on it. All hopes of making a 5000lb class were gone and the tractor was pulled in heavier classes. So how could we lose more weight?

The front wheels are heavy cast iron. Replacing them with hubs from a Case 830 and pressed steel wheels should lose some weight. Another place to lose weight is in the deluxe seat and the 3pt rockshaft mount. And finally, the air cleaner can be removed in favor of a K&N style filter. The tractor should be able to pull at 5000lbs without much more work. These tractors tend to be nose heavy, so without much room to shift around weights, adjusting hitch length will be the way to adjust weight balance. A new hitch similar to the Valentine design will eventually be built.



Heavy cast front wheels



Rockshaft and deluxe seat

Air cleaner



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The return of the Massey 101

It's been a long winter for the Massey Harris 101. With the new engine sitting in the frame, it was time to work on a few other issues that needed to be ironed out. The engine, being a flathead, is prone to sticky valves. This engine was no exception. With two stuck exhaust valves, and stuck tight, the head would have to be removed.



Head removed, exhaust valve on #1 and #4 are stuck



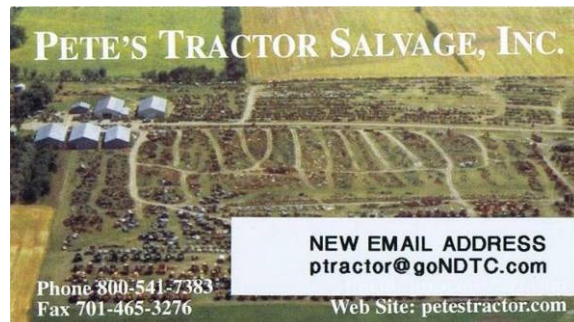
Exhaust port with manifold removed. This could have been a mess on start up.



Valves unstuck, lapped, & everything cleaned. Absolutely no ridge in the cylinder walls. Gotta love a low hour combine engine!

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The return of the Massey 101 (cont)

Here is some other progress on the Massey 101 project.



New gauges



Wiring behind gauge panel



Ford Mustang Radiator mounted



The correct manifold!

Stay tuned for the July issue of the Podium Newsletter (two newsletters from now) showing the final details of the Massey 101 project. This will include radiator hose routing, steering modifications and air intake routing.

Want more? Keep an eye on antiquetractorpullguide.com for new pictures and videos coming soon!

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Lessons Learned from Running a Tractor Pull

May 7th was the Benton County Fair Spring Tractor Pull in Corvallis, OR. Many of the folks who started this event around 15yrs ago have bowed out, leaving a small group of younger folks to pick up the reins and run the pull. The steps used to organize the pull were outlined in past newsletters. What about the day of the pull? That is really the test as to whether the pull runs according to plan.

At this particular pull, registration seemed to run as planned, and the first problem was encountered during the driver's meeting. When making announcements at a driver's meeting, it's always a good idea to use a PA system. A voice well heard is not often misunderstood. I have a portable PA system that is about 7yrs old that has been used for auctioneering, tractor pulls and other events. The system has been solid as a rock, producing superior sound each time it is used. It has an on board battery that lasts for several hours, plus an AC backup that plugs into an outlet. Why am I sharing all of this? Out of the blue, it failed during the driver's meeting. About half way through the meeting, electronic buzzing suddenly started coming out of the speakers instead of my voice. Confused, I chose to turn off the system and speak loudly without it.

As the pull started, it was apparent the "never fail PA system" started malfunctioning again, even with the AC backup plugged in. This was something that may have been avoidable, had I bothered to check the PA system before the day of the pull. Let's just say the pull becomes a little more confusing for the spectators when they can't hear the announcer for information. We settled for shouting information to the crowd at the start of each new class.

It turned out the on board battery had gone bad. A week after the pull and \$28 later, a new battery was on the doorstep from Amazon.com. The PA system has now been restored to it's former glory.

That was one of the more embarrassing lessons learned. Read on for more...

See www.antiquetractorpullguide.com for Benton County Pull Videos

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Lessons Learned from Running a Tractor Pull (cont)

Here are a few other lessons learned during the pull:

Figure out well ahead of time who your volunteers are and what they are doing. A pull doesn't run itself, it takes teamwork to make it run smoothly. At this pull, we overlooked help beforehand and had to scramble to get all stations covered.

