



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 – April 2016

Thank you for all the positive feedback we've received to our first members' newsletter. This second edition is a little shorter as there's not too much to report at this stage of the season. We're one month into the 2016 season and, at the time of writing, just seven clubs, Carlow, Nottingham, North Shropshire, Scunthorpe, Scarborough, Evesham and Trent, have beaten the weather to put on a meeting. We're encouraged by the excellent turnouts and racing that have been seen at these events, and we hope that, when the next few weeks have passed, all of the clubs and leagues lucky enough to have active venues will have their season under way.

Just to remind you, we're always keen to hear from our members. 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.

OUR NEW NASA VICE-CHAIRMAN

The position of NASA Association Vice-Chairman has been vacant for a while, but we're now delighted to tell you that Lynn Thomas of Essex League has agreed to accept the position after receiving the unanimous support of the Chairmen's committee at their last meeting.

Most of you will know Lynn, who over the last few years has not only been a very hard-working chair of Concord Autograss club, but has also found time to travel extensively round the country as a Class 8 racer. Having stepped back from her club responsibilities this year, Lynn's continuing to contribute as NASA Representative for Essex and she'll now be supporting Ernie Ashley in his role as your National Chairman.

We look forward to receiving more of Lynn's valued input at committee and board meetings and we're especially pleased to have her in NASA's "top team" as somebody who understands all too well the problems facing the smaller clubs.



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NASA MEETINGS SATURDAY 9 APRIL

The February NASA meetings were well attended and very positive in their tone. We'd encourage all our members to read the minutes of these meetings, which are all published on the NASA website, to keep you up to date with developments in the sport, and to give you more insight into the work your elected representatives are doing on your behalf.

The Chairmen's, Marshals' and combined Marshals' and Safety Officers' committees have their next meetings at Walsall on 9 April, starting at 11 am. We're looking forward to more constructive debate at these meetings, and we've seen some interesting items added by different leagues to the agenda.

You don't need to be an official league representative to attend these meetings, although obviously only league delegates are allowed to vote. Interested club members can attend to observe, and can speak at the meetings with the chairman's approval. Anyone who'd like to attend, please just "invite yourself", by speaking to your league representative.

SCRUTINEERING UPDATE

Now that we're into the racing season, the three directors who carry the rollcage testing units, Simon Bentley, Don Hilton and Vernon Mackenzie, will continue to cover as many events as possible where they can make "tagging" available. We'll give as much notice as possible, primarily through the NASA Facebook page, of the dates and venues where tagging is available, but please bear with us as event cancellations and other commitments may interrupt the tagging schedule.

You should all by now have had an opportunity to study the 2016 rule clarifications that were discussed at the February scrutineers' meeting. These are all detailed in the minutes of that meeting, which you can find on the "NASA Meetings" page of the website.

There'll be further clarifications issued as and when they become necessary. You'll already have seen a bulletin regarding increasing problems in compliance with bodyshell "silhouette" rules in the modified saloon classes, with particular reference to Mini Pickup-based cars. This, and any future bulletins we need to issue, will be retained for reference on the technical page of the NASA website.



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MARSHALS' FORUM

NASA have approved an "official" Facebook page to be set up as a forum for discussion between marshals. Anyone with an interest in marshalling matters is welcome to apply to join this group – please search for "NASA Marshals' Discussion Page" to see what your fellow marshals are discussing and to contribute your own ideas.

DRUG TESTING

Our March board meeting was attended by a representative from one of the potential suppliers we've been evaluating for drug testing equipment. We were given a practical demonstration of a test that can be carried out on the field, and we're pleased to say that our "guinea pig", Warren Beatty, passed the test!

We're now addressing the most important aspect of drafting a formal protocol for drug testing at NASA events. We're expecting the deal to be done shortly to acquire the equipment we need, and we're hopeful that, by the time this year's big meetings come along, we'll be set up to carry out testing. Initially, unlike the breath testing procedure, we won't be issuing any equipment or instructions to clubs. The testing will be carried out by a NASA team who will be able to turn up at any meeting anywhere with the authority to carry out any tests that they consider appropriate.

