



Introduction

Group S is one of the fastest growing categories of motor sport in Australia.

National Governance

The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) controls historic racing in Australia. CAMS administers historic racing through the Australian Historic Motorsport Commission (AHMSC) and through the regulations of the Fifth Category. The chair of the AHMSC is Bob Cracknell.

Group S and the Fifth Category

Group S covers the racing of historic production sports cars. But unlike most other categories in historic motor sport, Group S cars do not need to have “a racing history” nor are issued “certificates of description”. Group S cars are not historic racing cars; they are historic production sports cars, modified within the limits of Group S eligibility criteria.

Basically any historic production sports car within the specified historic period can become a Group S car. Group S therefore has a large pool of potential cars from which to draw. All other classes with the exception of Group N require the aspirant to find or resurrect a racing car with racing history from the period in question; a more difficult task, and one which also places a limit on the potential size of that racing group.

Administratively, conforming Group S cars are issued logbooks, not certificates of description.

A Group S car may be continually modified provided it remains within the limits of eligibility criteria while a certificate of description car must always remain as specified in its unique certificate of description.

While the emphasis of most historic categories is the preservation of historic racing cars, Group S emphasises the racing of historic production sports cars - a subtle but important difference.

Group S Eligibility

The eligibility of production sports historic cars for Group S and its three sub categories of Sa, Sb and Sc is oversighted by the Historic Production Based Eligibility Committee (HPBEC) which reports to the AHMSC. The HPBEC is chaired by Bruce Richards.

The general regulations governing Group S are prescribed in the CAMS Manual of Motor Sport – available on line. But the general regulations are amplified in the ‘specification sheets’ published for each Group S production sports car marque; specification sheets are now available on line.

Prospective owners of Group S cars should read both the general regulations and the specification sheet for the specific Group S marque before committing funds to modifications, livery or purchase. This may well save some expensive mistakes.

The Group S Racing Association

The Group S Racing Association (GSRA) was formed in January 2006. The formation of the GSRA stemmed from a desire of the owners of Group S cars to have a greater say in the administration and racing of historic production sports cars.

The GSRA has no executive authority but Group S owners wanted to be consulted on aspects of Group S and decided to form a body representative of all Group S owners in Australia.

The GSRA was incorporated in NSW because of the large number of Group S owners who reside in NSW. But as Group S racing is national, so the GSRA wishes to have a national perspective.

The constitution of the GSRA states that the purpose of the association is to represent the interests of owners and drivers of Group S cars in the course of participation in historic sports car motor sport. The constitution goes on to list the GSRA objectives as:

- to provide a representational voice for the owners and drivers of Group S cars;
- to promote Group S motor sport; and
- to facilitate enjoyable participation in Group S historic motor sport.

Membership of the GSRA

The GSRA has around 130 paid up members. Members reside in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. The GSRA is probably the strongest of the historic groupings.

GSRA Activities

A major activity for the GSRA committee is liaison with promoters of Group S events. The GSRA works with promoters such as the VHRR, HSRCA, FoSC, Austin Seven Club, HRCC (Qld), and the SCCSA (HRR) to ensure that GSRA members have attractive Group S race meetings to attend.

With the loss of Oran Park and the cancellation of the 2009 Winton AHMF, it has become even more important for the GSRA to liaise with promoters to ensure that members will have attractive race meetings to attend.

Sometimes this is difficult because of our wide range of cars from Sa to Sc. So a major focus of the GSRA is to boost Group S racing numbers such that Group S will always command two grids. This will do much to ensure that we can provide attractive race programs for our members.

As part of this liaison, the GSRA also seeks to assist members by organising accommodation options for travelling racers, whenever appropriate.

The GSRA also seeks to liaise with promoters over the issue of “invited cars”. Some promoters recognise that Group S is such a good and valuable customer that they will not include an invited car in Group S grids without first gaining approval from the GSRA. GSRA guidelines for invited cars are firstly, that no Group S car be excluded; secondly the invited car be visually representative of a production sports car; thirdly the modifications on the invited car be broadly within the spirit of Group S rules; and fourthly that the invited car race on approved Group S tyres and rims.

