

I hope you appreciate the historic reference in the title, but this time it's a very friendly, respectful and enjoyable invasion. God save MGs, Jags, and Triumphs (and all the other race cars too).

Lets review why we have a yellow flag on the out lap of sessions in VARA and what that means. The WHY, - well we had a problem as too many drivers were passing on the out lap under the white flag. The rule was clear, on the out lap, a white flag means NO PASSING. You want to be first in practice or qualification, then be at the grid first. So we changed it, and started showing the yellow flag on the out lap which is lifted with the display of green at the start finish. Some folks still don't get it I guess, or they forget – but the yellow means no passing. If the car in front of you points you by – and you go, its still a pass under yellow and you will be presented a black flag and serve a functional "stop and go". The answer, don't pass under yellow. If the car in front of you breaks down, and pulls off then you can pass such a car. Otherwise you remain behind the car in front of you until the green flag is displayed. If the car in front is slow, because he/she is trying to create a gap in which to qualify, then that is the way it is – don't get behind them next time. If the good person in front of you points you by, DON'T DO IT. Their decision does not supersede the rule. A yellow flag on the out lap, is just like a yellow flag in the middle of your race – means the same thing no passing.

Dust is always a possibility at BRP. Do review your dust cloud procedures. While your at it, review the required RED FLAG procedures – and while we have been lucky not to have many, its always a possibility and when it happens, drivers, flag marshals, race control and everyone else needs to do it correctly. On the subject of "emergency actions" at it, give a thought to emergency exit review from your race car – simulated fire. Think a bit about Roman Grojean getting out of the Haas F 1 car last year – a practiced but very fortunate escape. The standard is 6-10 seconds to get out, its worth some of your "in your garage prep time", to make sure you can meet that standard and this is decidedly your responsibility.

While on this subject think a bit about the black flag all procedures. Remember that when you do get back to the hot pits, the staff there will stop you short of the start finish line and the important timing loop.

The schedule is still in the final development stage, but be sure you check it carefully. We do plan a rookies and new to BRP track (station wagon / van session), for those who are in either category. Check the schedule or at registration for details.

The Ground School (required for rookies, and those new to VARA, and some experienced drivers sharing an "experience"), is scheduled for Friday early evening. Check the schedule or registration for the exact time. Ground School will be held in the upstairs tower classroom. This is the same place where Race Control operates during racing events.

May in Buttonwillow, in fact anywhere in the southern end of the Central Valley can be very, very nice, or quite warm. In either case, take care of yourself and be sure you hydrate.

Quick review on the 4 off rule. The rule requires a fully comp. licensed driver to self report to black flag if they have 2 spins, or off track excursions (4 wheels), in one session. If a person is a rookie then

after 1 such incident in a session they must self report – rookies must also contact the CDI. Black Flags will follow failure to self report and the result will be a “functional” stop and go penalty – the more black flags missed, the longer will be the time in black flag.

Contact: We had 3 incidents at Spring Mt. Some of the contact can be attributed to a shortcoming in a drivers situational awareness, some due to over aggressiveness. Both of these reasons are not excuses, but explanations and contact is NEVER acceptable. I check every race weekend to see if any IndyCar or F 1 talent scouts are present ready to sign up a driver for a professional career. Has yet to happen – that means we are attending the races to have fun. In two out of the three incidents at Spring Mt., the consequences could have been life threatening – they were not, thank goodness, but it was inches NOT feet that made the difference, and one incident is going to be very expensive (in time and dollars) for one person involved. Ours is a NO CONTACT organization. If you have contact you must report to Black Flag immediately. Every contact results in an investigation. That investigation determines who is a primary at fault for the contact, and who is secondary. Sometimes, both are primary when they are at equal fault. Efforts at correcting this deviant behavior in the future are determined based upon the Primary / Secondary determination and the results of the investigation. The bottom line, don’t have contact. You are racing for “fun”, to quench your passion for motorsports and competition. Having contact assures that both the “fun and satisfaction meters” will be flashing red. You will be unhappy, the CDI will be unhappy, I will be unhappy – and this is good for no one.

Remember, in order to finish first – first you must finish.

Have a great weekend. Let us know if we can help in any way.

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