

# NEWS January 2014

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#### Message from the Chairman

We enter some very challenging times for Karting in the UK with the ever looming 2017 date looming to adopt the Green Paper. Our first and immediate hurdle is to listen and help ALL clubs to be successful, over the past couple of years we have lost Lydd, Ellough Park and Warden Law to the ever growing Non MSA racing. This year with the costs and considered hurdles of running MSA racing we face the risk of losing more clubs, once gone it will be difficult to bring them back. The ABkC has never in its history been so relevant, we must gain feedback from all of the member clubs and drivers to help us get the regulated side of our sport "back on track", to do otherwise does not bear thinking about! So an open message to all clubs, tell us what you need, what help, what your views and ideas are, what can the ABkC do for YOUR club? Nothing can be ignored or considered moving forward, we must be more agile in decision making else risk losing more competitors to Non MSA. With license holders down around the 4000 mark we need to acknowledge that the word crisis will be heard more and more often, we need every club to be successful and need to simplify the entrance to our sport but need your input to make these much needed changes before it's too late! (Please send your club's views on this to chairman@abkc.org.uk)

## October Newsletter and Future Policy:

The October News was not mailed out to all clubs, hopefully everyone received it by email but if not please look on the ABkC website as it contained important information. If you did not receive it by email please get in touch with the secretary to have your email added to the list. Our policy used to be to mail a Newsletter to Chairman, Secretary and Comp Sec in the hope that a copy reached your committee meetings. In future we shall be relying much more on email, website and Facebook for the newsletter distribution so it is really important that you are on the emailing list. A few years ago the ABkC purchased notice boards for all member clubs for putting up ABkC newsletters and information. Hopefully you still have them. Anyway please ensure that you put up copies of this newsletter and the October newsletter on your club noticeboard.

# From the 2013 Annual General Meeting

The ABkC held their Annual General Meeting at Donington on 10th December with a good turnout of 13

clubs represented plus a large number of guests. After nominations were received for Steve Clayton, Nigel Edwards and Colin Wright for the Chairman position, the secret vote came out in favour of Colin Wright. He is mostly associated with Forest Edge Kart Club, currently as treasurer, and has also run a team. He has also had experience in other sports and is already engaging heavily with relevant bodies and clubs.

There were ten nominees for seven ordinary places on the Steering Group and the result of the election was for Martin Bean (TVKC); Steve Clayton (South Yorks); Rob Dodds (Forest Edge); Nigel Edwards (TVKC); Malcolm Fell (Cumbria); Colin Lipscomb (Llandow); Kelvin Nichols (Buckmore). The specialist positions were unchanged in Secretary: Graham Smith; Direct Drive Technical: Keiran Crawley; Cadet Technical: Paul Klaassen; Gearbox Tech: Phil Featherstone. Nigel Edwards remains as Chairman of the Direct-Drive Working Group, Steve Clayton for the Club Working Group and Phil Featherstone for Gearbox. Thanks to all those whose names were put forward.

Russell Anderson, who will continue to represent the United Kingdom on the CIK Commission, had decided to retire as ABkC Chairman. He succeeded the founder chairman Steve Chapman in 2001, and was presented with a limited edition one-fifth second retro stopwatch from Heuer, and an engraved crystal tankard. Anderson was then elected as an Honorary President of the Association by very popular acclaim.



