



**SHENSTONE & DISTRICT CAR CLUB Ltd.**

**SUBMISSION TO THE SPRINT & HILLCLIMB SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MSA SPEED COMMITTEE**

**New entry level Standard Car or “Showroom” Class for Speed Events and other regulatory matters**

**PROPOSALS:**

- (1) To introduce a new MSA blue book speed event class beneath the existing Road Going Classes to provide a lower cost class for entry level competitors.
- (2) To ensure that future MSA regulation changes are subject to adequate research, consultation and notice periods for implementation initially being ‘recommended’ with reasonable timescales for ‘mandatory’ enforcement.
- (3) To implement a basic system of licensing for entry level competitors.

**BACKGROUND:**

Shenstone & DCC (SDCC) have been in existence for over 80 years and have operated the Curborough Sprint Course (near Lichfield) for 53 years. As a motorsport club we have gone out of our way to promote grassroots motorsport with the operation of Curborough Sprint Course which includes in excess of 20 MSA regulated sprints per annum, the promotion of the MSA registered Curborough Championship, an annual Introduction to Sprinting Day (free for allcomers to be inducted into sprinting), an AHASS registered Sprint School, the provision of a club vehicle available for first time competitors and a host of other events and initiatives designed to promote sprinting in the U.K.

In recent years the MSA have introduced a number of regulations that have made it difficult for first time competitors to become involved in the sport and established competitors to remain with the need for additional equipment to comply with MSA regulations. This has included revised helmet regulations, changing race suit requirements and the introduction of Frontal Head Restraints (FHRs).

**Road Going Classes.** These were originally intended for competitors who did not want to get into track use only cars and still use their cars on the road. The Road Going Classes in Speed Events have progressively allowed more and more modifications to the point that nowadays nearly all of the cars running in these classes are trailered everywhere and never see any road usage, making a mockery of the class description and resulting in the need for the almost F1 level of safety measures seen in the racing car classes. The level of performance is often above that of the modified production class due mainly to the allowance of MSA List 1B tyres which are available in different compounds.

## **CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW:**

The last few years of economic austerity, now seemingly due to continue longer still, and the ever spiralling costs of increased safety kit to compete in speed events has seen a drop in the numbers competing. Meetings have been cancelled and for the first time last minute entries have been available at large venues like Shelsley Walsh and Prescott which is further evidence of this.

The recent consultation on List 1B tyres has seemingly shown that competitors already in the classes concerned do not want to help the situation as their own interests and expenditure already incurred come before the sports' grass roots level future. To try to help out many clubs have tried to run "standard" car classes beneath the blue book road going classes, but all tend to have slight differences in their regulations and allow minor mods, ie K&N type air filters, and aftermarket exhaust systems, slightly wider wheels, etc.

These small differences in local class regulation put competitors off as they do not know where they stand in terms of class entry at different venues. Also, unfortunately all of these small allowances aid extra performance enhancement and the classes become impossible to police. Last season saw many clubs and championships drop their standard classes to alleviate the hassle and problems associated with enforcing the regulations

## **PROPOSAL (1):**

(a) *Introduce a Blue Book "Showroom Class" for speed events, beneath the current Road Going Class structure.*

(b) *To use the SDCC Standard Class Regulations (that have worked very successfully for 17 years in the Curborough Championship) as the basis for the regulations but with even further tightening by excluding any forced induction vehicles.*

**The reasoning** behind this is that by using SDCC regulations of maintaining OE air intake and exhaust system itself polices any cheating as any "chipping" of naturally aspirated models, regardless of the sales propaganda, does not increase the performance and only varies throttle angle and drivability to "fool" the driver into thinking the car is quicker. This is the reason for maintaining production intake and exhausts. Forced induction models do, however, gain from chipping and boost modification and are therefore difficult to police. If 3 capacity classes of : SA up to 1.4L, SB 1.4 to 2.0L and SC over 2.0L were adopted and any forced induction car was automatically moved in to Road Going Classes it would self police. (Note SDCC regulations also outlaw 4x4 vehicles as most are forced induction.)

