



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 4 – July 2016

The fourth of our Members' Newsletters should reach you as you're making final preparations for this year's Nationals.

We hope everyone has an enjoyable and memorable weekend at the Nationals, but there's one thing which we must unfortunately mention. There have been a few instances this year where a very small minority of competitors have been reported for abusing officials or fellow competitors. We want everyone to realise that NASA will be taking a zero tolerance approach to such behaviour and any offenders are likely to find themselves on the sidelines, both at the Nationals and for a long time thereafter! We intend to look after the majority of our members who, whether in the capacity of officials, competitors or both, treat their fellow members with respect!

We wish the Wiltshire League every success in their hosting of the Nationals. We're pleased to see the league coming up with new ideas to enhance the enjoyment of the event by club members and spectators and we'd be pleased to receive any feedback.

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.

NASA DIRECTOR SUSPENDED

We have to advise you that, following the last full Board meeting on 8 July, Neil Griffiths was suspended from his duties as a NASA Director until further notice. This decision was made in order to protect Neil and the rest of the Board from a conflict of interest that had arisen in connection with an ongoing disciplinary case. This case has now been concluded and we hope to be in a position to give you an update following a meeting scheduled for Monday 25 July, which is intended to clarify Neil's position.

In the meantime, Neil remains a full director of the company, as appointed by the members, although his specific duties, which the Board as a whole allocate to individual directors, have been withdrawn for the time being.



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DISCIPLINARY UPDATE

Following a disciplinary investigation and formal hearing concerning an allegation of abusive behaviour towards a NASA official, Tony Hawkins (SV23) has received a three month ban from holding a NASA competition licence, which will be followed by a two year suspended ban. Tony will be permitted to re-apply for a racing licence, subject to the suspended ban, with effect from 14 September 2016.

The Board has received other complaints against members and these have been referred to be dealt with at league level. We are also aware of other disciplinary cases that have been dealt with and resolved by the leagues concerned.

As a general rule, incidents arising at specific race meetings should be dealt with using clubs' and leagues' own disciplinary procedures, and may then be referred to NASA for further action if the league feels that local sanctions are inadequate to deal with the offence. The Board does, however, monitor such cases and we'd ask all clubs and leagues to keep us informed of any disciplinary actions taken.

In some cases action will be taken directly by the Board; this will include any complaints arising from actions at the National Championships, cases referred by senior NASA officials and any incidents that the Board considers sufficiently serious to require direct NASA action.

TAGGING – CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

Just to remind you, if a car carrying an official NASA "blue tag" (confirming satisfactory testing of rollcage tube thickness) changes hands, the new owner is responsible for re-registering the tag number to be matched with his own race number and licence number. This may be done by emailing the details to tagging@national-autograss.co.uk.

The tagging team have just completed an exercise of matching details of all National qualifiers and reserves with the tagging database and have been following up all discrepancies with the leagues involved. It's already evident that a lot of the "missing" tag numbers are the result of new owners forgetting to inform NASA that they've acquired a tagged car, so please help us to keep the database up to date.



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TAGGING IN IRELAND

Although the vast majority of cars racing in England and Wales, and a good proportion of those in Scotland, have now been tagged for their rollcage thickness, the Board acknowledge that a problem has been created in Ireland, where logistics and the workload of the tagging team have not allowed any tagging to be carried out since June 2015.

The Board's now been in touch with both Northern and Southern Ireland leagues to propose a way forward that will enable Irish members to comply with the requirement to have all cars tagged for the beginning of the 2017 season and, most importantly, to enable new members and newly built cars to start racing during the season. We understand that representatives of both Irish leagues will now be discussing the practical implementation of tagging for their members.

In the meantime, Irish qualifiers for this year's Nationals have been put in a difficult position which the Board is working to rectify by making special arrangements to tag cars at the Nationals. Any Irish qualifiers who haven't yet been contacted by their league representatives should get in touch now to clarify these arrangements.

FIXTURE CHANGES AND CANCELLATIONS

Our webmaster is continuing to do everything possible to keep members, and visitors, informed of the latest fixture information. The coming weekend's fixtures are highlighted on NASA's website front page when they are confirmed as being definitely on, or cancelled.

While this was working well early in the season, it now seems that not every club's contacting Jason to confirm the status of their meeting. Unfortunately this year's weather continues to be so unpredictable that, even in mid-summer, we can't make any assumptions! Although we can't do much about those cases where changeable weather's caused last minute cancellations, could we ask every club to update Jason as soon as they're able? Notification by email to fixtures@national-autograss.co.uk is the easiest way.

