



MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION
UNITED KINGDOM

PRESS RELEASE

MSDG announces major restructure of circuit racing

Following the Motorsport Strategy Development Group's review of professional and semi-professional circuit racing in the UK, the Motor Sports Association has this week invited applications from championships wishing to form part of the new commercial racing structure.

Since its establishment last year, the MSDG has been considering initiatives to improve the quality of British motor sport at every level. The publication of these 'Pro-Race' proposals is the first output from the group and will be followed by similar announcements regarding rallying and club racing later in the summer.

The future structure of promoted circuit racing will focus on three clearly defined categories – saloon, single-seater and sports car – and within each category will be level 1 (British Championships), and levels 2 and 3 (National Championships). No championships outside this structure will be permitted to carry the words British or National in their title. [See accompanying chart: National Pro-Circuit Racing.]

At the top end, level 1 will comprise the three major existing British championships – BTCC, F3 and GT – with the remaining categories to be filled. Within each of levels 2 and 3, there will be one ‘open’ series and one ‘one-make’ series, totalling 15 championships in all.

“It is obvious that there are too many championships at present,” explains Alan Gow, MSDG chairman. “There is only a finite number of competitors, so the proliferation of championships spreads the competitor base too thinly.

“These initiatives are designed both to limit the number of promoted championships and to provide security of tenure for those championships that are endorsed. In so doing, we will establish an identifiable structure that will give people a clearer idea of how the championships fit together and to create a visible path to the top of British circuit racing in whatever discipline people choose.”

Tenders for championships, both existing and new, to be included in the new structure are now being invited by the Motor Sports Association’s Race Championship Control Panel (RCCP). While the process will be conducted in a fully transparent and open manner and applications are welcomed from all parties, the MSDG has made further recommendations to protect the long-term interests of all participants.

“Everyone suffers from a lack of stability – competitors, teams, the industry and of course the sport – and it invariably has a disastrous financial impact,” continues Gow. “As a result, the MSDG has also recommended that every championship promoter enters into a three-year contract in order to provide stability, security and continuity for all concerned. In addition, new championship promoters will have to lodge a fiscal bond of a minimum of £100,000 with the MSA at the time of application. This money will be held in trust to be used to help offset any losses incurred by the sport and/or the industry should a championship terminate unexpectedly.”

The MSDG's proposals are fully supported by the MSA, through whose infrastructure the recommendations will be administered. It is also envisaged that the MSA will ensure that 'best practice' principles are applied in all aspects and that successful championships will be able to graduate to a higher grade.

"This is the first of many progressive steps we hope to take in the near future for the long-term health of British motor sport," confirms Colin Hilton, Chief Executive of the Motor Sports Association. "We have been aiming for a long time to achieve a clearly defined championship structure. It is essential not only for the competitors and promoters, but also for the public to understand the genuine ladder of progression that leads to the top of the sport.

"With three year contracts in place, promoters and manufacturers will be able to plan and budget with confidence, knowing that inclusion is already assured, while competitors will know that their investment in these championships is protected by the contract period. By ensuring that there are no similar rival championships within the promoted structure, this will prevent two promoters from vying for the same competitors."

Being a representative group, the MSDG has considered the interests of all parties in reaching its conclusions. As a result, the proposals have been well received throughout the industry.

"A clear ladder of progression will attract more sponsors and drivers to UK motor racing," says Chris Aylett, Chief Executive of the Motorsport Industry Association. "That, in turn, will bring more business to the UK motor sport industry. But perhaps more significantly, thanks to the MSDG we have the British motor sport industry and the sport itself working together for the first time to resolve the issues we both face. That's a highly encouraging sign for the future. The limit on 'one-make' series and the inclusion of an 'open' formula at each level will encourage a return to creative engineering solutions and technical input."

Further support for the proposals has come from the clubs and the circuits.

Grant Stewart, Chief Executive of the BRSCC: "From all perspectives, we've needed to do this for a number of years. It sends out a very positive message and it's a highly constructive move that will help to bring both national and club level motor sport in Britain back to the fore."

Robert Fearnall, Chief Executive, Donington Park Leisure Limited also endorses the developments. "New look initiatives taken by MSDG to enhance the profile of promoted circuit racing to a wider audience, and help reduce confusing anomalies in its existing complicated structure, will be welcomed by circuits focused on maximising the untapped potential and commercialism of professional motor sport in the UK."

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors:

The Motorsport Strategy Development Group is a joint initiative between the Motor Sports Association (MSA) – governing body of motorsport in the UK – and the Motorsport Industry Association (MIA). Established in 2002, the MSDG was set up to provide strategic direction for the future of motorsport and the industry that supports it.

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