The extra benefits for competitors would be to also combine the new classes with a **new level of safety** requirements for these classes to bring it in line with current vehicle safety. Mandating Crash helmets in today's NCAP 5 production cars could have repercussions as cars with curtain and side airbags will probably give the driver a higher neck injury in a side impact if they are wearing a helmet than if they are not, as the airbag expansion position is designed for an average human head diameter, not a helmet diameter! This would produce a 'recommendation' for a helmet not a mandatory one. The current introduction of 'recommended' use of FHR's is considered by various motorsport personnel to be potentially dangerous.

Also, for over 20 years all production cars have been fuel injected and have inertia fuel cut offs for any impact situation. All speed event competitors unless they want to handicap themselves, run with minimum fuel so

why mandate a fire retardant race suit and gloves? Again a 'recommendation' should suffice or at least introduce just an entry level proban suit as acceptable with helmet and gloves recommended.

If new classes and regulations went hand in hand with a new definition of **period defined cars** for speed events where the date was moved forward to 1980 for Road Going production car classes then an early date could be set for the new showroom class eligibility to prevent any carburetted and low NCAP cars being eligible, say 1995.

**The new classes should see a return of people** who have moved to track day type events due to their lower safety requirement levels and become the proper grass roots, spring board entry level from which people will progress onto other classes as they used to, if they wish. At the moment many people who attend SDCC Curborough track afternoons state their reasons for not progressing on to competing purely due to the costs of all the safety requirements.

### **ROAD GOING SPECIALIST CARS:**

A further issue which prevents many proper road going kit car owners entering speed events is that the road going specialist car classes have been allowed to become too fast, again with the allowance of List 1B tyres and no windscreens, etc. Some of these cars now do single seater times and this years' introduction of extra ROPs is probably needed, but has seemingly produced a potential mass exodus from what have always been large classes. We are aware of heated discussions taking place on the MSA stand at the recent NEC Autosport Show on this subject!

This performance level is also responsible for keeping people who have "proper" road going kit cars away from competing as they realise the cost of trying to get anywhere near the same performance and that by doing so it ruins their weekend road car. By re-introducing a "standard" kit car class, perhaps up to 2.0L only which has to maintain list 1A tyres, and full windscreens, (as it was up to a few years ago) would probably bring back many of the competitors who are threatening to stop competing and bring a few trackday attendees into MSA regulated events.

### **PROPOSAL (2):**

*To ensure that future MSA regulation changes are subject to adequate research, consultation and notice periods for implementation initially being 'recommended' with reasonable timescales for 'mandatory' enforcement*

The publication of the FHR's regulations in 2015 for immediate implementation in 2016 is a prime example.

The perception of the grass roots motor sport 'world' is that adequate research and consultation is not exercised by the MSA in setting regulations that affect competitors and officials who have to implement the changes.

It is essential that this perception is reversed by engaging in publically accountable processes for determining rule changes.

### **PROPOSAL (3):**

*To implement a basic system of licensing for entry level competitors which involves either a 'day' licence or an 'event' licence.*

#### **Rationale.**

There are numerous competitors who only compete in a limited number of Nat. B speed events each year and with ever increasing costs of complying with MSA Regulations are finding it even harder to continue. Reducing their costs by not insisting on an annual licence to enable them to continue competing would be a significant benefit. It would also encourage new competitors into the sport as a 'taster' to enable them to develop the competing 'bug'. SDCC have examples of these competitors. Last year's Curborough Championship consisted of 65 contenders of which 19 did three events or less and it is these numbers that are currently at risk of not continuing.

Implementing a 'day' or 'event' licence would be no different to other motorsport disciplines like for instance Autotests where a club membership is enough for some events.

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