

Graduates Racing in 2009

All the indications from our drivers suggest that we are doing things pretty much right, so The Graduates' 2009 season is going to be virtually a continuation of 2008 with just a few minor tweaks. [The Caterham Graduates Racing Club](#) is run by its drivers and for its drivers - so what you get out is what you put in - and plenty of people seem to be prepared to put in enough to ensure that it all works pretty well. All like-minded drivers (or would-be drivers) are very welcome to join us!

The class structure and spec:

Classic Graduates: For cars to the 1995 - 2000 Academy spec: Live axle, 1600cc and 100bhp from either Ford x-flow or Vauxhall 8 valve.

Super-Graduates: For cars to the 2000 - 2008 Academy and Roadsports-B spec. Just add tyres (Yoko 048Rs at about £55 each) and a rear anti-roll bar. Most cars are rover-engined but for 2009 we have a new "sub-class" for Sigma-engined cars from the 2008 Academy.

Mega-Graduates: Upgrade from Supers spec: Add: 20bhp Supersport upgrade with new cam, ECU, solid lifters, valve springs; aluminium inlet manifold from MMM takes power to around 150bhp at modest cost; front wide-track; aeroscreen; no lights. Other changes are optional: dry sump, bigger rad, etc. etc. Also suits "downgrade" from Roadsports-A (change 'box, diff' and dampers). option of close ratio gearbox. See separate document for details of regs changes.

General:

Racing Membership subscription of The Club increases slightly from £275 to £285. Discounted to £135 for new Classic Graduates enrolments. This, plus club sponsorship, pays for the running costs of the championship (Club admin costs are minimal – no paid staff and minimal overheads). It also pays for professional technical support from [McMillan Motorsport](#) at all races and most of the pre-race test days, FOC. MMM's tech support will provide for nearly all your "emergency" parts and repair needs at the circuit.

The Club's philosophy is to provide affordable motorsport for its members - experience has taught us that this means not encouraging drivers who want to have professional team support - if this is what you and your wallet want, please look elsewhere!

Having said that, MMM *do* provide a limited number of places for car transportation and would be delighted to discuss this with you. This is not quite "arrive and drive" - they take the car to and from the circuit for you, but if you want to mess around tweaking it, that's up to you; they do not take it to scrutineering for you, they do not polish it between qualifying/race and they do not adjust your seat-belts or hold your umbrella! The subscription also pays for The Club's driver catering facility to provide you with tea/coffee & lunch on race days.

Calendar:

The championship is administrated by the [BARC](#). It is intended that all three classes will always race at the same events, and all will get 20 minute races (although we may have one or two slightly longer races, 30 or 40 minutes at one or two selected venues). The 2009 calendar is probably going to feature 14 races over nine weekends (each weekend at a different venue), ie. four single races and five double-headers - and spread as evenly as possible throughout the season. Eleven scores to count - ie. "drop three".

The calendar is organized to try to provide interesting racing throughout the season for those people who love their racing and want to experience a wealth of different circuits. Most Graduates racers tend to think that a weekend not at a circuit is a weekend wasted! (Which is why The Club often arranges for our drivers to get invited to non-championship races between the championship races!). The 2008 season featured a championship 30 minute double-header at [Spa-Francorchamps](#) which was just an [amazing weekend](#) and in '06 an outing with the BTCC at Knockhill! We plan to do a major overseas venue again in 2008. (Note: National A license required, ie. 6 signatures on your Nat B – plenty of time to get that organized. Drivers joining from the Academy – if you can get six signatures in 2008, then make your 2009 license application for a Nat A).

It is too early to discuss the other 8 venues in any detail, but since there are only 15 UK circuits it's more a question of which ones do we *not* go to! There is certain to be a nice mixture of some of the "major" circuits and some of the less well known. More later...

Numbers / Signing-up:

The maximum number of drivers that can reasonably be squeezed into a one-grid class is in the region of 35 to 40. The Classic Graduates class should fall into this area quite nicely; it is not impossible that Supers and Megas end

up being "full". The Club's original raison d'être was to provide somewhere for ex-Academists to race; today, Academists also have other options but with 50+ Academy drivers about to "graduate", it is quite possible that we end up with too many Super-Graduates and/or Mega-Graduates cars for one grid. In which case, we would expect to run two grids (at the smaller venues), with a qualifying race followed by the principal championship race; we have done this in previous years and developed a good scheme which has been shown to work very well (some drivers may end up getting two races for the price of one!). At larger circuits, we may stick with three grids and any "surplus" Super/Mega-Graduates may do their qualification race along with one of the other classes.

It is even possible that we end up with too many Megas/Supers drivers and have to "close the books" and stop accepting enrolments, so you are advised to sign-up promptly. Enrolment for 2009 Racing Members is expected to commence in early/mid November. First priority will go to existing Members; a few weeks later, enrolment will be open to all – first come, first served. Details will be on the web-site: www.graduates.org.uk. It's especially worth keeping an eye on the site's [forum](#).

All Graduates classes have always had their share of novice drivers – we like to think that we provide a very suitable environment for starting out in motorsport - and novices will be just as welcome as the more experienced drivers.

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