

# SAAC-49 OPEN TRACK

## SECTION 1 – GENERAL OVERVIEW

SAAC's High Speed Event at Thunderbolt will be similar in concept to the open track events held at past national conventions. All drivers must be full or associate SAAC National members or Team Shelby members.

This is not a competitive event. There will be no classes, no times taken and no trophies awarded. Simply put, SAAC's High Speed Event is an opportunity for you to drive your car at a speed you feel comfortable with under the safest conditions we can conceive. Safety is our #1 concern. We want everyone to have an enjoyable time, but we also want to continue to make high-speed events part of all national conventions. One serious accident or mishap could result in the club's not being able to secure the event insurance necessary for future high-speed events. This would mean an end to racetrack rentals and the beginning of really small, dull, conventions. The event insurance SAAC carries specifically stipulates that the open track activity be a non-competitive event.

Due to some vintage racing and club-related incidents in the past (thankfully, none involving SAAC), insurance requirements have been significantly tightened and compliance to the requirements we outline is mandatory. The alternative would be to do what other clubs have been forced to do: hold low speed parade laps or limit cars on the track to those which are race-prepared to current competition standards (roll cages, fuel cells, full Nomex, etc.). Or to simply hold no high speed event at all. Long pants are required in the Hot Pits. This applies both to drivers and crewmembers. So when we advise you of a rule or requirement, it is not negotiable. Your choice is to comply and participate or refuse to comply and be a spectator. If you understand that going in, we should be able to avoid heated discussions during the event regarding the interpretation of specific details. We have zero tolerance for quibblers, whiners and malcontents.

## SECTION 2 – THE TRACK

Thunderbolt Raceway has a length of 2.25 miles for the sports car track. SAAC will be sharing both the track and the paddock with cars that are entered in the SVRA races, so we don't have access to the entire complex.

## **SECTION 3 – PADDOCK ACCESS/PADDOCK PARKING**

Spots in the paddock will be available on a first come/first served basis. Once you find a spot and set up you will not have to move for the entire convention. All paved surfaces must be protected. Participants must use flat blocks or wood squares to absorb weight beneath any equipment that may cause damage to the surface, such as jack-stands and trailer legs. No holes will be permitted in any asphalt surface including but not limited to the racing surface, pit area and the paddock area. The track will open at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24, 7 a.m. Thursday, July 25, 7 a.m. Friday July 26 and 7 a.m. Saturday July 27. Once you go through registration and get a wristband it will not be necessary to go back there again; you can just drive right into the track.

## **SECTION 4 – GARAGES**

The Raceway has a few garages that will be rented by SAAC.

## **SECTION 5 – TECH INSPECTION**

Early tech inspection will be in the SAAC garage from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday, and Friday 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. This inspection should be little more than a formality because you will, no doubt, have thoroughly inspected your car yourself, as if your life depended on it. Because it does! Look for the tech signs. We strongly urge you to get your car through tech the day **BEFORE** you run so that in the event a last minute problem, you will have time to deal with it. There is a mandatory Drivers Meeting each morning at 7:15 am near SAAC tech for all drivers who are on the open track that day. If you are driving more than one day you must attend the meeting each day you will be on the track.

Run Groups will be assigned by SAAC.

**Novice Red Group.** No or very limited track experience. No special equipment required except for padded convertible roll bars. Open car roll bars must pass the broomstick test. The test reveals clearance for your helmet-clad head while sitting in the driver's seat with a broomstick set atop the roll bar and the windshield frame. Your helmet-clad head must have clearance under the broomstick.

**Intermediate Yellow Group – Friday only.** No special equipment required except for padded convertible roll bars. Cobras with padded 3-point bars are OK. Open car roll bars must pass the broomstick test. The test reveals clearance for

your helmet-clad head while sitting in the driver's seat with a broomstick set atop the roll bar and the windshield frame. Your helmet-clad head must have clearance under the broomstick.

