



## NATIONAL AUTOGRASS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021/JAN 2022

# ISSUE 18

We hope that you have all had a wonderful Christmas and looking forward to the 2022 Season Whilst still living with the current pandemic we managed to hold an almost normal 2021 Season. hosting both Nationals and most clubs hosting race meetings. The UKAC and BAS both managed to hold their series which without everyone working hard to the rules and regulations this would not have been possible.

January started sadly with the cancelation of the Autosport Show which is usually one of the first meetings of the year that sees many Autograss Members meet up, and our sport to be represented on display, and in the live action.

In 2021 we introduced online licence applications which most clubs signed up to this process, allowing their members to complete their licence application online. Well over 3500 members used this process.

This was a big step forward in the sport and the process will improve over time.

We also gave competitors for the Ladies & Junior Nationals the option to complete their applications online which also proved very successful.

Whilst the start of the Season saw restriction with just NASA Members attending meetings this saw an increase in membership and help clubs financially with the extra membership fees. We hope that all clubs can retain these members going forward. We hope those members who joined clubs who would not normally still continue to support the clubs in 2022. Many drivers liked the option of being able to pre-register and pay their gate fees up front and of course clubs can still offer this option if they wish. As normality progressed, we managed to see the UKAC & BAS start their series seeing great attendances.

Many clubs hosted two-day meetings along with the Stock Hatch Nationals held at Sturton & Stow. Whilst the Men's Nationals was very different in 2021, we were pleased that the event hosted by York Autograss Club went ahead. We witnessed some great racing and some very worthy National Champions, and our 2021 National Champion of Champions was non other than Adam Henley Yorks very own class 4 driver.

We were also very pleased that the Ladies & Junior Nationals was hosted by Radford Club who provided an excellent venue again with some very good quality driving another Northern driver brought home the Champion of Champions trophy Scunthorpe's Class 2 Driver Jess Roberts.

Both Nationals saw changes in Scrutineering procedures with the Red Tagging, this is a big step forward in our sport, and whilst the Scrutineering Department have encouraged this previously sadly not all clubs have taken up this suggestion. In 2022 ALL cars must be red tagged (and of course blue tagged) all information regarding pre scrutineering/red tagging sessions will be published shortly. This will then mean race day scrutineering will be slightly different too.

Whilst restrictions were very different between the countries it was great to see that all countries were represented at the Nationals and after many rule changes in particular in Ireland it was great news that our Irish drivers were able to cross the water.

As the Season was ending, we saw several changes on the Board of Directors and Chairmans committee at the AGM held in November.

The Board said goodbye to Jeffrey Parish who has been a board member and company Secretary for many years. I am sure everyone would join us in Thanking Jeffrey for his work and we are sure we will still see him at race meetings behind his camera.

Diane Tomkinson & Vernon Mackenzie were re elected to the board as they had completed their 3 year term it meant they needed to re stand. Warren Beatty re-joined the board; some members may recall Warren has previously been a Director.

The Chairman's committee also saw some changed with Barry Holloway replacing Graham Bennett as the chairman, and Dave Robins replaced Ernie Ashely as the vice.

Once again, we thank Graham and Ernie for their hard work and commitment to the sport in those roles.

The Board have already started making plans for the 2022 Season with budgets set for each dept as you will see with the updates from each dept below this has been possible due to the increased membership, expenditure costs down etc.

The Board are committed to drug testing, and we hope that you agree there is no place for this in our Sport a budget of 10k has been put to one side which will cover drug testing at many events, these will not just be 2 day meetings but club meetings too.

Plans to invest into the Marshals Dept is also high on the list of priorities, with NASA purchasing their own camera equipment, and training for marshals.

The Scrutineering team will also have a budget.

Whilst departments have always had access to funds to purchase items as and when, as the 2021 draws to a close we have already allocated budgets up front to assist with forward planning in 2022. To put a close on this newsletter we have asked all heads of departments to provide their report which you can find below.

We wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The next newsletter will be published in March

Please note that we are in the process of updating the website this is time consuming so please bear with us.

## TREASURERS REPORT

In October 2021 credits were raised and sent to all clubs for all cancelled meetings for 2021.

# 2022

There will be no increase of Affiliation Fees for 2022.

The Personal Accident weekly payment has been increased to £350.00 per week, the extra charge for this will not be passed on in an increase of Affiliation fees for 2022. The cost of Affiliation fees will be looked at again at the end of 2022.

