



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

Welcome to the first of what we intend will be a regular series of newsletters aimed at keeping our members up to date with important developments for Autograss.

The aim is to keep you all in the picture about the many aspects of Autograss that the NASA Board of Directors are working on and therefore we hope to be issuing a newsletter following each full board meeting.

We don't want this to be a one way process – one of our main objectives is to encourage participation from members at all levels of the sport. Ideally we'd like your feedback channelled through our "traditional" chain of communication, so if you have an opinion on anything covered in our newsletter (or anything that you think should have been covered!) please lobby your club and league representatives so that your views are aired in the Walsall committee meetings. However, the directors always aim to be approachable by members so you can contact any of us with your thoughts, or email via diane.tomkinson@national-autograss.co.uk to air any issues that you think should be brought to the directors' attention.

NASA MEETINGS SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY

We hope that everybody planning to attend these meetings has already picked up that they'll be held on Saturday 20th, not Sunday 21st, to avoid clashing with the Scunthorpe test day.

These pre-season meetings are probably the most important of the year; there's a lot of vital information to be shared and there are a lot of issues on which we need club and league feedback. Therefore we'd urge all leagues to make sure that you send representatives to the Chairmen's, Scrutineers', Marshals' and Safety Officers' meetings. Club officials are also welcome to attend to observe and to support their league representatives.

The marshals' and safety officers' meetings will still be held together as so many of the issues to be discussed are relevant to both roles, but we'd like to see all leagues represented by both marshals and safety officers as both groups have essential roles to play in the development of Autograss.



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

SCRUTINEERING AND "TAGGING"

The "blue tag" programme is continuing. We've acquired a third rollcage thickness tester, although at a cost of nearly £2,000 it's unlikely that we'll add a fourth in the near future. We know that cheaper machines are available, but the testing has proved that these can't be relied on. Simon Bentley, Vernon Mackenzie and Don Hilton are making pre-arranged visits to as many leagues and clubs as possible over the winter and the testing will continue through the 2016 season until, for season 2017 onwards, only cars carrying these tags will be allowed to compete.

The database of registered cars and tag numbers has now been shared with club and league officials and will be regularly updated. We've asked all members whose cars have already been tagged to enter their tag numbers on their 2016 licence applications, to improve our cross-referencing. However, if your car hadn't yet been tagged, don't let that be an excuse for delaying your licence application. Your licence can still be issued if you don't yet have a tag.

If you buy a car that's already tagged you must let us know – it's your responsibility to make sure we have an up to date record of the owner of each tagged car. Email us on tagging@national-autograss.co.uk with details of your name, car number and tag number, and tell us where the car came from. We don't necessarily need the seller to report in as well – just one email for each car that changes hands should be enough.

A new development is that there's now a facility for car builders or constructors to register to tag their customers' new cars – this registration may be granted at NASA's discretion after a review of that constructor's cars that have already been tested. Of course it will then be the constructor's responsibility to monitor the tagged cars and make sure they're not subsequently modified without re-testing.

"RED TAGS" ARE COMING

The "blue tags" on your rollcages only relate to the thickness of the rollcage material used so we'll shortly be moving on to the next stage of the process of ensuring the safety of cars used in Autograss – this will be the "red tag", which will be issued after a more thorough examination of the car for safety and compliance – covering everything from visible welding to seat and harness fitting.



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

We're aware that when the "red tagging" process starts we might initially find ourselves with a high failure rate but club and league scrutineers can help here by doing everything they can to ensure that cars are safe and compliant before the tagging process begins.

The red tags are expected to be the final part of the preparations for our long term objective of making sure that every NASA car is log-booked.

2016 RULEBOOK UPDATES

We've had a lot of enquiries about when the 2016 update sheets to the 2015 rule books will be ready. Vernon has drafted updates (which should be regarded as clarifications of the existing rules, rather than new rules or rule changes) and will be going through them with the scrutineers' committee on Saturday 20 February. After the consultation with the scrutineers, the bulletins will be finalised and published on the NASA website.

