

# Crushing

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There wasn't a speck of gleaming chrome left on the original machine, the bones if not the very tattered soul of the Cordoba, given life and fuel. The dash is gone. So is the dome light and the speedometer.

But when O'Dell pressed down on the gas pedal the V-8 made nearby windows rattle.

Stock Cordoba engines ranged up to 190 horsepower in peak conditions.

"Some people get really serious, some are in it for money," O'Dell said. "There's two different classes, this is a chain and bang car, it all has to be factory standard. If you take a car and just drive it off the road, and then hook some chains and pull it into the derby, this is like that."

At Precision Import Auto Repair shop in Baker City, which O'Dell and Jesse Christensen own, O'Dell prepared the machine for the rigors of vehicular mayhem.

"The other class is what they call the unlimited class, and they get really serious with that," he said, allowing more extreme modifications than simple reinforcement — short of outright weaponry and hazards, of course.

Gloves, safety harness, helmet, Hans neck brace aside, the beams he's welded to the car protect it and him from the damage of a serious roll, reinforced with a gauge of steel



After the derby the Cordoba was hauled away to a more final resting place, having earned its claim to 2nd place overall.



The derby trophy resides on O'Dell's desk at Precision Import Auto in Baker City.

tubing you might more expect to connect to a fire hydrant. Even then, it's against the rules to bash in the driver's door in derbies entirely.

Paying in part, O'Dell also lined up support from Baker Brothers Mobile Tire, Ladd's Auto, Robert and Ben Cutchall and Baker Beverage and Mixer Shoppe.

"Also I want to thank Terry Yates, Rocky Soder and why not, Jesse Christensen here," said O'Dell, pointing out his mechanic and business partner. "Terry had done a lot of

demolition derbies in Lakeview, where he grew up," O'Dell said. "He brought it to my attention, (offering to drive) and I said yes," and simple as that, O'Dell was getting strapped in, helmeted up and knuckled down in demolition driving.

Awards included best and worst looking, hardest hit delivered and most miles traveled, but grand prizes were all about endurance, last one standing taking the pot.

O'Dell was there to have a blast, prizes or nay, but after nearly 30 minutes of bashing,



Karmen O'Dell detailing the welded changes they'll make to his Chrysler Cordoba to make it fit to compete in the Demolition Derby on Aug. 6, 2022.



Karmen O'Dell behind the wheel of his '78 Chrysler Cordoba, a car later transformed to survive the Haines Demolition Derby on Aug. 6, 2022.

two 15-minute heats with a pit stop between them, Karmen smashed his way to the finals and ultimately took home second place, \$1,000 and a shining trophy for proof.

The trophy is on display

in O'Dell's office at Precision Import but whatever you do, don't wipe off the dust and grime.

"It's still covered in dirt from the derby," said O'Dell, and for him it's all part of the glory.

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