

Podium Newsletter

October 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.

Ideas to Finance Pulling

The one thing that most motorsports have in common is the cost. To haul tractors to pulls, pay entry fees, upgrade components and more does take A bit of an investment. Unless you are otherwise financially free, there are ways to finance pulling to allow competing in the sport without breaking the bank. Here are a few ideas that come to mind that may offset the cost of a pulling season:

Sponsors – If you love pulling, why not get paid to do it? Sponsors who are often businesses may exchange real money for advertising opportunities. This means you may be required to place stickers, banners or flags on the tractor or wear a hat or t-shirt while at an event. The best kind of sponsors are local type businesses – folks that would love to get the word out about their products or services in a friendly way. Also, a business sponsor may be able to supply items or services instead of compensation. This could be parts from a local auto store, clothing from a western wear store, or even sandwiches for the day of the pull from a local deli. When approaching a potential sponsor, always remember to describe what’s in it for them - that is, what events you may attend, where you’ll be and who will see their logos or products.

The other side of the tractor hobby – Collecting. Antique tractors are not just used for pulling, and many of us have tractors that are considered collector’s items. The “rare stuff”, or less common tractors may be bought and sold, sometimes at a profit. “Wheeling and Dealing” as it’s called, can generate a little extra income to be put toward the pulling fund as long as tractors keep moving.



For Sale: MH 444 w/3pt, PS, runs good \$1950 obo. Contact Zack for more details.

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Ideas to Finance Pulling (cont)

Deal in parts – Also associated with collecting and pulling too, parts are a great way to make a few extra bucks. Many times tractors are found in poor shape and would take an extraordinary amount of time and effort to bring back to life. These machines make great parts tractors and higher dollar components such as carburetors, magnetos, distributors, sheet metal, wheels/tires, engine components and so on make great items to sell. Also, this is October, which we've always referred to as the start of "Ebay Season." The days are getting shorter and outdoor activities are dwindling, thus more folks are spending time parked in front of the computer ogling parts and thinking about winter projects.



Typical Parts Tractor

Create a product or service – This obviously doesn't have to surround tractor pulling, but can be a great way to generate a little more moola to cover expenses. For example, in our area there is a woman named Diane Bouwman who brings her video camera to every pull. She sits and records each hook at the pull and then creates a DVD of that pull when she gets home. While at the pull, she gathers the names of folks who are interested in the DVD and charges each a fee for their copy. Voila! I'm sure her husband Doug doesn't mind that she spends time doing this, because it likely helps cover their pulling expenses.

Another great example that is related to pulling is Ethan Berry's fiberglass parts. Here's a guy who went out and created something that he knew folks would be interested in – losing weight. His fiberglass parts are very high quality and are so good that they can double for restoration replacement parts as well.

So there you have it, with a little thought and some planning it is possible to offset the operating cost of this hobby. Of course, if you were to ask me I will say every time, "YOU CAN'T PUT A PRICE ON FUN!!!"

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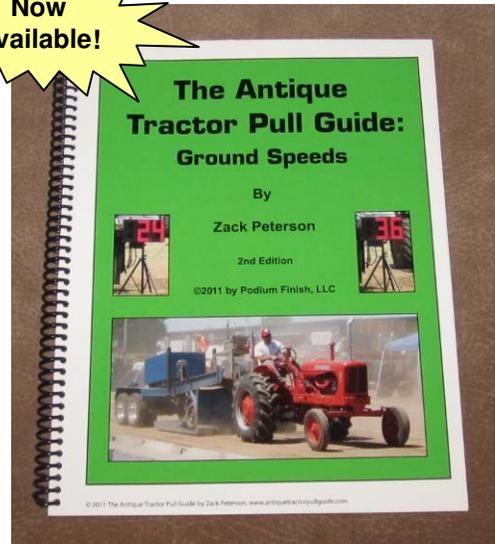


It's HERE!!! The All New 142 page 2nd Edition!