**Advanced Green Group.** Car/Driver combination is significantly faster than the other groups. No special equipment required except for padded convertible roll bars. Cobras with padded 3-point bars are OK. Open car roll bars must pass the broomstick test. The test reveals clearance for your helmet-clad head while sitting in the driver's seat with a broomstick set atop the roll bar and the windshield frame. Your helmet-clad head must have clearance under the broomstick.

We expect your car to be track-ready when you arrive at Tech. The track's paddock area is **NOT** the place to work on your car in order to get it ready. Anything that needs to be done to it should be done **BEFORE** you leave for the convention. This event is not a competitive event, but it **IS** a high-speed event. This means that the smallest mechanical failure has the potential of turning into a major disaster **VERY QUICKLY**... one that could involve other drivers and other cars—not just your own. We take this event very seriously and we expect you to, also. The safety/tech inspection your car will undergo will only check a limited number of critical items. You should not rely on the tech inspectors to find every little thing that may be wrong with your car. This isn't NASCAR. Our tech inspectors are good, but they will not have the time to spend on your car that you will prior to the event. The responsibility of putting a safe car on the track rests with **YOU**. The following list will help you make a thorough check of the condition of your car. The inspection team will be looking at these items in general... you need to be specific:

- **OPEN CARS.** All open cars or convertibles **must have padded roll bars**. All convertibles must run with tops down. Single-loop roll bars in Cobras are acceptable. Open car roll bars must pass the broomstick test. The test reveals clearance for your helmet-clad head while sitting in the driver's seat with a broomstick set atop the roll bar and the windshield frame. Your helmet-clad head must have clearance under the broomstick.
- **DRIVING SUITS.** Nomex driving suits are recommended but not required. Long pants, long-sleeved shirts, socks and closed toe shoes are required. Gloves are required in all groups, Nomex recommended. Everyone in the hot pit area must have long pants including any crew or relatives.
- **SEAT BELTS.** "DOT" approved or competition-type belts are required. Belts must be in good condition with no cuts or frays; must be mounted securely. Shoulder harnesses are recommended. Passenger seat belts must be closed unless if there were a passenger in the car.

- **MIRRORS.** Each car must have at least one rear-view mirror. Two are recommended.
- **INTERIOR.** Seats must be mounted securely. All loose objects must be removed. There should be no loose wires under the dash. A fire extinguisher is recommended; the fire extinguisher bracket **must be metal**—not plastic, which could break in an accident and make the extinguisher a 2 lb. projectile inside your car.
- **BATTERY.** Must be securely mounted; terminals tight and in good condition. Positive terminal must be taped or otherwise covered.
- **TRUNK.** All loose items must be removed including jack, spare tire, lug wrench, etc.
- **TIRES.** Should have at least half of the original tread depth (unless they are race tires); sidewalls should be in good condition (free of cuts, cracks or deep scratches). Should be the proper size for the rim width. Visually check tread for foreign objects (nails, glass, etc.).
- **BRAKES.** Brakes will be tested for pedal fade when the car is stationary and for correct fluid level.
- **BRAKE LIGHTS.** Must be operational (Grand National and Winston Cup type cars please take notice!)
- **FLUID LEAKS.** None allowed. Cars will be checked while running; includes oil, coolant, brake and fuel lines. Do not overfill gas tanks.
- **WHEELS.** Should be on tight, with all lugs in place. Will be checked for cracks. Hubcaps or trim rings must be removed.
- **STEERING.** Manual steering should not have excessive play; power steering should be free of leaks at hoses and seals. Fluid levels of either should be checked. Front wheels should be tight at bearing and spindle; steering linkage (tie rods, idler arm, etc.), should be in good condition.
- **GLASS.** No cracked or broken glass.
- **EXHAUST SYSTEM.** Entire system must be in good condition and securely mounted.
- **RADIATOR OVERFLOW CATCH CAN.** Mandatory. Must be securely mounted (although it need not be permanent). Stock radiator overflow catch cans on late model cars are acceptable.
- **THROTTLE RETURN SPRING.** Two required on all cars with carburetors.

No exceptions.