Russell Anderson receiving his awards from Colin Wright

In his valedictory speech, Anderson said 2013 had been equally as difficult as the previous year, with the economic situation still biting hard. He said that some recent regulations which emanated from the Karting Green Paper worried him greatly, and although they had good intentions there were unforeseen consequences. There seemed to be second tier championships popping up all over with less regulation, and we must be aware that for 2017 we could see yet another raft of new classes. So the next important matter for the ABkC is to decide which classes to support for the future. He felt that the IAME Cadet class has been well accepted and said well done to all involved. Anderson said we had fought battles with the MSA to continue recognition for our classes and have the right to seeded numbers. We continue to work together with JAG for Rotax and Tal-Ko for TKM. He noted that British drivers have had great success internationally, and that the WSK promoters have had their ups and downs promoting the CIK championships but 2014 will see some welcome cost cutting measures. With the likes of Tom Joyner winning the CIK-FIA World Championship and Oliver Hodgson the Rotax Grand Finals we are the envy of other nations. Finally he said that his decision to stand down was not taken lightly and he would be happy to serve on the steering group and assist the new chairman. He thanked the clubs for the privilege of leading the ABkC for the last twelve years. He congratulated Nigel Edwards on his appointment as Kart Committee chairman.

In his secretarial report, Graham Smith reported that the member clubs reported a total membership of 4489 against 4749 in 2012 and licences are down again at 4253 for 2012 and 3889 as at the end of September. The number of events and participation has held up reasonably well and we thank the clubs for their continued support of the association. We still face a lot of challenges and negotiations with the MSA to take place during 2014, not least on senior ages, driver weights and class championship seeded numbers. He wondered if some of the output from the Green Paper that has gone into regulation has been misguided as issues have changed and the new championship regulations have thrown up some significant anomalies. It has not been helped by the slow response from the MSA. He noted that the ABkC exhibited at the Autosport Show in the Kart Pavilion organised by John Hoyle and will return in January and we also went to the recent Kartmania as part of a new informational area. Using some of the prize fund sponsorship money, the new club development fund has £1042.50 still available from 2013 for applications from clubs and will have a further £3457.50 for 2014. Smith also noted that the MSA's ARKS Start Karting packs have had a re-design to A5 size, and will in future cost £75 which will include the cost of the first licence (and PG Entrant licence for a parent if needed). Stripping out tyre prize sponsorship for the championships the loss on the year is £693.40 compared with a profit in 2012 of £1618.95. The cheque account stood at £12919.96 and the deposit account at £21847.58 at 31st October. The prize fund is lower in 2013 due to the demise of Max 177 in the Super One.

After the official business was completed, there followed an open Q&A session where the following topics were discussed:

- The new Honda GX160 Timing tool Kelvin Nicholls described the new tool, and said it was now in production and would soon be available for sale to scrutineers and competitors. We are now monitoring the effect of the changes.
- A team manager wrote in to emphasis the need for Competition Secretary's to offer a friendly service to competitors. He had been concerned about drivers being refused entries to a meeting even although they were only a day late getting in their entries. It was noted that teams and competitors do not really understand the amount of work that goes into organising a race meeting, and perennial late entries are the bane of a Comp Sec's life.
- The lack of child friendly material in the MSA's output, regulations and start karting packs was highlighted and will be passed on for comment to the MSA. After all the vast majority of our competitors are now 'minors'.
- The difficulties some organisations will have in supplying either Mylaps or TAG-Heuer transponders to their members now that some clubs use one type of transponder and some another.
- The need for support at the shows like Kartmania by the big teams, traders and importers. Kelvin Nicholls said there had been lots of good feedback from the Kartmania show and a lot of people said how much they had gained from networking with others. For the next two years there is a fifth weekend to use in November which should prevent the clashes with race meetings, and they would be putting on more talks about how to start kart racing.
- The cost of undertaking MSA level kart racing, and thinking of ways to reduce that resulted in a long debate with no easy answer. It is a huge jump in costs from doing some indoor karting to having one's own kart and racing at MSA clubs. Very often drivers find it is easier to get into non-MSA racing which seemed to be well organised and often ran to MSA rules anyway. Some thought that extending the use of Tyro racing, where drivers could get a licence on the same weekend and compete straight away might be a good way forward, perhaps allowed only for that one club where they race. There are so many rules and regulations that it is difficult for newcomers, especially with cheap second hand equipment to get their heads round it and race legally to the MSA standards. The RAFMSA representative pointed out that his libre class used different tyres to equalise the different engine types. For instance a Formula A or KF2 engine would use hard tyres, and a TKM or 4-stroke would use soft tyres. This approach seemed to work.
- A requirement for a standardised proforma for a check list for new drivers competing for the first time was thought to be a good idea. Many clubs already do this so it was agreed to collate all the ideas and do an ABkC version.
- The challenges presented to the clubs and industry if the MSA proceed to slim down the officially recognised classes to only two Cadet, two Junior and two Senior (one low powered and one high powered) for 2017 and the need to formulate an alternative working

scenario, especially as at the same time they will offer to homologate new classes for club racing.

