

RACING LINES REPORT – Nitro Interclub Series

For many years the relationship between nitro based clubs in NSW has been poor. Each club just went about their business catering for their members and drivers. There was the odd instance where drivers travelled away from home to race at other tracks, but the majority were happy just racing at their home track. This arrangement suited many clubs and drivers who were happy with the success of their stand alone club.

The brains behind many of PDNR innovative events felt that something needed to be done to establish a relationship between NSW RC clubs. Many clubs in NSW share a passion and interest in nitro on-road racing, and it was time someone tried to bring them together. There were great gains to be had by sharing ideas and experiencing new challenges, and this is what faced both drivers and organisers involved in the Nitro Interclub Series. Drivers' were encouraged to travel away from their home tracks to compete against more experienced drivers and race at new tracks. The result, drivers improved their skills and experience which at the end of the day whether they won or lost, they came away having learnt heaps about nitro RC cars. Over the last few years many PDNR members and drivers were fortunate to experience first hand the benefits of travelling to a new track, meeting new people and sharing ideas and setup tips. It was for this reason that they set about establishing the Nitro Interclub Series (NIS).

The NIS concept was established by one of PDNR's founding and long standing members Tony Firth, with advice and assistance from RC veterans like Dave Smith, Trevor Johnstone, Ric Bartolozzi and Steve Burgess. The plan is for feedback from clubs and drivers to help shape the series into the most popular and well supported series on the nitro calendar. One feature of the NIS that differentiates it from other interclub series is that the NIS was designed to run in conjunction with major race events that are already established such as the Mingara Cup, Tamworth Cup and NSW State Championships. This means that the already busy RC calendar is not oversaturated with a new series of stand alone events which in the past has been to the detriment of the hobby with drivers losing interest in generally becoming burnt out.

Long term plans for the series will see it become its own entity, and less reliant upon PDNR. It will require the support of all clubs and drivers involved, but the series should eventually be run by representatives from all the clubs involved.

THE SERIES SO FAR

The Nitro Interclub Series started in August 2006 at the PDNR Challenge. This was PDNR's first major two-day event and attracted over sixty entrants across four divisions. The event saw for the first time many house hold names such as

Bardetta, Brooks and Bartolozzi make the track out west to the Penrith to take on the local favourites Woodbury, Firth and Umenberger. It was a huge event for PDNR, and for many of their members, it was their first taste of a major race meeting. After the event, PDNR drivers talked about how much they learnt from talking to and watching the visiting drivers, and in the sharing spirit of the series, PDNR members passed on some of the local tips to visiting drivers. All in all it was a great way to kick off what PDNR hope will grow into a great interclub series that will promote friendly competition between clubs, but most importantly extend the boundaries of our fantastic hobby of model car racing.

1st PDNR, 2nd NSWRCRCC, 3rd LRCCC

Round 2 was held in November 2006 by Mingara RC who had sent a strong contingent down to Penrith for the opening round. Another two-day event saw over fifty nitro entrants blessed by great weather resulting in some terrific battles on the tight but flowing track. The Mingara club did an excellent job of keeping everyone happy...the tucker wasn't too bad either! The local drivers were tough to beat on their home track, but trouble kept local favourite Greg Brooks off the top step of the podium which was filled by Philip Woodbury.

1st PDNR, 2nd MINGARA RC, 3rd NSWRCRCC

The next round of the series was run in conjunction with the Team Orion Summer Nats, organised by Racing Lines and held at the Fairy Meadow circuit. Again it was a two day event, but the nitro fraternity only had to worry about Saturday with Sunday allocated to EP. This event attracted international visitors and the best in the country with many top interstate drivers in attendance. Most notable local was Worlds 3rd place holder Peter Jovanovic, and everyones mate Surikarn made the trip down under again to keep everyone honest! This event catered for Nitro Open and Pull Start, and saw entrant number reach a high for the series with seventy odd nitro drivers keeping race control on their toes! The eventual winner was Simon Nicolson who displayed a dominating performance to TQ and win ahead of some determined competitors.

1st PDNR, 2nd NSWRCRCC, 3rd IMCC

Round 4 had drivers head back to Western Sydney to the new home of SORMCC who now call Whalan home. The Sydney Grand Prix has been running for a number of years and is recognised as the local derby of Sydney's hot shots. Once again there was good attendance with just under fifty drivers competing over two days. PDNR had good representation with this round being close to home, but SORMCC drivers were keen to make it a close battle for the round win. NSWRCRCC were again showing dominance in the Open Tourer class with Simon Nicholson again taking TQ before going on to take the Final in awesome style. Two classes were offered, Open Tourer and Pull Start.

1st PDNR, 2nd SORMCC, 3rd NSWRCRCC

The next round of the series was the NSW State Championships which formed Round 5 – held in typical style by NSWRCRCC at Moorebank Raceway. The ability to offer three divisions, being 1/8 Scale, Nitro Tourer and Pull Start attracted over eighty entrants, and again the best in the country travelled across state borders to be part of the hot field. This event would be a huge undertaking for many unseasoned drivers, with the sheer size of the permanent track a huge hurdle in itself. Combine that with the incredible traction, and high standards set by the local drivers and it was a very steep learning curve for many drivers. It was great to see however, some of the more experienced racers sharing sob stories with virgin racers about how many years it took them to tame the Moorebank circuit. This event unfortunately was rain effected – which seems to be the norm for any State Title – causing it to be run over 5 days with the Monday Rain Day called into use.