- **NO OPEN-WHEEL CARS.** All cars must have fenders; no Formula cars, Indy cars, F5000 cars. Open wheel cars are too hard for drivers of larger cars to see.
- **NO RENTAL CARS.**
- **REPLICA COBRAS AND GT40s.** These cars will be checked more critically due to recent problems encountered by special interest insurance companies, some of which have stopped writing policies on these cars because they are being built with engines that are blatantly more powerful than what was originally intended by the manufacturer. Cars, which we consider to be overpowered, will not be allowed to run based on safety concerns for driver as well as other cars sharing the track. Cars rejected for this reason will receive a full refund.
- **NON-FORD** powered cars will be accepted. If you have any questions about your car, contact Howard Pardee at the address at the bottom of this page.
- **TECH STICKERS.** Cars passing tech will receive a non-removable tech inspection sticker for their windshield each day. No cars will be allowed on the track without the proper tech inspection sticker. A maximum of two people may share driving one car.

## **SECTION 6—TECH INSPECTION FORM**

“Tech Inspection” form is available on the SAAC website. Each person who signs up for the open track should print it out. It must be filled out in advance, when you give your car the final inspection prior to leaving for the event. Bring the inspection form to Tech Inspection at the track. If you lose it or leave it home we will have extras at Tech.

## **SECTION 7—MEDICAL FORM**

“Driver’s Medical” form is also available on the SAAC website. It should be printed out and filled out in advance. These forms will be collected at Tech Inspection and are then given to the track EMT/ambulance crew. In the event of an accident where you are unable to communicate with emergency medical personnel, they will be aware of your medical history. If we don’t have one of

these forms from you, you will not get a tech inspection sticker. Extra forms will be available at Tech Inspection.

## **SECTION 8—HELMETS & GLOVES**

All drivers shall wear a properly secured, full face helmet, with face shield, which meets or exceeds Snell Memorial Foundation Testing Standards ratings with a “Snell 2015” or “Snell 2020” rating which must be approved at tech inspection. The Snell Foundation rates and certifies helmets and they upgrade their certification every 5 years. Helmets do not last forever. After 5 years their protective qualities begin to decline. After 10 years helmets are no longer safe and must be replaced. Please do not show up with an inferior or outdated helmet because you will not be allowed on the track. Gloves are required and a few pair will be available at Tech.

## **SECTION 9—RUN GROUPS**

There will be 2 different SAAC run groups on Thursday, GREEN/Advanced, and RED/Novice. On Friday there will be 3 different run groups, GREEN/Advanced, YELLOW/Intermediate and RED/Novice. SAAC will base the groups on driver experience and number of events the driver has run. Two drivers sharing the same car will be placed in two separate run groups if they are paying for an additional run group; otherwise they share the car in their run group. If you register for the open track in advance, you will be assigned a run group by the information that you provide.

There will be a maximum of 40 cars in each Group.

Each run group will get 80 total minutes on Thursday and 80 total minutes on Friday. If the session is halted due to a car that has stopped in an unsafe position on the track and needs to be towed in, the time it takes to do that will be subtracted from that session. If two people are sharing the same car but each has paid individually (which would qualify the car for two different run groups in each session), please bring this up at tech so the car can be placed in two different run groups.

## **SECTION 10—DRIVER’S MEETING**

A driver’s meeting will be held each morning at 7:15 in the vicinity of the Tech Garage. This meeting is mandatory for everyone who drives on the track that day. If you are driving more than one day you must attend the meeting each

day you will be on the track.

At each meeting each driver will get a special wrist band and no one will get out on the track without one. There will be no open track refunds for individuals who miss the driver's meeting and are then not permitted out on the track.

## **SECTION 11 – FLAGS**

The only method event officials and corner workers have to communicate with drivers out on the track is by the use of flags. The flag stations will be pointed out at the driver's meeting. Drivers should identify each flag station on the first lap, which will be run under a standing yellow flag (no passing). After that, drivers should watch each flag station as they approach it for any signals that might be given.

The following flags will be used:

**Yellow, standing** - Something has happened ahead of you. It probably isn't on the track, but normal escape routes may not be available to you, so slow down and be careful. Absolutely no passing. A yellow flag will be displayed for the first lap of a session to allow all cars to warm up.