Devise the system for transferring data from registration to the pull recording table. We had some confusion in doing this and next time we may use a computer so that papers cannot get out of order.

Enforce the written rules. We had a few people ask to "bend the rules" for them. The problem with doing this is that the rules must be bent for everyone. Enforcing the rules and especially reviewing certain rules during the driver's meeting will condition the pullers for the day.

Keep the track in good shape. A skilled float tractor operator is able to keep the track consistent from pull to pull. At this pull, dirt was being removed from the track after every hook, forming soft spots and hills.

Define what a full pull is. Since this was an indoor pull, the track was much shorter than a regular 300ft track. End to end is about 220ft, and for next time, we will define 200ft as a full pull and stop pullers before they drag the sled out the other end.

And finally, as a track judge, **make good calls when good calls can be made.** At this pull we added a 6250# King Of the Hill on the spot since we had several tractors around that weight. After starting the class, there were several pullers who made a full pull. Rather than pull 4 tractors again out of 6, we decided to pull the entire class again. There were no trophies for the class (only bragging rights) but everyone was more than happy to have another hook.



Action shot of driver's meeting – yell louder Zack!

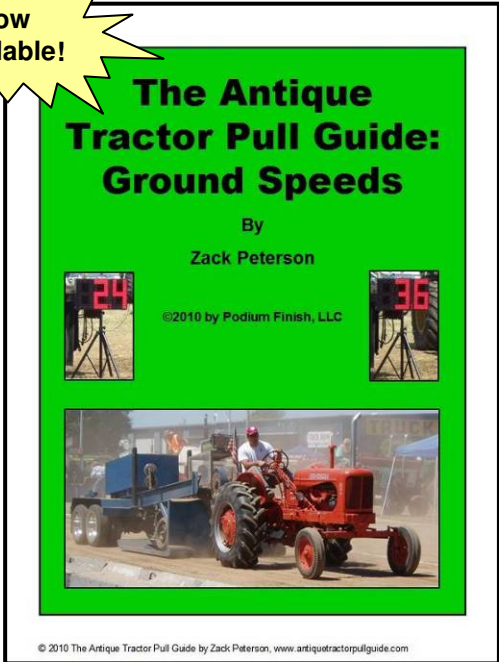
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The Antique Tractor Pull Guide: Ground Speeds

What's inside:

- Ground speeds for most makes and models featured in The Antique Tractor Pull Guide.
- Ground speeds shown with respect to different RPM and different tire sizes.
- Ground speeds shown in every gear from near idle to full RPM, including USAP/NATPA allowed RPM's.
- How to figure ground speeds for any tractor at any RPM, allowing for cut tires & lower tire pressures.
- Ground speeds for gearing variations including creeper gears, ring & pinion changes, M&W 9 Speed transmissions, Sherman transmissions and more!



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New Pulling Parts Available

The parts pictured below are the product of Ethan Berry of Vermontville, MI. He's creating new crosses for Constellation series MM tractors out of fiberglass, as well as fiberglass MM fenders (coming soon). He also has fiberglass Farmall M gas tanks and Farmall fenders for sale.

The advantage of using fiberglass parts is obvious for weight savings, however, Ethan's parts are sturdy, well made and accurate enough for restoration purposes. The Constellation series crosses are a good example, since originals are often broken.



For info or orders, contact Ethan directly:
Ethan D. Berry
The Mopower Ranch
Vermontville, MI
517-243-0617

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The Podium Newsletter reaches over 500 subscribers (and increasing fast) every month? Do you have a product or service to offer? If so, advertising in the Podium Newsletter and on www.antiquetractorpullguide.com may benefit you or your business, and at ridiculously low rates!

For more information, contact Zack at zack@antiquetractorpullguide.com

Podium Newsletter



Coming next month...

- Massey Harris Mustang Upgrades
- Pull Schedules
- Puller Spotlight
- And more...

June issue will be available 6/24/11

I want to hear from you! If you have feedback, requests or information you would like featured, please send an email to:
zack@antiquetractorpullguide.com.

Jack Muirhede II
watches the
competition
closely from the
seat of his
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