1st NSWRCRCC, 2nd PDNR, 3rd MRCCR

Round 6 was quite a trek for most drivers as they ventured out to the frost and dew at Tamworth. But it was well worth it, with the Tamworth Cup another long standing event, incorporating not only the Nitro Interclub Series, but the annual State of Origin battle as well. Another good attendance was received with just under sixty nitro entrants. The visiting Queensland drivers kept the pressure on NSW, but the Blues were victorious at the end! Great performances by Phil Woodbury (TQ & Win) and Nathan Ryan (Q2 & Win) kept the point ticking over. A solid performance by NSWRCRCC driver Dallas Gardiner (Q2 & 2nd) was not enough to stop the home club Tamworth taking second place.

1st PDNR, 2nd TRCCC, 3rd NSWRCRCC

Round 7 was to be the final round for Season 1 of the Nitro Interclub Series, and it was back to Whalan where SORMCC played host to the 2007 HPI Winter Champs. A smaller than average field braved the brisk conditions, with NSWRCRCC out in force to try and finish the series in style. SORMCC also had their best representation at this event, not surprising as it was their home track. Some of Australia's top guns were out to play in Open Tourer, with Darrin Campbell taking TQ from Simon Nicholson in the final round. Pull Start TQ came from the shadows with Matt Ferguson setting the pace. NSWRCRCC were going to be tough to beat with the entire Open Tourer podium calling Moorebank home. Winner in another dominating performance was Chris Reade, Wayne Walker 2nd, and Andrew Bardetta 3rd. Pull Start was a little more scattered with Trevor Waye from VIC taking the win, followed by Matt Ferguson 2nd and ever consistent David Ryan 3rd. There were some good battles in the lower finals also, with Jenny Taylor just hanging on to win the B Pull Start final, and Dallas Gardiner had a great tussle with Tony Firth but held on to win the Open Tourer B Final.

1st NSWRCRCC, 2nd PDNR, 3rd SORMCC

SERIES POINT SCORE – Season 1 (2006/2007)

At the conclusion of the first season, the overall points table has PDNR victorious on top, 2nd place NSWRCRCC and 3rd SORMCC.

Pos	Club	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6	Round 7	TOTAL
1	PDNR	20	20	20	20	16	20	16	132
2	NSWRCRCC	16	14	16	14	20	14	20	114
3	SORMCC	10	12	8	16	12	9	14	81
4	MINGARA RC	12	16	12	9		10		59
5	CASTLE HILL			7	12	10		10	39
6	LRCCC	14		3				12	29
=7	SINN			5			12	9	26
=7	TAMWORTH		10				16		26
9	MRCCR			9		14			23
10	SMA			2	10	9			21
11	MAITLAND					7	8		15
12	IMCC			14					14
13	DUBBO			6			7		13
14	QRRCA			4		8			12
15	BENDIGO			10					10
16	GOSFORD		9						9
17	SUGAR VALLEY					6			6
18	TFTR			1					1

Note: Points are allocated to clubs based on their rankings after each NIS event as follows: 1=20 pts, 2=16pts, 3=14 pts, 4=12 pts, 5=10 pts, 6=9 pts, 7=8 pts, 8=7 pts, 9=6 pts, 10=5 pts. This system means that weight of numbers at a home event is not going to over influence the interclub series point score.

More detailed results round by round are available at the NIS webpage at www.pdnracing.org.au/nis

HOW IT WORKS

The Nitro Interclub Series is essentially a point score that is awarded to drivers based on what positions they qualify and finish. The top five driver results from each club, for each division are added together to get each clubs total. The club with the most points wins the round.

The idea behinds this systems was to allow all drivers to compete individually, even within the one club. Organisers thought it could be problematic if a system with pre-nominations was used as it creates the situation where a driver may feel obliged to give up a position on the track so the club will get more points – some readers might remember the debacle when an F1 team instructed a driver to slow down and forfeit a position. Organisers did not want to see anything like this happen in RC. By counting the top five results, two drivers from the same club can race head to head knowing that whoever finishes higher will have their points allocated to their club.

At the end of each round, the points that each club has accumulated are used to give overall rankings. This determines the winning club for the round. To determine the series positions, a separate point score is awarded to clubs based on their results at each round. 1st - 20pts, 2nd – 16pts, 3rd – 14pts, 4th – 12pts, 5th 10pts etc. This allocation system was designed to try and keep the competition close, so if a club wins a round by 200 points, the most they are ahead in the series is only 4 points. It's a little confusing at first, but works well once you understand it.

SEASON 2 – 2007/2008

The second season has been given the go ahead with clubs agreeing to support the series for another year. There are plans for a few changes to the format and how the points are calculated which is expected to make the competition closer. There may be the addition of new rounds to expand the series to new clubs, and the biggest plan is to try and introduce a set of specifications for classes. The NIS are looking at four classes: NITRO SPORT, PULL START, OPEN TOURER and 1/8 SCALE. Any combination of these can be run at NIS events.

Round 1 will be the PDNR Challenge – August 18 & 19 2007

CONCLUSION

Thanks to all the clubs, drivers and race organiser who help support the inaugural series. Hopefully the support will continue and the series can grow bigger and better.