**Yellow, waving** - Something has happened ahead of you and is probably blocking at least some of the track. Be prepared to take evasive action or stop. Be very careful. Absolutely no passing.

**Red & yellow striped** - There is debris on the track ahead, possibly oil, antifreeze, dirt, or maybe a turtle. Be prepared to respond accordingly.

**Red** - Something very serious has happened ahead of you and you cannot continue. Come to a controlled safe stop on either edge of the track. If cars ahead of you have pulled off, use the same side of the track to allow maximum space for emergency vehicles. Stay in your car. You will be notified by the corner worker when to return to the pits.

**Blue w/yellow stripe** - A faster car is following. Allow it to pass at the next passing zone. This courtesy prevents tailgating, "driving in your mirrors," and promotes safety.

**Black** - Enter the pits at the next opportunity to consult with a official.

**Black with red center** - There is something wrong with your car; proceed carefully to the pits.

**Green** – The track is clear for hi-speed driving.

**Checkered** - The session is over. Finish the remainder of the lap as a "cool-down" lap but maintain about 90% of your speed. Use the brakes as little as is safe. Proceed to pit lane.

## **SECTION 12—PRE GRID**

The Pre-Grid leads to Pit Lane. Pre-Grid is a marshalling area for the various run groups. Pit Lane runs along the front straight. This area is wide enough for 2 separate lanes plus an emergency lane, which must remain open at all, times. You should have your car on the Pre-Grid when the group ahead of you is on the track. When you get to Pre-Grid you should stay in your car. You will be directed onto Pit Lane with your group. When the signal to go is given, the time you waste in Pre-Grid is time you will lose on the track. When the group ahead of you is on the track you should be in your car with your helmet on and seat belts buckled. This is when you adjust your mirrors; it is not the time to check your oil, talk to other drivers, take pictures or wander away from your car.

## **SECTION 13—EARLY LAPS**

Start off slowly. Familiarize yourself with the track and check the conditions. Identify the flag stations. Bring the car up to speed gradually and bring yourself up to speed gradually. Check your gauges.

## **SECTION 14—PASSING ZONES**

The passing zones and passing procedures will be discussed in the driver's meetings each morning. The five passing zones will be the straights between turns #2 and #3, the straight between turns #3 and #4, the straight between turns #5 and #6, the straight between #6 and #7 and the main straight between turn #12 and just before turn #1. A series of 3 cones on each side of the track will signify the beginning and the end of each passing zone. If the pass is not completed by the time you reach those cones, the faster car must slow and tuck in behind the slower car. Flag crews will closely observe passing procedures. Failure to follow these them will result in your being black-flagged. It may take the SVRA Chief Steward time to get to you, so you can probably count on missing the rest of your session. A second black flag for passing in a no passing zone will make you a spectator for the rest of the day. All the track workers are SVRA experienced track workers who will be the corner workers and pit marshals. Their word is final and SAAC doesn't control them.



## **SECTION 15—CAR PROBLEMS ON TRACK**

If your car stops running or has a mechanical problem, you should immediately raise your left hand out the window to signal the drivers behind you that you are slowing down. Drive or coast off the active asphalt. You should pull as far off the track as possible (if it's at a turn, you should go to the inside of a turn – not the outside because spinning cars will have a tendency to spin to the outside of a turn). Park your car as far away from the actual track's edge as possible.

The safest place is in your car unless it is on fire. Stay there and keep your helmet and seat belt on. Do not get out of your car and attempt to assess the problem. If your car is in a safe position, one of the flag crews will come to you when the session is over to find out if you need to have the car towed in. If your car comes to rest in an unsafe spot the session will be black-flagged until your car can be towed off the track.

## **SECTION 16—OPEN TRACK SCHEDULE**

The open track schedule (on the SAAC-49 website) will be adhered to as closely as possible. Once you know your run group, you need to know what time your group goes out on the track. It is your responsibility to have your car at Pre-Grid BEFORE your group goes out. You should be on the Pre-Grid when the group ahead of you is on the track. If you miss your group, that track time is gone forever. You cannot go out in another group to make it up. Any changes to the published schedule will be announced at the driver's meeting. Know when your group goes out.

