

Graduates Racing in 2012

The Graduates' 2012 season is going to be virtually a continuation of 2011 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 (more details at www.graduates.org.uk/racing/classes.asp):

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 - 2007 Academy spec and the old K-series Roadsports-B spec, with Rover engines. Just add tyres (Yoko 048Rs at about £55 each) and a rear anti-roll bar.

Sigma-Graduates: New separate class since 2011 - for Ford/Sigma-engined cars from the 2008/11 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, close ratio gearbox, etc.

General:

Racing Membership subscription of The Club is just £100, discounted to £85 for those who enrol before 1st Jan 2012. This, plus club sponsorship, and modest per-race entry fee surcharges of not more than £10 per race, pays for the running costs of the championship (Club admin costs are minimal - no paid staff and minimal overheads) and pays for The Club's driver catering facility to provide you with tea/coffee & lunch on race days.

New for 2012, members are free to choose to get their race-day technical support from anyone they want. One outfit that members may wish to consider is championship title sponsor McMillan Motorsport who are offering an excellent and affordable scheme - details from www.mcmm.co.uk. MMM also provide a limited number of places for car preparation and transportation and would be delighted to discuss this with you.

Calendar / circuits:

The championship is administrated by the BARC. It is intended that all four classes will always race at the same events, and all will get 20 minute races (or, more precisely "20 minutes plus one lap") although we are scheduled for at least one weekend of longer 30 minute races. The 2012 calendar is probably going to feature 14 or 15 races over seven or eight weekends (each weekend at a different venue), eg. one single race and seven double-headers - and spread as evenly as possible throughout the season. Double-headers will usually be across both days of a weekend. You do not have to contest every round of the championship - drivers are quite welcome to dip in and out and only contest a few races. Even those who are aiming for the championship can afford to miss a few races, since the championship table ignores each driver's three lowest scores.

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!).

Star feature in our 2012 calendar will be a long awaited return to **Spa-Francorchamps** in October- thought by many (from Graduates racers to F1 stars) to be the best circuit in the world! (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 collected six signatures in 2011, then make your 2012 license application for a Nat A).

Other circuits expected to figure in our 2012 calendar are Donington Park, Anglesey, Brands Hatch, Cadwell Park, Oulton Park and the UK's fastest circuit, Thruxton (for a rare double-header weekend, *with* pre-race testing on the Friday).

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. It is not impossible that one or other of the classes ends up being "full". 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 some venues, we expect to have four grids - one per class. But at others we may have just three grids and two classes sharing the grid space. It is possible that we end up with too many drivers and have to "close the books" and stop accepting enrolments, so you are advised to sign-up promptly. Enrolment for 2012 Racing Members is expected to commence in late November. First priority will go to existing Members; a little 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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