

VARA Stewards Letter High Desert Challenge 20240

Welcome to the HDC edition 2024. Due to a schedule conflict with a Cal Club Majors event at BRP, there will be some new faces in several positions at our event. As you may know, many of our volunteers on Grid, Flag Marshals, even some in Race Control, are also volunteers for Cal Club and the SCCA. There has been little conflict on dates between Cal Club and VARA mostly due to the diligence of our General Manager, Janette and Ceci Smith at Cal Club. They work hard to avoid date conflicts. This time the conflict was unavoidable and as a result – new faces. With extra effort on the part of several elements of VARA there will be minimal issues with the event, but YOU, as a driver, crew member, can help insure those potentials are reduced further. What can you do?

1. Make SURE you are early to the grid and READY TO GO.
2. Check your fire bottle, - pin OUT? Head and Neck restraint adjusted properly? Mirrors right? All done before you leave your pit for the grid.
3. Wave at the Marshals displaying the Yellow Flag on all “out laps”, to create muscle memory for you and a connection for the Marshals.

Your efforts will help us quickly settle in to the rhythm of the day, and thus facilitate communications between Race Control, the Marshals and YOU. After all, that connection through the flags is the only way we have to communicate with you once your on track in your race car so it's a critical safety link. Our first priority, is that of safety for all our racers, volunteers and staff. If you see any glitches in our efforts, please let me know.

Willow Springs has redone about half of the “Big Willow” track as you may know. There are a few bumps here and there, a product of the desert itself. Make sure that your first several laps are designed around reminding ourselves of the nuance of the track and insuring staying on the asphalt.

Toward that end and because we have a number of new racers joining us this weekend, some from other organizations and some just new to racing, a VERY SLOW SPEED station wagon session, or mobile track walk will be offered from 0715 to 0730 on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Master Instructors will be available for consultation and instruction should you wish. This is VERY SLOW SPEED, flashers on, NO RACE CARS, only street cars. If crew or family members which to join the mobile track walk that is acceptable. As volunteers and Marshals will be deploying to their racing duties during this period, the greatest possible care must be taken by anyone driving and SPEED will be closely monitored. Drivers meeting on Saturday is at 0730 (7:30 AM), so dress accordingly if your in group 1 or 2 for the grid.

Rookies, (new to racing and VARA and seeking their VARA full competition Racing License), are under the direct supervision of Rod Susman, the Chief Driving Instructor. Your stripes and progress through the levels of training must be approved by Rod. Should you spin, or lose control of your car on the race track you must report to Black Flag and then to Rod. A fully licensed racer can have a single loss of control and continue on, but with the second, he/she too must report to Black Flag for review of the incident and any input the Steward might deem appropriate. There will be a special

Rookie practice at 0800 on the schedule. Persons planning on running it (and all Rookies should), would be wise to pre grid their cars before the drivers meeting, so they can take advantage of a little more seat time. Just remember, cold track, cold tires, cold brain WILL result in HOT mistakes.

You know the drill, VARA racing is a NON CONTACT venue. Any contact, no matter how slight REQUIRES you immediately report to Black Flag. A discussion between Black Flag and the Steward will result in one of several paths, immediate retirement, and an investigation into the contact begun. Minor contact could result, in the driver returning to the session, and required to contact the Steward upon completion of the session for the investigation. Once the contact is understood from the investigation a decision will be made as to fault and action if required. The goal of course, is to prevent contact and thus create a safer racing environment.

As we have said many times, the VARA bubble is a good way to look at how one defends a position and how one presents his vehicle in a pass. Knowing what and who is around us, and how to “be seen” is critical for the success of the vintage racer.

Saturdays Enduro for B S cars is going to be a hoot – but just as inferred above, almost NO ONE, is going to “win” a racing contract with MB F 1, or Penske this weekend. So the goal must be to have fun, play with your car and take it and you home with good memories and the car and driver looking as good as it did before the event.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us as noted.

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