TRACK SAFETY

Just as important as the steps we're taking to improve the safety of Autograss cars is our consideration of track safety. After some major accidents and near misses in the last couple of years we need to demonstrate our readiness to respond to the risks that have been highlighted. However, we're avoiding any knee-jerk reaction. For the 2016 season there'll be no change in the published minimum standards of track construction, although changes may be advised at specific venues after track inspections.

We're currently planning an independent review which should involve a highly respected motorsport safety expert looking at our current track construction requirements and our inspection procedures. Any recommendations that come out of this review will form the basis for future upgrading of the safety features of our tracks.

MARSHALLING AND DRIVING STANDARDS

One of NASA's key objectives for the 2016 season is to begin to address the long-standing controversial issue of consistency in marshalling, which cannot be separated from a major crackdown on driving standards.



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

We shouldn't need to remind anybody that Autograss is a non-contact sport, but our mission now is to make sure that nobody forgets that before reaching the first corner! What we're asking for is respect for your fellow competitors, which we expect to see reflected throughout the classes and throughout the scale of race meetings. Marshals will be asked to get tough on contact and over-aggressive driving, whether it appears deliberate or accidental through carelessness.

Addressing driving standards and contact is an essential element of our safety crusade as, in today's quicker machinery, the potential consequences of inconsiderate driving are getting more and more serious.

AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL

We'd like to thank all of you who made NASA's participation in the 2016 Autosport International show such a success; those who worked behind the scenes on the organisation; the drivers and their teams who put on the spectacular show that everyone's now come to expect of the grassers in the Live Action Arena; the Junior drivers who excelled themselves promoting the sport both on and off the track; everyone who had a hand in the preparation of the splendid variety of cars we were able to show on the stand. And of course all our members and friends who visited us during the course of the show.

BREATH AND DRUG TESTING

Through last season we kept a close eye on the results of the breathalyser tests carried out at both major events and club meetings and we were encouraged by the very low failure rates. These tests are an essential part of our safety policy and we'll now be encouraging club testers to carry out more tests during the race day, testing in pit lanes before races, and putting more emphasis on these tests than on the random pre-meeting tests. However, drivers are warned that the consequences of failing a test once in the car ready to race are extremely serious and would inevitably lead to a lengthy ban.

Clubs requiring recalibration of NASA- issued breathalysers may now return their units direct to the service company who will ensure a quick turn-around. The contact details for this service are:

**Alco Digital Limited, Fosters Yard, Forge Lane, Old Guildford Road,
Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 3JA.
Telephone 0208 454 7372.**



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

Please contact Margaret Allen if you have any other queries on the supply and service of the NASA recommended breathalysers and to order supplies of mouthpieces.

We've also recognised the need to have a drug testing facility available and we're currently evaluating systems; the intention is that during the 2016 season we'll be in a position to test drivers for evidence of drug use.

NATIONAL ALLOCATIONS

Those of you who attend the Walsall meetings will know that there's been plenty of discussion over the years regarding the basis of National allocations – especially the allocation of one guaranteed place in every class to every league (conditional of course to the league having at least one active car in the class). This was introduced several years ago, mainly to protect some of the smaller leagues who were losing members because they couldn't be guaranteed a National allocation.

Last year, reacting to feedback from some leagues, we proposed to withdraw the guaranteed places, but the chairmen's committee disagreed and therefore we've continued to guarantee the one place per league. We've now been told that this is again being questioned by some members, so it will be back on the agenda for the league chairmen to discuss.

We'll still be guaranteeing a place for the defending champion to race in every class, conditional on the champ still racing in the same class under the same number and appearing in a minimum number of race meetings before the allocation cut-off date.

EXPERIMENTAL CARS

To date two experimental Class 2 cars have been authorised to compete in the 2016 season; Bob Ellis of Spalding club with the Polo (NASA 5) and Paul Hinton of Invicta with a Toyota Yaris (NASA 25). We've also been approached by different members with interesting ideas for a new generation of entry-level Class 1 cars, which are currently being evaluated.



