



SUPERMILEAGE

Race Update: The Shell Eco-Marathon 2015

Walking into the Cobo Center Friday morning was a dream come true for Supermileage teams across the world. The atmosphere was buzzing with young teams from five different countries eager to test their beloved vehicles. Shell's number one concern for the competing teams was safety. As such, they created a rigorous technical inspection consisting of ten tests that made sure the cars were safe. This year, our Race Strategy team developed tests back home in the Wilson Center so that we were able to make sure our car passed some tests prior to arriving in Detroit. After we passed only four of ten tests on our first time through, we knew it was going to be a greater challenge than we originally had hoped for. We ran into a problem with the kill switch due to the changes in the rules that requires two movements, i.e. a pull and twist to kill the engine. After some design, build, and testing of our reverse-engineered switch, we passed the engine test. Additionally, our ingenious creation of a single-handed steering device garnered extra attention from the Inspectors: meaning we had to wait until the following day for welding to open to make sure our apparatus was extra secure. These minor

setbacks added up and we finally passed Saturday afternoon. As we raced into the queue line to test Son of Cypress on the outdoor streets, they closed the track right before us. After a few moments of quiet distress, we decided to fix up what we could, and then get a goodnight's rest before coming in early for our last opportunity to race.

Sunday began early and productively with the help of some much-needed caffeine. Our Chief Engineer went straight to welding, but once the steering was fastened, other pieces began to fall apart. On our first attempt on the streets of Detroit, our chain tensioner broke so we were forced to return to our paddock. After more adjustments were made, we tested once more on the indoor track. As our driver began to make her turn, the chain tensioner once again fell off. Locking up the rear wheel, Son of Cypress skidded and rolled into a barrier¹.

Failure to complete an official test-run aside, we are proud with how Son of Cypress preformed. The roll bar withstood the flip, our driver remained secure in the seatbelt, and the body stands virtually unharmed. We know we can be confident in our safety measures and our determination is now only that much greater for Shell Eco-Marathon 2016. Shell did an amazing job engaging the community with the competition, and we are looking forward the next couple years being held close to home in downtown Detroit.

Editor: Morgan Freeby



“Our determination is now only that much greater for Shell Eco-Marathon 2016.”

¹For footage of the crash, please visit our flickr and/or Facebook

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