



MOTORSPORT NEW ZEALAND

DECISION OF EXECUTIVE INQUIRY

PANEL:

- Mr Paul Te Punga (Chair)
- Mr Raymond Bennett
- Mr Shayne Harris

PARTIES:

Taranaki Car Club Inc (represented by Mr Don O'Connor, Mr Aaron Young)

Mr Scott Smith (Clerk of the Course)

Mr Jason Riddick (Competitor) (Apology due to work commitments conveyed via Mr Smith)

Mr Harry McKee (Steward) (Apology due to ill health received)

MotorSport New Zealand (represented by Mr Ross Armstrong, General Manager)

The Inquiry was convened under Article 119(a)(ii) and 119(a)(v) of the National Sporting Code of MotorSport New Zealand to investigate the conduct of a Bent Sprint clubsport event held under permit 27189 on 19 October 2008.

DATE AND TIME OF HEARING.

Wednesday 18th February 2009, commencing 6.00pm.

PLACE OF HEARING

MotorSport House, 69 Hutt Road, Wellington

PROCEEDINGS

The Chairman introduced the Panel members and confirmed that the hearing would be conducted in accordance with the guidelines for hearings as found in the MotorSport Manual.

The Panel heard evidence from Mr Armstrong, presenting the case for the Sport, and from those other parties present. Repeated attempts to contact Mr McKee via telephone were unsuccessful.

Mr Armstrong presented a comprehensive list detailing areas of concern within the supplementary regulations for the event and other event paperwork, and submitted a video which had been posted on YouTube.

Mr Smith and the Taranaki Car Club acknowledged that the attention to detail in the regulations left room for improvement. Nevertheless these regulations had been submitted with the permit application, and suggested that if there were serious concerns, then there had been adequate time for these concerns to be brought to the club's attention prior to the permit being issued. The permit was issued notwithstanding the standard of the supplementary regulations and the event proceeded. It was stressed that the safety plan was in place including 5 marshals with radios and a number of other intermediate marshals within line of sight contact. Additional marshals had been placed at key points on the day in consultation with the Steward. The club contended that this enabled the event to proceed with minimal risk of multiple vehicles being in the same marshal sector at the same time. The club also submitted a DVD with other footage of the event shot from different parts of the course during the event and submitted that these images provided a much more representative picture of the manner in which the event was conducted than the edited and repetitive YouTube clip.

Considerable discussion ensued concerning different types of events provided for in the MotorSport Manual; Bent Sprint, Street Sprint, and Drifting.

Questioned about the vehicles that appeared not to stop for a red flag in one sequence, Mr Smith explained that in consultation with the Steward on the day it had been agreed that a stationary red flag would be used to indicate 'caution' while a waved red flag would indicate 'stop immediately'. Drivers had been briefed accordingly. While unable to question the Steward Mr McKee directly on this point, there appeared to be corroborating evidence for this in the Steward's report.

The Chairman then adjourned the meeting in order for the Panel to consider the information before it.

OBSERVATIONS

The panel stressed the importance of ensuring that event paperwork is correct. The Supplementary Regulations must provide a sound platform for the event to take place. If old regulations are 'recycled' for a future event, it is critical that attention is paid to ensuring all dates are appropriate, and that the format of the documents is still current and consistent with the latest templates and regulations released by MotorSport New Zealand.

The panel believes there was ample time for the regulations to be reviewed and any issues advised to the applicant for correction prior to the issue of the permit. It may be beneficial for MotorSport New Zealand to remind all involved in issuing permits of their responsibilities in this regard. The first onus is on the applicant to ensure that the draft regulations are of an acceptable standard, but those reviewing the application and the drafts of the supporting documents must also be diligent prior to issuing a permit.

Number of marshal points notwithstanding, the operation of six vehicles simultaneously on this course may leave minimal time to react, signal to other vehicles that a problem has occurred, and still allow those vehicles adequate time to slow and stop before they encounter the incident. Careful consideration should be given in future on how to manage this aspect of the event.

FINDINGS

The Panel finds:

- The attention to detail and general quality of the Supplementary Regulations, the Entry Form, and the Vehicle Compliance Inspection Items Checklist was inadequate, and the overall paperwork for the event submitted for in support of the permit application was of a poor standard.
- The draft regulations had been submitted at the time of application for the permit, and in issuing the permit, MotorSport New Zealand effectively endorsed the use of those regulations.
- The quality of the regulations did not adversely affect the running of the event on the day.
- No regulation expressly forbids a car from drifting in a Bent Sprint.
- The number of marshals posted around the course supported the running of six cars, separated by distance.

- The panel was unable to establish the basis on which the Steward and Club agreed on the day to modify the purpose of the red flag.

PENALTY

The Panel rules that no penalties shall be applied. All parties shall bear their own costs.

The participants were reminded of their rights of Appeal under the provisions of the National Sporting Code.

Verbal decision delivered 18 February 2009 at 20:45

Written decision DATED this day ___ February 2009 at _____.



Paul Te Punga
Chairman



Raymond Bennett
Member



Shayne Harris
Member