



Castrol BMW Race Series

Driver Newsletter 11 – July 2009

Greetings, and a warm welcome to you all as we head into the fourth season of the **BMW Race Series**. Based on the number of phone calls and e-mails, we know you are as keen as ever, so we want to give you as much information as possible, so those rebuilding cars can be sure of complying with the new rules. We have been going through an extensive review of our regulations, the E30 technical rules in particular, and the sub-Committee presented a number of recommendations to the Committee. We thank them for their valued input and we are nearly ready to publish the full technical document. The new rules should also be a bit easier to read/interpret, as we have regrouped all of the similar topics together. While the draft regulations are being checked and rechecked, we can provide you with a summary of the main changes for the new season, so at least you have some advance notice of some of the planned changes.

E30 Technical Regulations – In no particular order, the following changes / clarifications are to be introduced this season. Other minor changes or rewording of regulations are also happening, but these are the main ones. Full details will be supplied in the next few weeks:

Valid Models – we have clarified exactly which models are allowed to compete, and redefined that unless specifically stated in the regs, and parts to be used on E30 race cars, must come from one of the valid models, and not just any BMW model.

Pistons – only Mahle and KolbenSchmidt pistons are allowed – no aftermarket pistons, even if a particular piston size / shape is no longer available from BMW. Pistons must be fitted with the normal 3 rings.

Piston Protrusion – To go with the minimum cylinder head height, we have now defined a maximum protrusion of the piston above the top of the block. The two measurements will help to create an upper limit for compression. The maximum protrusion will be 0.50mm on M40 and 0.60mm on M20.

Conrods – these must be Original BMW parts. They can be resized / machined to allow for new bearings, but this cannot alter the effective length of the rod.

Hybrids – the earlier decision to ban “hybrid” engines from the start of the 2010/11 season remains.

Bearings – non-BMW bearing shells may be used for the crankshaft. (main and big-end)

Gaskets – the head gasket, inlet manifold gasket (next to head) and exhaust manifold gasket (next to head) must all be Original BMW parts – all other engine gaskets are open in terms of supply.

Balancing – the regulations reiterate that “balancing” of engines is specifically prohibited.

Crankshaft – to eliminate any contradiction, the regs now state that crank grinding is allowable, but this is strictly limited to the bearing surfaces.

Sump Baffles – regulations now in place to limit the size and location of baffles, to avoid any potential issues of windage or scraping.

Valve-Seats – confirmation that valve seats can be machined to provide sealing, this can be triple-cut, but there are limits on where / how the machining may be done.

Valves – confirmation that valves must be 318i or 320i valves, unmodified apart from the sealing surface, and that valves from other models cannot be used.

Flywheel – redefine the minimum thicknesses and weights for each model. (M20 & M40)

Sensors – reword to prohibit the slotting of mounts for crank and cam angle sensors, which adjusts timing.

Coatings – clarify that low-friction coatings cannot be used on any engine or gearbox components.

Gear Linkages – confirm that these must be original BMW E30 item – no substitution allowed.

Clutch – confirm that supply of clutch components (pressure plate, clutch plate and release bearing) is open, but the clutch must still be same type/specification as OE part, and cannot be further modified.

Suspension – confirm that front top mounts must be BMW parts (2 choices available) and that springs should ideally be mounted so that the manufacturer’s markings are visible for inspection purposes.

Fuel – confirm that no additives are permitted – must be pump gas between 91 and 98 octane.

Weights – 320i running L-Jetronic engines will be given a 50kg weight reduction, making three different minimum weights: 318i 1075kg, 320i L/Jet 1175kg & 320i Motronic 1225kg. NB: This allowance is based on the engine fitted, not the body-shape used.

Harnesses – confirm that 4-point is acceptable, as we are not an MNZ Championship or sanctioned class.

Glass headlights – must be taped / covered, as per MNZ regs. (previously showing as optional)

Strut Braces – confirm that these can be welded and/or bolted in place, as long as standard mounts used.

Towing Eyes – To reduce damage, all Facelift E30's must use a soft towing eye, which has been developed by the Committee and will be supplied, at reasonable cost, to competitors.