The All New 2nd Edition of
The Antique Tractor Pull Guide: Ground Speeds

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- New ground speed charts added – expanding to 142 pages! Now includes speeds for Allis WC with Sherman Transmission, Deere 430/435, Slow speed letter models, and more!
- 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.
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- Figure ground speeds for any tractor at any RPM, allowing for cut tires & lower tire pressures.
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Puller Spotlight – Adam Ruscha

By Adam Ruscha

Hello, I'm Adam Ruscha from Stockton, Missouri. I'm originally from El Dorado Springs, Missouri which isn't all that far from where I settled down in Stockton. I graduated high school in 1998 and continued my education in Joplin, Missouri at Missouri Southern State University. I left MSSU with a bachelor degree in Business Administration and a minor in Total Quality Management. Upon completion of my degree, I pursued a career running a powder coating shop in El Paso, Texas. I did that for a couple of years before making the decision to relocate back to my hometown area. I am now employed by KAMO Power in El Dorado Springs as a material and purchasing specialist. I have been married to my lovely wife Ashley since June of 2010. We live on 40 acres with our Jack-Rat Terriers named Rudy and Diesel.



I've been involved in the sport of tractor pulling since the summer of 1991. I grew up as a third generation J.I. Case fan. My uncle Bob started Ruscha Machinery Sales in Verona, Missouri and operated it for many years before his passing in 2001. The business is now run by my cousin, Thad. As any of the many customers through the years can tell you, Ruscha Machinery is a great place to contact if you are looking for J.I. Case tractor parts. Uncle Bob and my father, Don were instrumental in my involvement with the sport. They built and pulled a CC Case through the 1970's and were quite successful with it. Dad still owns and pulls the tractor once in a while to this day. I grew up hearing stories of the many pulls they attended before I was born.



Me, standing in the wheel of Dad's CC with my Grandpa Ray in the early 1980's.

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Puller Spotlight – Adam Ruscha (cont)

By Adam Ruscha

Tractor pulling sure seemed like a wonderful thing to get involved with. As I got older, my knowledge of tractors couldn't help but thrive seeing as how I was around them all the time on the family farm. Dad was a field mechanic for the highway department and pulling wrenches became second nature to my younger brother and me.

It was during the summer months of 1991; we made a trip to Joplin, Missouri and bought a brand new Honda Fourtrax 300 ATV. We were on our way home and happened to stop at a gas station and saw a flier for an ATV/mini-rod pull in Avilla, MO that very night. I begged Dad to let me pull the 4-wheeler that night, and as I recall it didn't take too much begging. We headed home and did the chores, then turned around and headed for my first pull.

When it came time to get ready to pull, I found out that I had to have a helmet to participate. That was a bit of a problem because I didn't have one. A really nice gentleman that had a modified puller called "The Power Pig" loaned me his helmet. It was a little too big for my 10 year old head, but it served the purpose...it allowed me to pull. There were several ATV's in my class of various sizes and brands, but the new red Honda prevailed and I won my first trophy for a 1st place finish. I still have it on the shelf in my office to this day.

It was a few years after that, when I was able to hook to a sled again. My family did a lot of custom hay baling when I was younger. Dad would run the mower, my brother and I would usually be in charge of raking the hay, then Dad would come along and wrap it up with the baler. One summer in about 1994-95, I had a desire to own a VAC Case. We found one in the paper. It was a 1954 model with 3 point and 34" rear tires. It wasn't the prettiest thing, but it ran well and I had the \$600 it took to buy it. I decided shortly after buying it that I wanted to get into tractor pulling. We started loading newly acquired VAC and the ol' CC and going to pulls. Now I would love to say that I went out there and won piles of trophies, but that wasn't nearly the way it happened at all. I think I pulled that wore out VAC for about 2 years and never did much better than last place. The tractor was entirely too heavy, and the engine was average at best.



My first trophy from the ATV pull in 1991

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Puller Spotlight – Adam Ruscha (cont)

By Adam Ruscha

My brother used to tease me that he couldn't cheer for me because the tractor had already ran out of power before he could clap or say "C'mon Adam!" Needless to say, I got tired of losing pretty quick. I decided to do something about it.