 A promotional documentary video is to be made in conjunction with the Super One production team for airing in Motors TV in May 2014.

The next steering group meeting will be held at the end of February and many of these topics will have a more in depth discussion and decisions for future policy. It was noted that the MSA Kart Committee intends to have a 'Kart Stakeholders' meeting in February to engender a debate amongst teams, traders and clubs for the future direction of the sport.

# **Data Protection**

Many clubs will be registered with the ICO as they hold personal information on competitors etc (although there are exceptions for clubs, check the website). It is very important that any such data (personal or financial) that is carried on a portable device is encrypted. Check out this link bit.ly/1fmai7g, a company was fined £5000 for losing a hard drive but it could have been up to £70000.

### **New Classes**

Please report any problems arising with the new classes, e.g. X30 and KGP. For instance the number plates for X30 Senior are the same as Max 177, does that give rise to any problem if they are racing together. Remember you cannot mix 11 year old and 13 year old classes together on the track without a waiver from the MSA. The regs are all available on the MSA website. You must also refer to the KTE's in your approved SRs.

All the 2014 KTE class regulations are available on the MSA website and most on the ABkC website.

# Club of the Year / Volunteer of the Year

Congratulations to Dunkeswell Kart Racing Club who were Highly Commended in the 2013 JLT MSA Club of the Year awards, also to Martin Bean who has won the Clerk of the Course category of the JLT MSA Volunteer Official of the Year Award.

#### How to Start Kart Racing brochure 2014

The 2014 brochure was launched at the Autosport Show. It has attracted some comments on the various forums, and these will be studied by the Steering Group to see if any changes need to be made for next year. (There is a small error in that the map for clubs has two number 2's). Please arrange with the secretary to collect a bundle from Shenington or a meeting, e.g. Scrutineer & Timekeepers Seminar at East Midlands. The brochure is also on <a href="https://www.startkarting.co.uk">www.startkarting.co.uk</a> and the Chairman Colin Wright has asked all clubs to put a prominent link onto that brochure to help newcomers find out more about our sport.

## **Brochure for Hotels**

The steering group is pressing on with producing a slim brochure for clubs to put in their local hotels and information points. It will have a space for the local club to stamp in their contact details. Alternatively print small stick on labels with the information. We hope to get 1000 of these out to each club by Springtime.



ABkC and ARKS shared a stand at the NEC Autosport Show. Very many newcomers visited to learn about starting kart racing including a good number of Bambinos

## **Club Development Fund**

We have a new tranche of funds to offer on the 2014 Club Development Fund. Grants are usually capped at £500 and Application Forms are available from the Secretary. We need them by mid-February to discuss at the next steering group meeting.

#### Stop Press

Further to the announcement of the last minute change to yellow flag regulations detailed in the last Rule Change leaflet regarding the use of double yellow flags, the MSA are planning to issue an amendment to state that kart circuits can use the 2013 regulations. Also there is a new International licence Grade D, this is reserved for entering karts of less than 15bhp.

## **Membership Renewal**

Thanks to all clubs who have already renewed membership for 2014. For those that haven't please find a membership form enclosed in the mail shot to clubs, please return asap. In these difficult times it is really important that the ABkC continues to speak for all clubs. Colin Wright and Graham Smith are meeting the MSA Chief Executive in February so we can engage on a number of important matters affecting our sport now and in the future.

(Editor Graham Smith, email <a href="mailto:secretary@abkc.org.uk">secretary@abkc.org.uk</a>)