FIXTURES ON THE NASA WEBSITE

Don't forget that the official NASA website, www.national-autograss.co.uk, is the place to look for the latest updates to the fixture list.

Clubs who are forced to cancel or reschedule meetings – obviously you'll be making announcements on your own websites and Facebook pages, but please make one of your first actions an email to us; fixtures@national-autograss.co.uk, so that we can give our members the most up to date information.

Some of you may have installed a mobile app that was advertised last year for NASA fixture information. This wasn't an official NASA app and we understand that its creator is no longer maintaining or updating it. There's not much we can do about this, other than advising you always to go to our official site for the information you need.



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NATIONALS 2016

We've already started the qualifying rounds in some areas and it won't be long before the Nationals will be upon us. This year the Wiltshire League will be hosting both the National events at Javelin Park, and the league's been discussing various ideas with their contact directors to add to the promotion and spectacle of the events.

While the details of some of the ideas is still being discussed, the idea of holding a public draw to determine the heat permutations (the "pairings") has been well received in the last couple of years and Wiltshire intend to take this one step further. They plan to hold the draw on the Thursday evening at the Nationals venue, similar to last year's, but they also plan to produce a printed booklet with all the pairings and heat permutations for the weekend, which will be available from Friday onwards (subject of course to substitute and reserve drivers).

We'll have more news on special features for both the Men's and Ladies' and Juniors' Nationals as we get closer to the events.

EXPERIMENTAL UPDATE

With several proposals being discussed for new experimental cars in Classes 1 and 2, there's still an open invitation for members to submit ideas via your league representatives to the NASA scrutineering team.

After approval has been given in principle, the permit for an individual experimental car, together with the "NASA" race number will be issued after the car has been built and inspected by a NASA scrutineer. The first new car to be checked and approved this year is the Toyota Yaris Class 2, NASA 25, which has been built by Paul Hinton. This car raced at the Easter Scunthorpe meeting with promising results.

After discussion with the BAS and UKAC organising committees, NASA's agreed that experimental cars may enter BAS and UKAC meetings but won't be eligible to qualify for the finals. Experimental cars also won't be eligible for the Nationals, which has always been the case, but at every other event it's up to each club and league to decide whether they'll be allowed to take points and awards.



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DISCIPLINARY REPORT

There have been three disciplinary issues referred to the board so far this year. Two of them have been resolved under our investigation procedure which has resulted in no formal action being taken; the third is currently being dealt with. We wouldn't normally make reference to a disciplinary case before it's properly concluded, but in this case we'll give you a quick note of the case as it might serve as a reminder to be borne in mind as the early season meetings get under way.

Briefly, the case concerns a club official who signed on at a meeting and proceeded to work in a restricted area when his licence had not yet been applied for. The evidence presented to the board suggests that this was a simple oversight, but we shouldn't need to point out how serious the consequences could be if an accident took place involving an unlicensed official.

If any other clubs are presented with a similar situation at a meeting, don't forget that, unlike a driver, an official may sign on if a full licence application's been completed (the "pink slip") even if the actual licence hasn't yet been received. We know there's a temptation to sign officials on quickly and fill in the licence numbers afterwards, but please, especially early in the season, could clubs double check the licence status of anyone signing on in any capacity.

ABERDARE CLUB

As many of you will have heard, the new club that was formed for 2016, the Aberdare Autograss club, has notified NASA that they're unable to continue, due mainly to their promised take-up of new membership not materialising.

This has left Penhow club on its own in the newly formed Welsh Celtic League and NASA has agreed to support Penhow as a single club league for the remainder of 2016, which will be re-evaluated at the end of this season.

The league will receive allocations for the 2016 Nationals based on its number of members signing on at race meetings before the cut-off date, but, as a new league, they won't be allocated the guaranteed place in every class that other leagues are entitled to.