



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 8 – July 2017

Nationals time is on us already!

We hope everyone is ready for the big event hosted by Cwmdru Car Club at The Ovals, Lyonshall on August 5th and 6th. Congratulations to all those who have qualified through their leagues. The full list of entries, and the official reserves, can be viewed on NASA's website or Facebook page. The "pairings" that produce the heat grid draws will not be revealed until you arrive at the venue and receive the official programme. After the League Chairmen's committee discussed and voted on the available options for this year we agreed to go back to the old system of saving the draw as a surprise for everyone rather than repeat the "live draw" that's been tried in the last few years. As usual, feedback will be welcomed as we start to plan for next year.

This year we start the experiment of running the Ladies' and Juniors' Nationals just two weeks after the men's – at the same venue on August 19th and 20th. We'll be interested to receive your feedback on whether you find this to be an improvement on the traditional timing.

Whether you're competing in either Nationals meeting, spectating and supporting your league members, or part of the NASA or host club's teams of officials, we hope you have a safe, enjoyable and memorable two weekends in this lovely part of Herefordshire.

NATIONALS 2019

If your club or league is interested in hosting the Nationals in 2019, whether the men's the Ladies' and Juniors', or both, now's the time to start putting your detailed bid together. We're allowing a bit more time for applications than in the past, but the deadline to submit bids is 1 October, following which all clubs and leagues that have put in bids will be asked to make a presentation to the Board before a final decision is made.

Initially clubs and leagues can express their interest by emailing Diane Tomkinson, the NASA Secretary, and we'll then provide whatever help and advice is needed on an individual basis as the detailed presentations are prepared.



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NATIONALS 2018

We've mentioned it in previous newsletters, but we know that some members would like us to confirm again that both the 2018 Nationals meetings will be hosted by South Wales League. The planned dates are 4/5 August for the Men's Nationals and 18/19 August for the Ladies' and Juniors'.

At the time of South Wales' successful bid to host the Nationals, the league potentially had a choice of venues but now we're 99% certain that the venue for both events will be the familiar Castle Lloyd Farm, between Red Roses and Pendine.

DOGS AT RACE MEETINGS

There was a distressing incident at a recent race meeting when a young child, spectating with a family group, needed medical attention after being attacked by a fellow spectator's dog. We're pleased to say that the child's physical injuries were not too serious although of course it will have been an extremely traumatic experience for her and her family. All of us at NASA send our best wishes to the family as they recover from this ordeal.

Many motorsports do not permit animals to be brought into race venues; we don't want or intend to let Autograss go in this direction as we recognise that for many of our members, their dogs are an integral part of their family day or weekend out at a race meeting. However, we must remind all our dog owning members of their responsibility to ensure that this unfortunate incident remains a one-off.

If you bring your dog racing, it's a condition of entry that the dog must remain under control and on the lead at all times, whether on the race field or the campsite.

We'll also be asking all clubs to provide prominent signs at the entrances to their venues and at points in the spectator areas, together with programme notices, reminding all visitors of these conditions. We hope nobody thinks we're going over the top with these conditions – we don't want any other family to suffer what happened in this case, or any visitor to a NASA event to feel threatened by a dog.



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DISCIPLINARY CASES

In the last newsletter we told you about the new disciplinary procedures being trialled by NASA this year, which involves cases being heard by independent panels made up, in the main, of experienced league representatives. They will make recommendations to the Board of Directors, who are still ultimately responsible for imposing any disciplinary penalty.

We were, of course, hoping that the new panel wouldn't have much to do, but a few cases have arisen in recent weeks. Some of these have resulted in no full disciplinary proceedings being needed, although stiff "final warning" letters will have been issued in some cases.

One case that's now been concluded, subject to any possible appeal, concerns events following a Stock Hatch race at Yorkshire Dales track on Sunday 21 May. Driver Gavin Bosomworth (Y105) has had his licence suspended for two months, ending on 21 July 2017. This is followed by a one year ban, suspended for one year, so that the period of probation ends on 21 July 2018. This is in addition to any local club and league penalties that may have been imposed.