Rolled Wheel Arches – confirmation of the amount of inner guard that can be rolled to avoid tyre rub, and which models this applies to.

Interior – clarification that glovebox unit only can be removed from interior, but dashboard structure remains as is, apart from modifications to allow fitment of a roll cage.

Yes, it looks like quite a few changes, but in reality, almost all of these clarify existing regulations. The new wording is only to enforce the originally intended rule, which some were trying to avoid.

Open Class – to allow for an even wider range of entries in this class, including some from aftermarket tuners like Alpina & Schnitzer, we are preparing a detailed list of acceptable engine/body combinations. This will cover both turbo and non-turbo models. To prevent “absolute hotrods” from being created, we have set the following basic restrictions for all Open-class cars. A maximum wheel rim width of 10” and minimum lap times of 1:02 Pukekohe, 1:38 Taupo and Manfeild 1:12. Hampton Downs minimum time to be established. Cars breaking these times will be penalised and/or excluded.

Race Meeting Formats – the format for both Open and E30 classes will change. E30 will include more split-grid races, making more points available, while the Open class will now include 2 handicap races, one scratch race and full points for qualifying. In both cases, championships will allow drivers to “drop” races.

2009/10 Race Calendar – We are still negotiating with a number of race meeting organisers, so the final calendar cannot be absolutely confirmed at this stage. However, we are hopeful of having as many as eight rounds this season, across four circuits, and a minimum of six events. We should also have TV coverage for at least five of those rounds. Below is a preliminary season programme:

September 13	HRC	Pukekohe (1-day meeting, TBC, practice 12th)
September 19 & 20	HRC	Hampton Downs National (subject to circuit completion)
November 14 & 15	MG	Manfeild
November 29	Ray Green	Hampton Downs National (1-day meeting!)
January 16 & 17	HRC	Hampton Downs National
February 6 & 7	HRC	Taupo (full circuit)
February 20 & 21	NZIGP	Pukekohe (Tier 2, to be confirmed)
Mar 20 & 21	HRC	Hampton Downs National

The biggest doubt surrounds the delayed construction of the Hampton Downs circuit. If they are not ready for the meeting on September 19th & 20th, they will run the 2-day Icebreaker meeting at Pukekohe on the previous weekend. (12th & 13th) If the track is completed, and we should know by mid-August, then they will run a smaller meeting for us on Sunday 13th. There is also some doubt about our chances of getting into the Tier 2 meeting in February. Once again, Manfeild will have just one 45-car E30 grid - the balance having to go into the Open class, where they can still earn championship points. More details to follow.

NB: In addition to this programme of championship rounds, there will certainly be other non-championship opportunities, especially for the E30. For example, the TACCOC meetings on October 10th (HD) and April 7th (Puke) will have a dedicated E30 class, and offer a lot of racing for a very reasonable price.

Registration Forms: Once the regulations for both classes have been distributed, we will also send out the new registration forms. There's no point doing so before you have the new regulations, as you all have to confirm that you have read and accept all the rules and will abide by them. And for those hoping to get the “early-payment” discount, we will ensure there is plenty of time for you to save a few bucks.

Vehicle Signage – A new race number box is being developed and will be compulsory for all E30 race cars, optional in the Open class. Compulsory for both classes are the Castrol windscreen banners and Castrol bonnet decals, plus the Toyo Tires decal for the boot lid of E30's. At the same time, we have reviewed the location of the decals for the other E30 Race Series sponsors. The Koni, King Springs, Toyo and Radio Sport decals will all be on the front fender – behind the wheel arch and in front of the door. At the same time, the race number box will move right to the front of the door. Both of these changes will provide more space for your own sponsors. Full details will be included in the new E30 regulations.

Personnel Change: Gerry Hodges has decided to step down from his role as BMW Car Club delegate on the BMW Race Series Committee. As his replacement, the BMW Car Club has appointed Chris Couch, who most of you will already know - he's usually wearing a fluoro vest, standing on an oil drum and blowing his whistle! Welcome aboard, Chris.

See you all at Pukekohe on September 13th, or will it be the 12th? Let's pray for no more rain!!