

Electric Car Racing Association

The First Rules

The ECRA's original rules were published in magazine articles, the association started publishing handbooks some few years later.

Laurie Cranshaw proposed setting up a national organisation for racing electric powered model cars in articles published in Model Maker magazine in 1960.

Laurie announced the formation of the Electric Car Racing Association (ECRA) and published what he called its charter in 1961. The charter had rules for racing both rail and slot guided 1/32 cars. At that stage the association was run by Laurie, and as far as we know had no other officials.

The charter talks about running classic meetings, it's worth explaining what that meant. Classic meetings were held on club rail tracks and were the meetings from which drivers qualified for the National Championships. In 1961, 62 and 63 the National Championships were for rail guided 1/32 cars.

The 1961, 62 and 63 versions of the charter are reproduced below.

The Electric Car Racing Association

— a fact at last

by Laurie Cranshaw

YES, friends, we have, at last, an Association for the promotion and control of electric car racing, be it rail or slot.

First of all, I would like to thank all those interested folk who wrote to me (and they were many) and to say how much I appreciated their well informed ideas and comments. I learned a great deal. However, I don't think we should let this occasion pass without a very sincere vote of thanks to D.J.L.D. and V.S. and all at Clarendon Road who really laid the foundations of this Association with their ideas, comments and encouragement.

Here then are the articles of the Association:—

Rail Racing—The Southport Standards:

1. All models must be built to 1/32 scale with a tolerance of 1/16 inch.
2. No car to exceed a maximum overall width of 2½ in.
3. No projections, capable of guiding the car, are allowed beneath the car other than the steering guide and contacts.
4. All cars must be scale models of full-size prototypes.
5. All cars must carry drivers.
6. All cars must bear official racing numbers clearly displayed in two places, such numbers to be not less than ¼ in. high.
7. The track guide rail, which also acts as the negative rail is 3/16 in. high.
8. The track return rail which acts as the positive rail is approximately ¼ in. away from the guide rail on the left hand side and laid flat on the track surface.

Slot Racing—The Aintree Standards:—

1. Items 1/6 as per Southport Standards.
7. Maximum length of guide, measured extreme front to extreme rear, must not exceed ¾ in.
8. The guide must not project more than 3/16ths. below track level.
9. The track slot to measure ¼ in. in width and 3/16th. inch in depth.
10. The contact surfaces on each side of the slot must be a minimum width of 3/16in.
11. Looking in the direction of travel the positive contact must be on the left of the slot and the negative on the right.

Classic Meetings—Meetings open to competitors other than those who are members of the organising club.

Grand Prix Cars

1. The event to be run in heats and finals with all races timed.
2. Heats to be set out before practice commences.
3. Heats to be a minimum of 20 laps.
4. The fastest heat winners qualify for the final, or —where more than the heat winners are timed— the fastest cars qualify for the final.
5. Final to be a minimum of 150 laps.
6. Each competitor be told his racing lane in the heat so that he can obtain maximum effective practice.
7. In the event of two or more cars qualifying for the final on the same lane the tie so resulting shall be resolved as follows:—

- (a) A member on whose track the event is being run automatically loses the tie.
- (b) Ties between organising club members or between visiting drivers be resolved by heat times or by ballot.
- (c) A visiting driver losing a tie be given at least five minutes practice on his new lane.

Sports Cars

Items 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 as per G.P. cars.

4. The method set out under G.P. cars is recommended but the following may be used as an alternative:—

"or heats shall be over a set period of time, i.e. 5 mins. and the cars completing the greatest number of laps and/or distance shall qualify for the final." *Note:* If this method is used it is recommended that the track be marked in 10 equal parts and that drivers be credited with the laps and number of tenths they have completed (i.e. if a driver has completed 31 laps and has passed the fourth mark but has not reached the fifth mark his laps completed will be 31.4).

5. Final to be a minimum of 100 laps or 20 minutes in which case the same method as set out in item 4 will apply.

Le Mans Events

Items 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 as before.

Items 4 and 5 to be decided by the organising club set out in the supplementary regulations.

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Well, folks, there is your charter, decided upon by the majority vote, and I think all will agree that it should run for at least 12 months to show up any weaknesses.