Typical of such cars are the McNamara BMW 3.0 CSL and the ex-Dodds “Toolbox” bugeye Sprite. The GSRA is opposed to the inclusion of “marque sports type” cars or cars with “slick tyres” in Group S grids.

The GSRA represents Group S views to the AHMSC. The GSRA has contributed to the CAMS strategic planning process for historic racing, and in this regard it has also been pleasing to observe that some of the “generational issues” impacting on other historic classes are not so evident in Group S; we are attracting new entrants which augurs well for the future of Group S.

The GSRA has worked with the Commission on eligibility issues and on updating the Group S Approved Tyre List.

The GSRA has provided a submission in support of the proposed Wyong Motor Sport precinct. Regrettably a perusal of Wyong Council papers shows that progress with this proposal will be slow and difficult with a positive outcome not assured.

The GSRA has requested CAMS historic section investigate and negotiate improvements to the supply and availability of 100 octane racing fuel which following changes to oil company policies, is becoming difficult to procure.

GSRA Preferred Race Numbers and GSRA Pointscore

The GSRA administers the Group S Preferred Race Numbers Register for both NSW and Victoria. This scheme eliminates the constant renumbering of cars should race number administration be left in the hand of individual promoters. The GSRA website outlines the rules governing preferred race numbers and race number requests should be processed through the GSRA website.

The GSRA administers the GSRA pointscore. Major changes introduced in 2007 were consolidated in 2008 and 2009. Both the Catalina Cup (NSW) and the Goldfields’ Cup (VIC) pointscores are well supported by members. The pointscore rules and results are available on the GSRA website.

GSRA Code of Conduct

Group S racing is an amateur sport meant to be enjoyed by all who participate.

Although the competitive aspects of driving historic sports cars is part and parcel of the sport, over driving or over aggressive driving is not. The GSRA Committee has agreed the following driving standards, which are based on peer group opinions within the Group S driving community.

- do not push or rub another competitor
- give the other driver racing room
- do not squeeze across pushing the other car off the track
- do not close the gate once the other driver is committed
- when defending position, alter line only once
- do not block; although tactically defending a position in the closing stage of a race by altering line once is accepted
- the odd spin or off track excursion is acceptable – making a habit of it is not
- lapped drivers should hold their racing line but be alert to when a passing move is being made; do not frustrate the passing move – there is no need to point which side the pass should be made; that is the prerogative of the passing driver

If drivers are unhappy with a fellow competitor’s driving behaviour, the GSRA Committee should be approached to address the matter.

The GSRA Team

The GSRA committee for 2010 is:

- Brian Weston (ACT) - President
- John Young (NSW) – Vice President
- Robin Marshall (NSW) – Treasurer
- John Lenne (NSW) – Secretary
- Terry Lawlor (NSW) – Committee
- Peter Jackson (VIC) – Committee (and Victorian Registrar)

Several volunteers have also been appointed in ex-officio capacities to undertake responsibilities without which the GSRA could not function effectively. The ex-officios are:

- Brian Duffy (NSW) – ex-officio - Group Sa Registrar
- Troy Ryan (SA) - ex-officio - South Australia Registrar
- Manuel Pena (QLD) - ex-officio - Queensland Registrar
- Geoff Williams (NSW) - ex-officio - Webmaster
- Colin Wilson-Brown (NSW) – ex-officio - Pointscore Manager /Race Numbers Registrar
- Kent Brown (ACT) - ex-officio – GSRA Newsletter Editor
- Phil Baskett (VIC) - ex-officio – Assistant Pointscore Manager

As well, Brian Duffy represents the GSRA at the HSRCA and Bruce Richards is a commissioner on the AHMSC; he is also the Group S Portfolio Manager. David Withers assists with GSRA accommodation.

Finally we have several sponsors. TravelPlan, Classic Connection and ITX Group contribute to the pursuit of our passion and hobby; please support them.

It is important that our large membership base supports the GSRA committee. To this end members are encouraged to discuss with the committee suggestions to further grow Group S, to improve our future racing options, and to recruit new members.

Brian Weston
President GSRA

10th January 2010