## **SECTION 17—PASSENGERS**

Due to New Jersey State Law passengers will NOT be allowed. The only passenger allowed is a Certified Instructor. SAAC will have one Certified Instructor at the event. If you know of someone who is a Certified Instructor who wants to assist, please have them send me their credentials before 7/22/24 at the address at the bottom of these instructions.

## **SECTION 18—VIDEO CAMERAS**

Only securely mounted video cameras are allowed. If you intend to videotape your on-track sessions the camera must be mounted in the car prior to the car's going through tech inspection. The reason for this is for safety. Should the driver lose control, an improperly secured camera could become a flying projectile inside the car. Velcro, nylon tie-wraps, elastic bands and bungee cords won't cut it.

## **SECTION 19—RACE NUMBERS**

Race numbers are *required* on BOTH sides of all cars (8"–10" in height work best). Temporary numbers (liquid shoe polish or tape) are okay. Number color should contrast with the color of the car. Duplicate numbers on more than one car in a class do not present a problem. Corner workers use numbers to identify cars on the track. Cars without numbers will be black-flagged and sent back to tech inspection to get numbers.

## **SECTION 20—RACE GAS**

Leaded and unleaded fuel will be available at the track in the paddock.

## **SECTION 21—INCLEMENT WEATHER**

We will run rain or shine. There will be no refunds due to inclement or less than ideal weather. The SVRA will determine if the track should be shut down for weather like lightning or anything that would be threat to the corner workers and EMT crews.

## **SECTION 22—ALCHOLIC BEVERAGES**

They are prohibited inside the track during the entire event. Drinking and driving don't mix. You already know that. Please don't make us be tough guys. Self-compliance works best for everyone.

## **SECTION 23—BIKES, TRIKES & SCOOTERS**

NO wheeled vehicles of any kind are used inside the track except golf carts.

This means bicycles, motorcycles, motor scooters, 3-wheelers, 4-wheelers, skateboards, rollerblades, etc. It is a safety issue. There are valuable cars everywhere and some of these forms of alternative transportation are difficult to control at times. They only invite damage to cars – especially in the hands of youngsters. Let's use some common sense, here. Golf carts may be rented for all activities. Golf carts will be available only by pre-registration.

## **SECTION 24—REFUNDS**

Any car which fails to pass safety/technical inspection due to mechanical problems and which can not be brought into compliance prior to going out on the track will receive credit towards a future national event open track. Cars that arrive at tech and are visibly not in compliance (i.e. cracked glass, inadequate tires, defective wheels, etc.) are not eligible for refunds or credits. Cars, which break down at some point during the event, will not be eligible for refunds or credits for that session. They will receive credits for subsequent sessions if they have signed up for them.

## **SECTION 25—REJECTION ON GENERAL PRINCIPLE**

Any car that appears to be unsafe or unfinished will be rejected. This decision is made at the discretion of the Senior Tech Inspector or the Event Chairman. Such a decision will be weighted towards the other drivers and vehicles on the track who should not have to tolerate an obviously unsafe and/or unfinished vehicle in their midst. SAAC reserves the right to deny the privilege of participating in this event to anyone for reasons that may be related to safety, attitude problems, car appearance or any other reason deemed appropriate by the Event Chairman, even after granting advanced acceptance by mail. In such cases, SAAC will grant a full refund of the open track fee on the spot. SAAC will not be responsible for any car preparation costs, travel or lodging expenses or any other costs associated with participation in the event for those participants who are rejected.

## **SECTION 26—QUESTIONS**

Questions? Please ask them before the event, while things are fairly calm because as the event approaches everything moves into fast-forward. Keep in mind that we get no pleasure from playing the tough guy and telling anyone “No,” but we will if we have to. All our decisions are based on safety and, believe it or not, are for your own good. We look forward to seeing you at Thunderbolt!

Howard Pardee

860-442-3400

E-Mail: [saachp350@gmail.com](mailto:saachp350@gmail.com)

No questions after 7/22/24 please as I will have left for the convention.  
See me there.