If any unattached competitor or club decides that modification or alteration is required or that some new rule is needed as a result of experience and will send a note of it to me, I will undertake to deal with it through the pages of MODEL MAKER until such time as you yourselves decide that you prefer someone else to carry the Association on to greater heights.

One immediate benefit will be clearly apparent. The cost of printing or duplicating for a "Classic Meeting" will be considerably reduced as only the items with variables need to be mentioned in the Supplementary Regulations.

Finally, a sincere "Thank You" for your kind letters and all the help so generously given. I hope you have got what you want (or nearly so) and that my small effort

1962 ECRA Rules

The following changes were made for 1962, The full set of rules was not reprinted

Electric Car Racing Association

Laurie Cranshaw writes: "May I first thank the large number of folk who wrote expressing views on the proposed new "Rule 8" for Classic Meetings and particularly to those friends in America who were kind enough to write. After carefully sifting all the opinions and votes the majority is as follows and forms Rule 9 of the Association:—

Classic Meetings

RULE 8. A competitor may have a maximum of two drives in the heats of any one G.P. or Sports Car event (see proviso in sub-section B below) except in the British Championship Meeting where one drive only is permitted.

(a) The two drives may be (1) his own entries of two different cars, (2) one entry of his own and one proxy entry, or (3) two proxy entries.

(b) If the number of proxy entries is such as to render it impossible for the home club drivers to observe the maximum of two drives then the excess proxy entries shall be allocated to acknowledged experienced visiting drivers who shall only be notified of these additional proxy drives when they actually arrive at the track.

(c) Should a driver qualify for the final with more than one car of his own entries then he must drive the quickest.

(d) Should a driver qualify with proxy car/s in addition to his own then he must nominate a driver/s for the proxy car/s".

1963 ECRA Rules

ECRA rules (which Laurie calls the Association Charter) were updated and published in the September 1963 edition of Model Maker magazine

MODEL
MAKER

The Electric Car Racing Association

Notes from Laurie Cranshaw

(Chorlton House, Nigel Road,
Heswall Hills, Barnston, Ches)

AS it is two years since the Association Charter was first printed some of you may be a little hazy concerning it and many new recruits to the sport have probably never seen it. In order to remedy this position here is a complete reprint including the amendments made at the Newport meeting after two years' experience of running classic meetings.

Southport Standards — Rail

1. All models to be built to 1/32nd scale with a tolerance of 1/16 in. in track and wheelbase and any one chassis can only be fitted to any one body; i.e., a single chassis cannot be raced in one event with a G.P. body and in another event with a sports or G.T. body even though the track and wheelbase measurements are the same. Nor can the same chassis run in two heats of the same event with two G.P., two sports, or two G.T. bodies.

2. No car to exceed a maximum overall width of 2½ in.

3. No projections downwards, capable of guiding the car, are permitted other than the steering guide and contacts.

4. All cars must be scale models of full-size prototypes.

5. All cars must carry drivers. Should a driver become detached during a race the car must be stopped and the driver re-fixed before it can continue the race.

6. All cars must display racing numbers in two places, such numbers to be not less than ¼ in. high.

7. The track guide rail which also acts as the negative rail to be 3/16 in. high.

8. The track return positive contact rail, wire, tape or strip must be laid flat on the track surface on the left hand side of the guide rail and its centre must be approximately ¼ in. from the guide rail.

9. Guides, either pegs or tunnels, must be parallel when viewed from the front and no in-curve will be allowed. Excessive wear sufficient, in the opinion of the Stewards, to give an advantage on the particular guide rail being used will not be permitted.

Aintree Standards — Slot

Items 1 to 6 as above.

7. Maximum length of guide, measured extreme front to extreme rear, must not exceed ¼ in.

8. The guide must not project more than 3/16 in. below the top surface of the track.

9. The track slot to measure ¼ in. in width and 3/16 in. in depth.

10. The contact surfaces on each side of the slot must be a minimum width of 3/16 in. and preferably with their centres 3/16 in. from the slot edge.

11. Looking in the direction of travel the positive contact must be on the left of the slot and the negative on the right.

Classic Meetings

Meetings open to competitors other than those who are members of the organising club.

A. GRAND PRIX EVENTS

1. The event to be run in heats, sub-final and final with all heats timed.

2. Heats to be made up prior to the meeting and a race sheet showing these to be given to at least one member of each visiting club before practice commences.