NATIONALS PHOTOGRAPHERS

We've decided to try and make life easier for photographers and other media attending the National Championships by providing a central point of contact to obtain and confirm accreditation for the event. We're aware that often in the past photographers have found the Nationals confusing as there's no obvious signing on location for them.

Therefore, if you're a photographer wishing to apply for on-track access, and/or access to restricted areas during the Nationals meeting, please would you register your interest by contacting jeffrey.parish@national-autograss.co.uk.

We'll let you know as soon as possible whether your application's been successful and we'll advise you of times and places where you can sign on. A limited number of photographers will be given access to restricted areas so, if we don't already know you, it would be helpful if you could provide a reference from the club where you regularly work. You'll also need to provide evidence of your public liability insurance cover when you sign on.



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NATIONALS PHOTOGRAPHERS *(continued)*

Of course, anyone wishing to take photos or videos purely from public areas is still free to do so and the nature of the Cwmdru venue will provide you with plenty of excellent opportunities.

The one exception to this is the flying of drones over the venue, which we cannot permit without special permission – any application will need to be vetted in advance by our insurers and risk managers to ensure that the necessary insurances, licences and risk assessments are in place.

ELECTION TIME

Well, it's a little while away yet, but it will soon be upon us! Nominations will be needed for any new candidates wishing to join the NASA Board of Directors for 2018. The election will take place at the NASA AGM on 26 November and the deadline for nominations will be Monday 16 October, which will creep up on us in no time after another busy couple of months' racing.

As usual, three of the current directors will be retiring and (we hope!) standing for re-election, these being Barbara Harper, Keith Matthews and Jeffrey Parish. But those of you who take an interest in these things will be aware that we prefer to have ten places on the board and, at the moment, only eight of those places are filled. It could be a very good time for some new blood to come onto the board. To be eligible for election you need to have been a NASA "associate member", which means holding any class of NASA licence, since at least 1 April this year, and you need to find two NASA "full members", or league chairmen/representatives, to propose and second you. Anyone who's seriously interested in joining us now has nearly three months to make their mind up, gather support – and chat to the current directors. Any of the current board will be more than happy to give you an insight into what's involved in being part of the NASA directors' team.

SCRUTINEERING UPDATE

The scrutineering team have made a start on the new versions of the class rule books. If anyone has any ideas, suggestions or thoughts on these, please contact your league chief scrutineer or email Vernon Mackenzie direct.



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SCRUTINEERING UPDATE *(continued)*

The “blue tagging” programme of certifying roll cage tube thickness has settled down and we’ve not had reports of anyone attempting to race an untagged car, which would be a serious disciplinary offence. There’s now a £20 charge for any car being tagged, either for the first time or being re-tagged due to damage repairs or alterations, which is helping to offset the costs of the exercise. We’re pleased with the response from members, who have been willing to travel to get cars tagged.

Clubs and leagues need to do everything possible to make sure that tags are registered to the right people. All leagues should have the latest tagging spread sheet that can be printed off and easily checked when cars are scrutineered at club meetings.

Vernon has made an experimental start to the “red tagging” programme, covering other areas of car construction and safety, at the South Wales BAS round; there will be a bit of trial and error in getting the checklist sheets right, but progress was made when the first red tag was awarded to Bradley Thomas’ IK55 Mini! Vernon will continue to trial the checklists to see how it's going to work before handing the job over to selected people. More details will follow the trial.

Tyres are also high on the scrutineering team’s agenda at the moment, the main concern being costs. NASA has commenced a series of meetings with tyre suppliers to discuss this and other issues.

With the Nationals fast approaching all clubs and leagues are urged to make sure that all cars representing them are within the class rules. Vernon has a new simple checklist, available to club and league scrutineers, that may help with this.

Overall, car and driver safety has improved across the board over the last two years. Areas such as seats, seat belts, roll cages etc, have received attention, lots of changes and improvements have been made and the intention is that this will continue to develop with the “red tagging”.

The most important aspect of any safety programme is driver awareness; a lot can be done to promote this at club level.



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NATIONALS SCRUTINEERING

Please will everyone competing at the Nationals or involved on scrutineering read the following notes from the Director in charge of scrutineering, Vernon Mackenzie.