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

LADIES' AND JUNIORS' NATIONALS DATE

We've often received suggestions that we should look again at moving the traditional date for the Ladies' and Juniors' Nationals which has for nearly 30 years been run on the weekend following the August Bank Holiday. For two years, in 2002 and 2003, we experimented with alternative dates, in July and August but, although those two events were held at popular venues (York and Severn Valley) our analysis showed that the change had little or no effect on the level of support for the meeting.

We've now received a written proposal from a league, suggesting that the event's moved to the mid-August weekend currently used for the BAS and UKAC round 4. We're going to seek the views of the league chairmen about this idea so please will anyone with an opinion on the matter discuss it with your chairman.

The main argument that's always put forward for moving the event is that the established date causes problems with school commitments – especially when it can, in some areas, clash with the vital first day of the school year, or even the first day at a new school for families with younger children. This has been very difficult for us to get a grip on due to the variations in school term dates between different areas, so we'd appreciate feedback.

One of the big difficulties that would arise from a change of date is the pressure it would put on organising and marshalling teams if the Ladies and Juniors raced just two weeks after the men's Nationals. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes between the two events, and there are also issues for those who need to take a (non-racing!) family holiday in August. So we'd welcome ideas how to get round this. A couple of suggestions we've received so far are to bring the men's Nationals forward into July, or to stick with the current Ladies' and Juniors' weekend but race on Friday and Saturday instead of Saturday and Sunday. What do you think?



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

DIRECTORS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We recently completed the first full directors' meeting of the year, which occupied us for a full weekend in Walsall. We welcomed Neil Griffiths to his first board meeting and look forward to working with Neil. One of the first tasks was to allocate directors' roles and responsibilities for 2016; although every director carried joint responsibility for the board's actions, our heavy workload requires us to create "departments" headed by specific directors, who can then build teams to provide the support they need both inside and outside the board. The main roles allocated are:

Chairman of the Board (elected position)	Simon Bentley
Registration and membership co-ordinator	Barbara Harper
Company treasurer	Margaret Allen
Company secretary	Jeffrey Parish
Association secretary (non-board position)	Diane Tomkinson
Directors responsible for scrutineering/technical	Vernon Mackenzie/Don Hilton
Director responsible for marshalling	Keith Matthews
Director responsible for health & safety	Warren Beatty
Directors responsible for insurance	Margaret Allen/Simon Bentley
Director responsible for event permits and reports	Pat Patrick
Directors responsible for documentation	Jeffrey Parish/Keith Matthews
Directors responsible for promotion (inc NEC show)	Simon Bentley/Vernon Mackenzie/ Warren Beatty
Director responsible for ladies' racing promotion	Barbara Harper
Director responsible for junior racing promotion	Neil Griffiths
Director responsible for website	Jeffrey Parish
Responsible for social media	Diane Tomkinson

Championship liaison directors:

National Championships 2016	Keith Matthews/Neil Griffiths
National Championships 2017	Vernon Mackenzie/Warren Beatty
British Autograss Series	Simon Bentley/Neil Griffiths
UK Autograss Championship	Warren Beatty/Barbara Harper
All Ireland Autograss Series	Jeffrey Parish
Eastern Open Challenge	Vernon Mackenzie
British F600 Championship	Jeffrey Parish
Stock Hatch Tour Series	Jeffrey Parish

Disciplinary panel

Initial selection from: Pat Patrick, Keith Matthews, Don Hilton, Warren Beatty



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

Track inspection responsibilities

East Midlands	Pat Patrick
Gloucestershire	Neil Griffiths
South & West Wales & Welsh Celtic	Simon Bentley
Southern	Neil Griffiths
West Midlands	Simon Bentley/Neil Griffiths
MAP	Warren Beatty
North Western & Shropshire	Warren Beatty
North Yorkshire	Pat Patrick
Yorkshire and Dales	Don Hilton
Kent & Essex	Jeffrey Parish
East Anglia	Jeffrey Parish/Vernon Mackenzie
CGTRO	Keith Matthews
Fenland	Vernon Mackenzie
Wiltshire (Nationals only)	Warren Beatty/Keith Matthews
Scotland	Don Hilton
Northern & Southern Ireland	Jeffrey Parish

