

Goodbye, Casey Jones

WMC Revises Its Passing Policy

For those participating in our Driver's Schools the race track on occasion more closely resembles a train track, with several cars running nose to tail at the slower pace of a single car heading the line. Our traditional passing policy, which restricts passing to three or four "straights," assures a safer event, but at the expense of those caught in the aforementioned trains. It is a sound policy that will remain in place for novice drivers. Our more experienced drivers, however, are likely worthy of looser reins.

Several years ago we conducted a "Passing Exercise" designed to give those who wanted to move on to Club Racing a safe and controlled means of gaining wheel-to-wheel experience. The exercise was successful and effective, but as an isolated event it was also logistically cumbersome and lacking a shepherd it simply faded out of the picture. The revised passing policy will apply the structure of the "Passing Exercise" to a new policy that will grant Group 1 drivers and instructors the option of passing in corners. There will be rigid rules in place that will insure that those not wishing to pass, or be passed, will continue to have the same experience they've enjoyed under the traditional passing policy.

Group 1 drivers and instructors wishing to pass in corners will be required to attend a Passing Clinic, after which they will be given numbered orange stripes to be affixed in the corners of their front and rear windows. These stripes will afford that driver expanded passing rights from that event forward. When a driver with passing stripes comes upon another driver with passing stripes, the former may pass the latter at will, even in corners. Those without passing stripes must adhere to the same passing zones as novice drivers and, more importantly, may not be passed anywhere other than a passing zone (with the requisite point by). We will post spotters around the track and any driver with passing stripes who illegally passes a driver without them will be black flagged and ejected from the event. If this new policy proves to be as controlled and safe as we anticipate, the consequences of an illegal pass may be reduced to the simple revocation of passing rights for the remainder of the season. While the policy is new, however, transgressors will be sent packing.

This new policy will be implemented at our August 18-20 event at NHIS. Passing Clinics will be scheduled for the mornings of Friday, August 18th and Saturday, August 19th. Given the demands of tech inspection, etc. there is a possibility that they will be conducted very early in the morning, so those interested in participating should be prepared to arrive at the track when it opens at 7:00am. If you are a Group 1 driver or instructor and would like to earn your stripes, please email me at vmax@metrocast.net and I will add you to the roster. More detailed information will be distributed prior to the event.

Ed Valpey, Chief Instructor, White Mountain Chapter, BMW CCA