

## Drivers' Education & SAFETY POLICY Up-Date -

Bruce Hauben, Track Chair

The 2005 Track Committee (TC) did yeoman's work in planning for, and putting on 6 events totaling 13 track days. I want to heartily thank the entire TC for their hard work that made my job bearable and all the events run as smoothly as they did: Steve Artick, Novice Development; Paul Avery, Instructor Development; Mark Hald, Scrutineer; Laurie (Laurence) Jitts, Operations; Mark Keefe, Registrar; Matthew Wallis, Chief Instructor; and Joyce Brinton who filled in for those unable to come to an event, ran control, and helped maintain my sanity. You track rats out there only get to see and enjoy the results of the TC's hard work, not all the last minute and on-going "fires" and glitches that must be resolved.

We've made some changes in the structure of the TC for 2006 which will fill in some gaps and, we think, provide a stronger foundation on which to grow. Mark Hald has retired as Scrutineer due to work obligations and we sincerely thank him for his many years of service on the TC and hope to see him at future DEs. In the foreseeable future, the Scrutineer/Tech Line function will be added to Laurie Jitts' Operations function as an outgrowth of his responsibility for the worker assignments and training. This past season Laurie has been very ably assisted by Pete Donohoe (and by the way, they are both in our instructor mentoring program) at the events, and next season Pete will take over the new function of Marketing and Publicity. As this function will be primarily behind the scenes, Pete will be available to continue working with Laurie at the track.

As past Chief Instructor, I certainly know the great job that Matthew has done this year and while his work obligations will not allow him all the time at the track next year as he had this and past years, he very much wanted to remain active with the program. So, Matthew is now Co-Chief Instructor and Steve Artick will take over the other half of the Co-Chief Instructor function. Taking over Novice Development from Steve will be Frank Bruns and we welcome Frank to the TC. Mark Keefe will be entering his tenth year as Registrar – many thanks to Mark for his tenure; I will continue as Track Chair and Joyce Brinton will again do what she can to help maintain my sanity...for her own benefit as well as mine. Thanks to all of you!

***Now to the critical portion of this up-date - SAFETY. While we'd all like to think that we're immune to involvement in an incident -- we're prudent, we don't let the "red haze" overtake us on the track, we properly maintain our cars, etc. -- the fact remains that we're not immune! By definition, accidents happen: "an unforeseen and unplanned event or circumstance". However, in DE "the only accident not driver related is when a meteor hits your car".***

As I've written in previous *Upshifting* columns, DE track driving is far safer than many other sports. The rate of accidents and injuries in bicycling, rock climbing, hang gliding, hockey, driving to work, bullfighting and bull riding (just seeing if you're awake) is far greater. The best piece of safety equipment is still "good judgment", beyond that we 'require' very few things, and suggest others.

The TC is well aware that for most of you DE track driving is a part time hobby, something that you enjoy with your street car and you want to continue enjoying that same car on the street as well as the track. For others, we have dedicated track cars and have more leeway in how we might modify that car for the track. We've tried to address all situations in the changes you'll read about here, as well as to remind you all of certain on-going track safety policies and procedures, and some recommendations.

I strongly urge all of you to read the tech regulations at <http://www.porschenet.com/DEtech.html> and <http://www.porschenet.com/TrackProg.html> before every event. In fact, read them far enough in advance that you have time to correct deficiencies before the event...did you get that fire extinguisher installed or replace your 11 year old harnesses?

In the past we have strongly recommended that appropriate “race seats” (those with proper holes for the pass through of all harness belts) be installed when using 5/6 pt. harnesses. **Beginning with the 2006 DE season it is required that when using 5/6 pt. harnesses proper “race seats” must be used – ones with manufacturer-installed openings for the shoulder, lap and sub belts; no add-on or ‘home modifications’ will be accepted. This will be incorporated within the pre-tech form.** Remember that the “equal restraint” requirements still apply.

Referring to the tech sections above, we allow cabriolets to run with tops down if 5/6 pt. harnesses and arm restraints are used and the driver passes the “broomstick” test. (In some cases a roll bar or cage is also required.) **If those of you with cabs wish to continue driving with your tops down, it is now necessary to install proper “race seats” to accommodate your 5/6 pt. harnesses, use arm restraints, and pass the ‘broomstick’ test.**

**The Black Run Group will be welcomed back to the tech line at all NER DE events. This decision was made based on NER’s commitment to ensure the highest level of safety for all drivers and their cars.**

As a reminder, and as it is clearly explained in the tech requirements on the web site, **helmets older than SA2000 or M2000 (i.e. SA95 or M95) will not be allowed in 2006. You must have an SA2000 or M2000 helmet to drive in 2006.** The SA2005 certified helmets are beginning to reach the marketplace, so if you have to buy a new helmet you might as well get a 2005 rather than a 2000. There is not much cost difference between an M2000/5 and SA2000/5 helmet, so we **strongly recommend** the SA2000/5 for its fire retardant nature.

**We have already initiated a new “second opinion” run group progression policy which is already working very well.** Any NER instructor may move a student from the Green to Yellow run group as has been our policy. However, from that point on the instructor initiating a run group move to Blue, White or Black must complete a short evaluation form and give it to one of the Co-Chief Instructors who will then assign another instructor to ride with that driver in the run group to which he/she aspires (not necessarily on the same day or at the same event) and fill out another copy of the same form for the Co-Chief Instructor. Then, and only then, will the Co-Chief Instructor determine if that driver should progress to the next run group. **Caution** – this may effectively delay White Group drivers wishing to be promoted to the Black Run Group for the Enduro until their next event.

**Log Books will be designed and given to all NER Green and Yellow Run Group drivers in 2006.** In addition to those areas designed for Instructor comments there will be several pages where the driver – after being signed off to drive solo – may record his/her DE events with all regions and clubs. There are benefits to all concerned in maintaining these log books fully and accurately.

Finally a note to all drivers, not only those of you planning to try a DE event in 2006 for the first time. Begin with your stock, street car, street tires, OEM belts, etc. and learn high performance driving with very little expense. Only after reaching the point where you have truly reached the limit of your street tires should you begin to consider modifications. And then, change one thing at a time, learn how that modification has affected you and your car, and only then make the next modification. There are many experienced drivers in the NER who will gladly offer their suggestions as to when and what to modify; don’t hesitate to ask your questions. We all agree that the most efficient use of your dollar in driving better and faster on the track is not to modify your car right away, but learn how to be a better driver. Very few amateur drivers have ever reached the limits of their cars.

Enjoy a safe off-season and stay tuned for more details on our 2006 season as they develop. See you at the track.