THANK YOU DOUGAL

At last year's AGM we said goodbye as a director to Derek Hardy (Dougal) who had served for three years on the board and for many years before that as NASA Chief Scrutineer. The directors would like to give heartfelt thanks to Dougal for his years of devotion to Autograss and we look forward to seeing him around the tracks in future.

NATIONAL FIXTURE LISTS

Although we printed 12,000 copies of the 2016 Fixture List, we don't have many left after the Autosport show! It's encouraging to see that, although most members will now have access to the latest updated fixture information on the NASA website, the traditional printed book is still very much in demand.

If any clubs haven't collected stocks yet, please contact Margaret Allen so that the remaining few boxes can be shared out at the Walsall meetings.

If you didn't manage to pick up your own copy at the NEC, most of the remaining stock is now in the hands of the clubs, so please claim one at your next club meeting.

We'd like to thank all the trade and club advertisers for continuing to make the free fixture books possible.



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVES

Although the NASA directors are the people elected to manage and run Autograss to the best of their ability, NASA actually belongs to you, the members, through your league representatives. These are the "shareholders" of the company who are there to represent your interests, so please make sure that they have your support, and make them aware of your views on how the sport should be progressing. The current "full members" of NASA are:

	<i>Nominating league</i>
Barbara Harper	Honorary member
Nick Weir	East Midland League
Darryl Smart	Gloucestershire League
Manfred Kampschulte	South Wales League
Ray Wyeth	Southern League
Tony Griffiths	West Midland League
Barry Holloway	MAP League
Malcolm Cooper	North Western League
Kevin Griffiths	North Yorkshire League
Lynn Thomas	Essex League
John Lawson	Yorkshire League
Joan Bevans	West Wales League
David Robins	East Anglian League
Patricia Ashley	Shropshire League
Peter West	CGTRO League
Derek Linch	Kent League
Richard Lewthwaite	The Dales League
Bill Martin	Northern Ireland League
Simon Jackson	Wiltshire League
Paul Meaney	Southern Ireland League
Carole Shaw	Fenland League
Scott Pryde	Scottish League
To be nominated	Welsh Celtic League



NASA MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 – February 2016

SAD LOSSES

Sadly in the first few weeks of 2016 we've lost some well loved, valued and respected members of the Autograss community.

Gareth Thomas was of course a legend of the Autograss scene; a life-long stalwart of the Border Counties club, a top-line Class 7 racer for most of his long career; finally a National Champion in 2011, and a man who made friends and won respect wherever his racing took him. Those of you who were at the NEC will have been touched by the on stage tribute to Gareth by Simon Bentley and Steve Langley; video of this can now be seen on NASA's Facebook page.

Andy Sizer had a much shorter career in Autograss but in the brief time he was able to spend in the sport he made a big contribution; as a senior fire brigade officer in Northern Ireland he was a keen and proactive safety officer for Down Autograss while racing in Class 5 and running his son Curtis in Junior Specials.

Barry Booth was a clubman through and through. He was a keen Class 2 racer when the opportunity allowed but his main priority was the Nottingham club where he was a tireless worker behind the scenes. Barry travelled far and wide to enjoy the company of other Autograss enthusiasts and made friends all over the country.

Will Hinton was almost synonymous with the Leicester club; racing since the formative years of the sport, supporting his daughter Rachel in her own very successful racing career, freely sharing his massive knowledge of the sport and serving as a dedicated club chairman who played an important part in the early growth of NASA.

We at NASA send our sincere condolences to the family and friends of all those that the sport has lost.