

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2006 12:00 AM

Import mechanic wins national Porsche 944 title

BY JIM PARKER

The Post and Courier

The race that earned Karl Troy a national title in the Porsche 944 Super Cup series was Sunday in Ohio.

But the North Charleston repair shop owner likely became the odds-on favorite this summer when he won the Southeast championship despite burning out a clutch that left him hardly able to shift gears.

The July 30 race at Virginia International Raceway near Danville was against many of the top competitors in the country, said Troy, owner of European Road and Racing on Rivers Avenue.

After he won with a crippled car in Virginia, three drivers dropped out of the National Auto Sport Association championships at the 2.4-mile Mid-Ohio Raceway track in the countryside in Lexington this past weekend.

"Like those games on the Internet, 'You must be present to win,' " said Troy.

He went on to beat two drivers from the Northeast in the title race, completing the 19-lap race in 38 minutes, 4.7 seconds.

His best lap time of 1 minute, 44.16 seconds was more than three seconds faster than the best turned in by the two competitors.

Troy drove a 1991 Porsche 944 S2 calibrated to 200 hp to keep within the competition's boundaries on weight and power, which make the cars evenly matched mechanically. "It's a very good, potent car. Reliable, too," he said.

He and his brother, Martin Troy, also an auto mechanic and shop owner in the Charleston area, bought the vehicle seven years ago. Karl Troy didn't mention the purchase price, but said they made a good deal. "We didn't want to tie a lot of money up in the car."

In the summer race at the 3.2-mile Virginia raceway, Troy blew out the clutch and could shift only between third and fourth gear. To compensate, the racer said he had to be even more precise than usual on his turns and straightaways, not losing any time.

Troy, who drives regularly in road races, also took part this spring in the cross country One Lap of America rally behind the wheel of a British-made Ultima GTR. He finished sixth, and won one of the heats held at the Roebing Road race course near Savannah.

The National Auto Sport Association is one of two major road course racing groups in the United States, the other being the Sports Car Club of America.

Troy described the Mid-Ohio track as "one of the most beautiful and technically difficult" on the circuit.

He wasn't the only South Carolina winner at the national championships in Ohio. Jon Krolewicz of Columbia took a time trial division in which drivers raced against the clock.

He drove a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo sports car.