All clubs and leagues should make sure that all cars representing them at the Nationals are going to pass scrutineering. There is nothing different about national scrutineering, other than more eyes looking. Most of the cars competing at the Nationals will have qualified at league level and will have been scrutineered a few times. If the car is not right, it shouldn't be there.

We are working to the 2015 rule book, apart from any new rules and updates that have happened over the last 18 months. I will supply a reminder of all new rules and updates in the next few days, please ask if you are unsure, don't leave it until the event.

There is a pre-scrutineering checklist available to all clubs and leagues, as has been mentioned at the last few scrutineers meetings; it's a simple way of checking a car so that nothing is overlooked.

We are considering scrutineering all cars that have a completed checklist, signed by the league Scrutineer, first, maybe with a fast track to the front of the queue.

The scrutineering team are there to make sure that cars are safe and within the rules, not to find dangerous cars or cars that are outside the rules. Such cars will not be allowed to race, causing embarrassment to everyone. Any cars suspected to have problems will be put into a separate area and dealt with last.

As you may be aware, we are ready to start "red tagging". Some cars have been checked already. In theory, 400 cars should be ready for red tags at the Nationals but there are some obstacles. We are reluctant to start because of this. The biggest problem is the importance of the tags, and related information.

As soon as the names and race numbers of the 400 competitors were made available, we started checking the blue tag database, something that all clubs and leagues have access to. We checked all of Class 1, 2, and 3, 120 cars. 28 of them had incorrect details without even checking the tag number. This needs sorting out before arriving at the Nationals.



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NATIONALS SCRUTINEERING *(continued)*

The blue tag will be checked before the car enters the scrutineering lane, if there are any problems the car will not be allowed to continue until corrected.

Scrutineers will be operating all through the heats on both days, as always if any problems are found with a car, it will be excluded.

Finally, if any competitor abuses any scrutineering official, they will be left until last.

Key points are:

- 1) Cars should be pre-checked by the club/league scrutineer (checklists available)
- 2) Signed pre-list cars will be scrutineered first (fast track)
- 3) Blue tag fitted, registered to correct name and race number (if not car cannot move to scrutineering)
- 4) Scrutineering will be operational all weekend, cars should be correct at all times.

FIXTURE LIST UPDATES

We're still having problems keeping the NASA website up to date with the latest fixture information. We want the official site to be an accessible and reliable source of information for anyone planning a visit to an Autograss event, but we can only do this with the help of officials in all clubs.

Please will all clubs use the fixtures@national-autograss.co.uk email address or the link provided on the website to advise us as soon as you've made the decision whether a race meeting's on or off. We know that most of you post on club Facebook pages but we can only update our site if we know the information's from an official source – and believe it or not, our webmaster isn't constantly trawling Facebook!



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STOCK HATCH AND F600 NATIONALS

Plans are already afoot for 2018's premier event for the two NASA sanctioned "club classes".

The Stock Hatch and F600 committees have been working together to run a joint National Championship meeting again next year and the successful applicant to host the meeting, drawn from a hat at this year's Yorkshire Dales event, was Sturton & Stow Motor Sports Club. The Nationals for the two classes will therefore be held at the Caenby Corner track, on a date which will be confirmed once the major series dates have been approved.

NASA are aware that there was some controversy over the selection process for the 2018 host club, but as far as we're concerned it was a decision within the remit of the two committees that NASA has authorised to oversee their respective classes.

NASA'S BY-LAWS

At an Extraordinary General Meeting held in June, the NASA By-Laws were adopted as a part of our legal constitution. The By-Laws are intended to document existing NASA procedures and will be binding on the directors unless they're changed by a majority of league representatives at an AGM or EGM. Much of the content was brought forward and modernised from a document that some of you may remember, called "Living with NASA". Subjects covered include:

- The aims and objectives of NASA
- The democratic structure of the organisation
- Definitions and requirements for clubs and leagues
- Procedures for forming new clubs or leagues, or moving clubs between leagues
- Fees charged to clubs and leagues
- Detailed processes for the election of directors and officials
- The roles of the national committees

We'll get the by-laws uploaded shortly onto the NASA website so that they're accessible to all members.