At present I have 195 meetings booked for 2022, but as now have an arrangement with insurers to only pay for meetings run, I will be at the end of the season raise credits for any cancelled meetings. It is important for you to notify me if you cancel any meetings. At this moment have not got the cost per race meetings, but as we have some outstanding Public Liability still not settled the insurers will be putting a reserve by in case, they have to settle these claims. Will have the costs for these meetings soon. As over the past two years we have not been able to have our usual 21 meetings at Walsall, travelling expenses to meetings, also we have been unable to put on NEC Show for 2 years, all this as enabled us to not have to increase Affiliation Fees, but push forward with the Drug testing, which we will be doing in 2022, there are other departments that are looking to improve things for 2022.

## MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

The licencing system will remain as in 2021 but:

As soon as affiliation fees are known, then clubs will need to set their own licence fees so will need to get in touch with Diane/myself so that these can be updated on the website.

We will also need to know if any of the clubs from 2021 that were not doing online licences, if they would like to transfer to the online system this year, as these will need to be set up.

Louise Jones has now resigned from her post as registration assistant for me for East Midlands League, Gloucester League and Scotland League.

These leagues will be taken over by:

East Midlands – Brenda Northmore

Gloucester League – Sandy Williams

Scotland League – Jan Ward

There is a new lady called Maria Houlihan from Southern Ireland who will now be sort out all of Southern Ireland's Licences.

My proposed shut off dates for 2022 are:

Signing on Sheets – Sunday 22 May 2022

Licences – Wednesday 25 May 2022

R101 – Monday 20 June 2022

L&J Forms – Monday 18 July 2022

## DISCIPLINE

Discipline rules have been changed this year and will be printed in the members handbook.

The focus of the changes has been on levelling the rules throughout the sport so that everyone adheres to the same process whether its club, league, championship, or NASA who are dealing with it. There are three stages to this.

1. Investigation and evidence gathering
2. Discipline hearing.
3. Appeals procedures

The rules are clear within the handbook.

Changes have been made to the drink driving procedures as follows No voluntary breath tests.

Only a single test will be taken no second test after half an hour.

Drivers can withdraw from a meeting prior to 8 am on the morning of the race day by attending race control and informing them.

Testing will commence at 8 am to allow drivers to withdraw.

Testing of drivers to be done in holding lanes preferably however NASA officials can request a test at any time.

The penalty for failing a breath test / failing to provide remains at twelve-month suspension of licence.

There is additional information and procedures specific to drug testing included in the new members handbook.

It is advised that all members read these rules and familiarise themselves with them.

They relate to the way in which tests will be carried out and include a comprehensive list of drugs being tested for.

This includes some drugs prescribed by doctors for example for pain relief

We would remind members that it is their responsibility to declare any prescribed medication they are currently taking and should seek their doctor's advice as to its effects on their driving ability. The penalties for providing a non-negative drugs test are as follows.

First offence a minimum two-year suspension of licence.

Second offence a minimum of a five-year suspension of licence.

Third offence mandatory lifetime ban.

Failure to provide a sample carries the same penalty as providing a non-negative sample. During the 2021 season a total of four drivers were dealt with for breathalyser offences and their licences removed for a year.

A total of four drivers were dealt with for drugs offences three received two-year removal of their licence. The fourth had their licence removed for three years.

One of those who returned a non-negative test is challenging the decision & has instructed solicitors Also, through the 2021 season two drivers were dealt with for an incident on the track where one drove the wrong way round and head on into the second driver.

Both drivers left their vehicles, and the second driver assaulted the first one. Both received a three-year ban. However, under a new system they were offered the chance to assist at meetings throughout the year by working at various tracks and demonstrating their willingness to atone for their mistakes. Their cases would later be reviewed and if the review team felt they had engaged in the process effectively then the original sentence could have a proportion of it "suspended" Both members took that opportunity, and their cases will be reviewed shortly.

# SCRUTINEERING UPDATE

The NASA Scrutineering team will remain the same for 2022 as all current officials were re-elected at the recent AGM.

There will be a league Scrutineers meeting during the first part of January where league Scrutineers will discuss plans for 2022 pre-season Scrutineering (red tagging) this was discussed at the NASAAGM in November and will be a big step forward with general car build and class specific rules that sometimes get overlooked.

Red tags fitted during 2021 will either be removed or re registered with leagues as cars are rechecked. The roll cage tagging program continues as in previous years, thank you to everyone who helps to make that work, members should make sure that their cars are tagged and registered with NASA, we can only use the information you give us so please let us know if you buy or sell a car via the website.

2022 will see the introduction of a new class 1 car, the Citroen C1, this car and it's permitted variants (Toyota Aygo and Peugeot 107) have been tested during 2020 and 2021, many thanks to the members that took the time and expense to promote what we hope will be a good alternative to the class, a first for NASA with this class will be the introduction of a NASA sealed ECU and a minimum weight,( this may then be extended to other permitted makes in the class) the rules for this are done and should be available online in early January.