We'd like to thank Jason for his continuing efforts to give NASA an effective and professional online presence.



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NATIONALS DATES

The League Chairmen voted at their June meeting to recommend a change of date for the Ladies' and Juniors' Nationals for the 2018 season, from the first weekend of September to mid-August. The Board's agreed to accept the Chairmen's advice, despite some reservations on the effect this may have on officials' workload and the availability of volunteers.

At the same time an issue arose with the 2017 Ladies' and Juniors' event, to be hosted by Cwmdru Car Club at The Ovals, Lyonshall. To avoid a potential clash with a neighbouring local function, which came up after the Nationals date was originally set, it's been agreed that the 2017 Ladies' and Juniors' will also be moved to August.

Therefore the 2017 Nationals meetings, both hosted by Cwmdru Car Club, will be held on:

5/6 August 2017 – Men's Nationals
19/20 August 2017 – Ladies' and Juniors' Nationals

Provisionally the 2018 dates will be

4/5 August 2018 – Men's Nationals
18/19 August 2018 – Ladies' and Juniors' Nationals

No venues are yet set for the 2018 Nationals – applications will still be accepted for consideration.

We should have more news of the format of the 2017 season calendar (including BAS/UKAC proposed dates) next month, following a meeting between representatives of the two series at the Nationals.

RESERVE DATES

Clubs who have included "reserve dates" in the fixture list are reminded that they need to notify Margaret Allen if these dates are actually being used, so that the insurance records can be kept up to date.

The reserve dates aren't included in the original invoicing of race meeting insurance, although in most cases there'll be no additional charge for using the reserve date, if it replaces a meeting cancelled earlier in the season.



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RACE PROCEDURES

The Board are currently discussing whether certain aspects of race meeting procedure should be standardised. This includes the ever controversial issue of track markers – should a particular type of marker (eg cones) be stipulated? All members' feedback received will be taken into consideration.

Startline procedures have also been discussed and the Board has proposed that one method should be legislated in the rule book for 2017 – this would be a vertical start gate, with the "wind-up" given from the first marshals' post.

SUPPLY OF WARNING SIGNS

Clubs who need to purchase additional trackside warning signs are advised that, with immediate effect, the price of these has had to increase from £2.50 each to £4.50 each. NASA try to keep down the cost to the clubs by purchasing several years' supply of these in one go, but we recently had to purchase new stocks and the price had increased significantly since the last lot was bought.

PRE-NATIONALS SCRUTINEERING

Our scrutineering team have made it clear that any car presented for scrutineering at the Nationals with safely related defects, or with deliberate illegal performance enhancing modifications, will not be allowed to race. Leagues are reminded that they should have arranged pre-Nationals checks on all their league qualifying cars.

MARSHALLING MATTERS

There's been some lively debate recently between regular marshals, whether at their Walsall meetings (sadly not involving enough marshals – see the item below) or on the Facebook NASA marshals' group. One question raised, to which the Board can provide an answer, is what action should be taken when so many cones have been sent flying that the line through a corner has completely disappeared. Leaving aside the individual penalties for hitting the cones, our advice is that the chief marshal is justified in stopping the race, especially if he or she feels that the lack of track markers is a safety issue.



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WALSALL MEETING ATTENDANCE

We were quite disappointed by the attendance at the most recent national committee meetings at Walsall in June. Out of the 21 leagues, thirteen were represented by their Chairman/League Rep, fourteen by Scrutineers, four by their Chief Marshal and six by their Safety Officer.

We're aware that the June meetings have always been the least well attended of the year, and that they tend to fall on a busy racing weekend, but there is usually a lot to discuss by this stage of the season, so does anyone have any suggestions of how we could tempt more league representatives to attend? At the moment the attendance hardly justifies the considerable cost of putting the meetings on.

Also please note that the date of the next meetings for all committees has been changed from Saturday 8 October to Saturday 15 October 2016.

DRUG TESTING UPDATE

A further update on this; the drug testing equipment that was demonstrated earlier in the year has now been delivered and the necessary training course on its use has been attended. Therefore NASA are now in a position to carry out random drug tests when it's considered necessary.

NORMAN BROWN

We were very sad to hear that Norman Brown passed away on 15 July. Norman, who many of you will have known as "Grandad" Brown, was a successful competitor with Whiterose and York clubs in Classes 1 and 2. Norman actually completed more than fifty seasons as a competitor in various forms of motorsport, and saw two more generations of his family compete successfully in Autograss. NASA send our sympathies to all Norman's family and friends.