3. Heats to be a minimum of 20 laps each.

4. The fastest heat winners or, where more than the winners are timed, the fastest cars qualify for the final and the next fastest heat winners or cars qualify for the sub-final.

5. Final to be a minimum of 150 laps and the Sub-Final a minimum of 50 laps.

6. Each competitor to be told his or her racing lane in the heat so that he or she can obtain maximum effective practice.

7. In the event of two or more cars qualifying for the

final or for the sub-final on the same lane the tie so resulting shall be resolved as follows:—

A. A driver who is a member of the club on whose track the event is being held automatically loses the tie.

B. Ties between organising club members or between visiting drivers be resolved by heat times—fastest time has first choice and so on.

C. Drivers losing a tie be given at least 5 minutes practice on the new lane.

8. A competitor may have a maximum of two drives in the heats only of any one G.P., Sports or G.T. event (see proviso in sub-section B below) except in a British Championship meeting or Area Championship meeting when only one drive is permitted.

A. The two drives may be (1) his or her own entries of two different cars, (2) one entry of his or her own and one proxy entry, (3) two proxy entries.

B. If the number of proxy entries is such as to render it impossible for the home club drivers to observe the maximum of two drives then the excess proxy entries shall be allocated to acknowledged experienced visiting drivers who shall only be notified of these additional proxy drives when they actually arrive at the track.

C. Should a driver qualify for the final or sub-final with more than one car of his or her own entries then he must drive the quickest.

D. Should a driver qualify with proxy car/s in addition to his or her own then he or she must nominate a driver/s for the proxy car/s.

B. SPORTS (INCLUDING G.T.) EVENTS

Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 as per G.P. Events.

4. The method set out for G.P. Events may be used or the following alternative:—

"Heats shall be over a set period of time, i.e., 5 mins., and the cars completing the greatest number of laps or the longest distance shall qualify for the final and the cars completing the next greatest number of laps or longest distance shall qualify for the sub-final.

NOTE. If this method is used the track should be marked into equal parts and drivers should be credited with the number of laps and tenths they have completed.

5. Final to be a minimum of 100 laps or 20 mins. and the Sub-Final to be minimum of 50 laps or 10 minutes.

C. LE MANS AND TEAM EVENTS

Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 as per G.P. and Sports events.

Items 4 and 5 decided by the organising club and set out in the supplementary regulations.

General

1. Entries received after the official closing date will not be accepted.

2. Conduct of practising:—

A. No home club drivers to practise during the Saturday and/or Sunday of the meeting.

B. Each visiting driver to book his or her practice sessions with the clerk of the course.

C. Wherever possible the last hour of practice should be reserved for those competitors unable to arrive earlier.

D. Home club drivers be allowed two laps before their particular race.

3. If a race is ready to start and any competitor/s is/are missing they shall be given 1 minute to bring their car/s to the start grid.

4. If, when a race is started, all cars do not leave the starting grid, the clerk of the course may declare a false start and order a fresh one. Should all cars not start at this second attempt the car/s themselves will be regarded as faulty and the race should continue. It is assumed that the clerk of the course is satisfied that there is no fault in the power supply to the particular lane/s.

5. Awards will normally be made to drivers except in the case of bonafide proxy entries when awards will be made to the entrant.

6. In the Sub-Final of a Classic Meeting an award must be made to at least the winner of such sub-final.

7. Drivers Championship. In order to qualify for this event a driver must:—

- A. Be one of the ten fastest at a Classic Meeting held on his or her own club circuit, or (B) be one of the twenty fastest at a Classic meeting held on a circuit belonging to a club of which he or she is not a member.
 - C. For the G.P. Championship qualifications must be in a G.P. event.
 - D. For the Sports Championship qualification may be obtained in either a Sports Car event or a G.T. event (until such time as these classes have a separate Championship) provided such events are run to Classic Meeting standards.
8. The organising club should appoint three Stewards,

two of which should preferably be visitors to whom the clerk of the course may refer for a decision.

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There is your complete Charter as it stands at present and I suggest you post it in a convenient place in your club room. It will be very useful to any slot enthusiast or slot club at present considering any desirable alterations or additions which slot enthusiasts have found to be needed. As previously explained the Association works entirely without cost through the kindly help of *Model Maker* and must be one of the few to be able to do so. If there are any points you would like discussed and put to a postal vote just send them to me and I will do what I can to help.