I turned 16 years old around this time and had an hourly paying job while I was in high school. We knew of this old 1951 VAC that was sitting in the fencerow about 20 miles from my hometown. I got it bought for a hundred dollar bill. I was working when Dad and my brother brought it by the store I was working at. It looked even rougher on the trailer than it did in the fencerow. If memory serves me correct, one rear tire was holding a little air, the rest were flat. The flat rear tire was mounted backward, and the cylinder head was gone from the top of the engine block and had been for quite some time. It was going to take some work, but I could see the potential. After several trips to my Uncle Bob's place in Verona, I had everything I needed to make a VAC pulling tractor, or so I thought.

Dad and I spent several hours building the engine, getting the unnecessary weight stripped off of it, building weight brackets, hitches, and wheelie bars. I put a set of 26" tires from a 660 Case combine on the rear, and sharpened them up. We shot a coat of Van Sickle Flambeau Red paint on it and were ready to go. The little Case did considerably better than its predecessor (which is still being used on my farm), but still was leaving me short of winning trophies. The 26" combine tires never got enough traction for my liking. I switched to a pair of 14.9 x 28 Goodyear Traction Torque tires. That is when things started looking up.



My 1951 VAC pulling at the Hickory County Missouri Fairground in 1999.



Some of the trophies collected over the years.

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Puller Spotlight – Adam Ruscha (cont)

By Adam Ruscha

I had been pulling this tractor for close to a year before I won a small purple 3rd place trophy at a pull in Schell City, MO. I couldn't have been prouder though. All that hard work paid off. Since then, the VAC has seen many changes including; 4 different tire sizes/cuts, engine adjustments, hitch adjustments, some serious weight loss in the form of a lighter battery, custom hubs, smaller fuel tank, and cutting material out of wheels and other parts. I still have a lot of things I want to do to it, even to this day. I don't think a pulling tractor is ever what you'd call "done". Even though I have won piles of trophies including Missouri State Fair wins, and some respectable NATPA finishes, there is always room for improvement.

Along with pulling the VAC, I have pulled a turbocharged diesel hot farm tractor with the Missouri State Tractor Pullers Association for a couple of years. I still have the 900 Case I competed with, but there comes a point where you are spending more money than it is worth, and that is the situation I ended up with there. If I was winning, there was someone spending more money to beat me, and then I had to get into my wallet to get back on top. It is and was a vicious cycle and wasn't a game that I could afford to play when I was an 18 year old college student, and I'm not so sure I could do it now, especially without making the wife really mad! I did learn a lot by pulling that circuit though. I used an EDM machine to modify the holes in my fuel injectors to change the spray patterns and amounts, and was able to gain valuable experience working on diesel engines which was something I had never done at the time. I gained a lot of knowledge about turbochargers, injection pumps, and how much pressure stock head gaskets will really take. After moving back to Missouri from Texas, I dabbled in garden tractor pulling with my younger brother.

I pulled a Cub Cadet in the stock classes and actually won a points championship with it the first year I drove it. My 2 year old nephew staked claim to that tractor after the first year of me driving it, so I no longer pull it, but he sure does.



Case Ruscha, age 2, pulling the practice sled at the Ruscha family farm

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Puller Spotlight – Adam Ruscha (cont)

By Adam Ruscha

After messing with the stock tractors, I decided to build an alcohol powered garden tractor. I put together a modified 16 horse Kohler block with a stroked crankshaft, billet cam, aftermarket rod and piston, a 6" custom aluminum intake with a 44 Mikuni carburetor. After getting a fuel pump on it big enough to feed the thing, it turned out to be a pretty wild little ride.

I haven't done much with the garden tractor lately, as I have focused my interest back onto the VAC and antique tractor pulling.