Stockhatch became a NASA class in 2021, the rules for this class can be found in the download section of the NASA website, they will appear in the normal technical section when the website is updated. There will be a change in the junior special rules for 2022. As the availability of 14 inch tyres has become more difficult, the junior special will be allowed to use 15 inch wheels on the rear axle only, the tyre size is restricted to 185/65-15 only.

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter the Scrutineering department have secured a budget, some of this will be spent on the sealing and checking of the electronic components that are used on autograss cars, this will be carried out by independent specialists that will also be made available at selected race meetings similar to the process used with drug testing.

We will also be focusing on individual class specific rules, bodyshell construction, the modification of parts to reduce weight, and as always driver safety.

Please read the rules which have changed for start line safety, all cars may be fitted with a handbrake to stop movement on the start line, this will now become the drivers responsibility, see class specific rules.

Any rules that are new, have been changed or reworded will be marked # in the online rules, please check the rules that are relevant to you, all Scrutineers will be updated at the January meeting.

# SAFETY DEPARTMENT

While 2021 was both an intense and challenging year for the safety team, it was also very rewarding. At the beginning of 2021, we completely restructured the safety department and how it operates. Ray wyeth was made head of department, assisted by Darryl Smart and following his election Chris Allanson completed the team.



We started by dividing the country into 3 groups that each team member would be responsible for and in turn provide a point of contact for clubs and leagues specifically.

It is a system that has worked well we feel and enabled us to not only work closer with our safety officer's but enable us to build levels of trust that we look forward to continuing building on in 2022 and beyond.

At the end of 2021, Chris Allanson took the decision to step away from the safety team so we would like to take a moment to thank Chris for his efforts during the last 12 months.

Chris's position on the safety team was taken by the newly elected Warren Beatty, so all the clubs and leagues that was Chris's responsibility will now fall under Warren's leadership.

Once the Christmas and New year break is over Warren will indeed be taking the time to introduce himself to those clubs he will be working closely with.

At the start of 2021, the board made a commitment to drug testing at race meetings of which would run hand in hand with our existing alcohol policy, these two programmes would run under the leadership of the safety team.

2021 was difficult to plan testing for, with the obvious uncertainty around our meetings due to covid, but as we move into 2022 we are pleased to say we are now in a position to step up the number of bookings we make for drug testing and as such the safety team have been granted a budget of 10k in order for us to make multiple bookings over the course of a season including our friends in Ireland.

As a department, we have had a lot of positive feedback regarding our drug testing programme from our members, the most common feedback is the feeling of not having anywhere to report any issue's members have, so with this in mind we urge anyone who wants to have their opinions heard on this matter to come forward and speak freely and can do so in the strictest of confidence.

From 2022 the drug testing programme will be overseen by Darryl Smart, who will in turn also act as a point of contact, with full backing from the safety department.

2021 also saw the trialling of the stone shield fencing at two tracks, one being Yorkshire Dales and north Shropshire. The Dales club suffered with stones flying into the spectators, so a Heras fence with a finer gauge mesh was attached to it and positioned just 300mm behind the safety fence in the problem area. this then reduced most of the stones spraying into the spectators and causing potential injuries and damage to any vehicles.

Also, as YD have the room around their track, they have taken this one step further and extended the spectator barrier further away from the track.

While we as the safety team realise, we race on an unsealed surface, we are duty bound to act for the safety of all that spectate and support our sport. and we are working closely with our sports insurance provider to hopefully reduce any insurance claims.

We are working to introduce the stone shield into next year's track construction rules for those clubs and leagues that would benefit from using them.

During the off season, meetings have been continuing with the safety team and also with our safety officer's up and down the country.

These meetings have been very productive, shortly we will be issuing an updated version of our track construction rules but don't worry there are no major changes, and all content has been discussed and agreed with your respective safety officer's.

Another change made by the safety department is that the chocking of cars will be prohibited from 2022.

This is purely for safety reasons, this last year we had an occasion where a Marshall was knelt down chocking a car and the race was started while doing so, this in our opinion is one occasion to many and as such it is now the responsibility of the driver to ensure car is not rolling prior to race start.

# MARSHALS DEPARTMENT

Exciting news from the marshals dept for 2022 and beyond!

The directors have agreed to fund some major changes within our department, which are long overdue Marshals training courses will be piloted for 2022 covering all aspects of the tasks we undertake plus health and safety issues relating to our area - more news to follow as soon as the course formulation, structure, content, and venues can be confirmed.

The camera systems and other alternative tech assistance and options are being investigated for increased clarity of 'on track' decision making.

Marshal recruitment, recognition and rewards are all areas that are being researched to recognise the work our marshals do and how we can improve their welfare  
We are introducing an annual 'marshals trophy' for which each league will nominate one of their marshals.

As you can envisage there is some serious work involved in putting these ambitious plans into action - but be assured we are all working together to make it happen.