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WALSALL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There's been a growing concern about attendances at the (roughly quarterly) meetings of the League Chairmen's Committee at Walsall. At the June meeting, which is often the worst attended of the year, we had eight leagues represented. More frustratingly, only two of the twelve league reps not in attendance had bothered to contact us and send in the proxy votes that we needed for the EGM section of the meeting.

We do appreciate that league representatives' time is at a premium on a busy race weekend, and this was a particularly busy weekend. Sandwiched between the MAP and the BAS/UKAC weekend, and with BAS/UKAC opting to run on what would normally be the last weekend available for National qualifying, nearly every league was squeezing in a final qualifier. But when two of the hardest working league reps could manage to send their apologies and appoint proxies, why couldn't the others?

The Board's discussed the problem and one point of view is that we don't want to force league reps to attend meetings that they clearly consider a waste of time. Another suggestion was to fine leagues for non-attendance!

The Board's now suggesting that maybe the number of full committee meetings should be cut to two per year, one pre-season and one post-season (the AGM). These meetings usually get an (almost) full attendance with plenty of information to be gathered. The rest of the time, when everyone's busy with day to day racing, we'd encourage league reps to keep in touch by making more use of the closed Facebook group that has already been set up for them.

Traditionally, the Chairmen's, Scrutineers' and combined Marshals' and Safety Officers' Committees have all met on the same day at Walsall – thereby economising on shared travel and on block bookings of meeting rooms. However, it could be time to reconsider the approach. Recently a smaller gathering of scrutineers met at short notice and had a very productive meeting. Possibly the way forward is for these groups to arrange their own meetings at whatever frequency meets their needs?

We'll be looking for feedback from those who attend all the various committees – and those who don't!



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FURTHER READING

Subject of course to what we've said above, about attendances at Walsall committee meetings, we'd like to draw members' attention to the fact that the minutes of these meetings are all published on the NASA website. Therefore, if you'd like to keep up to date, or perhaps find out what your elected league reps have been saying, or leaving unsaid on your behalf (or even whether they turned up!) it's all there for you to read.

A note of caution, though – don't automatically assume that because something's minuted at a meeting it becomes a NASA rule. It might only be one person's opinion that's been recorded. Discussion and guidance from the committees is very much valued by the NASA directors, but nothing becomes a rule, a rule amendment or an official clarification, until it's been discussed by the Board and included in an official bulletin.

LUKE BRANSTON

Sadly we have to report another tragedy to hit our racing world with the news that Luke Branston passed away following an accident at work on 21 June.

Luke was a well known and popular racer in BRISCA Formula 2 Stock Cars, showing great promise and achieving increasing success racing alongside brother Micky. However, as most NASA members, and particularly those in the East Midland League will know, the Branston family is deeply involved in Autograss racing. With their parents Kevin and Sharon being long term racers and club and league officials, both of the boys, and sister Lisa, raced successfully as Juniors before moving into other classes. Even after making the successful move into Stock Car racing, the two brothers retained their love and interest for Autograss and their many friends within the NASA clubs and Luke's passing has united the Stock Car and Autograss worlds who will miss him equally. Our condolences to all his family and friends.



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MORE SAD LOSSES

We've also been very sorry to hear of the loss of other members in the sport who'll be very sadly missed.

Hanna Thomas, the 2005 Ladies' Class 4 National Champion, passed away on 13 July. Our sympathies to Ken, and to all their friends and family.

We've also received the news of the passing of Paul Seymour, a former Chairman of Cambridge Autograss Club and a loyal supporter of the East Anglian League over many years. Our sympathies to all Paul's family and friends.

These losses bring us to mention the exciting plans for a programme of Autograss-related Cancer Research fund raising events, kicking off at the Nationals and building up to a climax following the end of the season, co-ordinated by Sue Herdman. The plans are developing too fast for us to go into any details here, but we're sure all our members will be following the news from Sue and her team on social media. We congratulate Sue on her initiative and NASA looks forward to following and supporting these events as they unfold.

If you have any issues that you'd like to bring to the directors' attention, your first option is to follow the established procedure and ask your league representatives to submit agenda items for the Chairmen's, Scrutineers', Marshals' or Safety Officers' committees. You're also welcome though to contact any director personally (our contact details are all on the website and in the fixture books) or to email us all via diane.tomkinson@national-autograss.co.uk.