Looking back, I've really enjoyed every pull I've been to over the past 20 years. It has been a great way to spend time with my family and make some new acquaintances in the pulling world. I have found antique and classic tractor pulling to be a much more affordable form of motorsport competition than automotive racing. It is truly an addictive hobby as well as an enjoyable one. I look forward to many more years of pulling tractors myself and will enjoy assisting my nephews in their pulling adventures in the future. I urge anyone with an interest in tractors to give it a shot, there are a lot of pullers out there that are a big help to young and/or new participants of the sport.



Alcohol powered Cub Cadet after the first 4 pulls



"The Bad Birdie" pulling at Billings, MO
Antique/Classic Tractor Pull in 2011

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Fiberglass pulling parts

MM & Farmall Fiberglass Parts

They are finally here! Fiberglass MM Late R clamshell fenders. These fenders weigh 7lbs a piece! Will also fit other MM models – U, Z, etc.

Ethan D. Berry
The Mopower Ranch
Vermontville, MI
517-243-0617

Ethan is a good friend, fellow puller and very knowledgeable about tractors. He has used his skills as an engineer to create some amazing pulling parts that are high enough quality for restorations too.



Fiberglass MM 5 Star Grille Cross



Fiberglass Farmall Fenders

Farmall M gas tanks also available. Stay tuned for more parts coming soon!

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Slinging Weights – Ways to Lighten the Load

Moveable weight is always important for tractor pulling. Add on weights are also used to move to different weight classes. If a tractor is hauled to a pull, more times than not it's entered into different weight classes to enjoy more than one hook. This means heaving weights becomes the norm, likely more than once. Between unloading weights after hauling, weigh-ins, shifting weights, and weighting up for heavier classes, pullers get a good workout during an afternoon at the track. Now, to make a very general statement, most pullers don't look like world class athletes. The days after a pull can be plagued with sore muscles, sore back and general fatigue from over exertion. What are some ways to head off this soreness between pulls, or at least cut down the number of times weights have to be moved?

Cut down the number of hooks – This is also known as the “pull less and BS more” tactic. By hooking your tractor less times or not moving up in too many weight classes, less weight has to be moved before each hook. This also leaves a little extra time to visit with fellow pullers.

Use lighter weights – It's a little more difficult to move up in weight classes since more smaller weights must be added, but they are much easier to handle. One hundred pound suitcase weights (IH, JD, MM, etc.) are very common, but slinging 10 of them between classes to go up 1000lbs can wear a guy out. Handling 110lb MM wheel weights or 130lb IH wheel weights are even tougher. It takes 17 weights that are 60lb or 25 weights that are 40lb to equal the same 1000lbs. Forty pound suitcase weights are by far the easiest to handle.

Keep weights off the ground – Dumping suitcase or wheel weights on the ground and then having to bend over and pick them up can cause significant fatigue or even injury. Having a rack or some place to store weights when not on the tractor that is at about mid-thigh level makes handling weights much easier.



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Slinging Weights – Ways to Lighten the Load (cont)



More examples of portable weight racks to store weights off the ground

Lift weights other than at the pull – Here's a concept -> hit the gym for a work out between pulls. This is not only a good way to avoid soreness, but it builds strength, endurance and improves overall health. Oh yeah, and skip the hand dipped corn dog at the next pull too. In fact, shedding a few extra pounds inside the overalls can help in pulling too, but that's a discussion for another day.



Wheel weight rack

Bring a tractor for each class – This is similar to pulling fewer times, but if you want to pull at different weights, use different machines to do so. Weight loading can be done at home at your leisure and minimal weight movement is needed at the pull.

And finally, **Form a Pit Crew** – A few extra helping hands to throw weights between classes can be a big help. Younger, strong kids are good for a pit crew as well as fellow pullers. Often times if pullers are in different weight classes, they may help each other throw weights between hooks.

Podium Newsletter



Coming next month...

- Mounting Tires Tubeless
- Making a difference for the kids
- Puller Spotlight
- And more...

November issue will be available 11/17/11

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.

NW Nationals Recap

These 10 ribbons, 2 plaques and large trophy all came from the same tractor pull – the NW Fall Nationals in Moses Lake, WA. Stay tuned for the full story in a special Podium Finish Newsletter Supplement.

