

The Portable Driver's Advisor

What every driver should know about SCCA rules and process.

By John Nesbitt, May 2008
Revised January 2009

The Portable Driver's Advisor

Introduction.....	3
Acknowledgment.....	3
1. The GCR and Event Supplementary Regulations.....	4
Driver Responsibilities.....	4
Entrants.....	4
Participant Conduct.....	5
2. Grid, Start, and Race Rules and Procedures.....	6
Schedules.....	6
Grid.....	6
Start.....	7
Flags.....	7
Yellow Flags.....	7
Blue Flag.....	8
White Flag.....	9
Stopping and Restarting the Race.....	9
Sound Control.....	10
Medical Issues.....	10
Insurance.....	11
3. Rules of the Road.....	12
Avoid Physical Contact.....	12
Racing Room.....	12
Shared Responsibility.....	12
4. Stewards' Actions.....	13
Types of Stewards.....	13
Chief Steward's Action (CSA).....	13
Request for Action (RFA).....	14
CSA or RFA?.....	14
5. Protests and Appeals.....	15
Alternatives to a Protest.....	15
Who May Protest?.....	15
Filing a Protest.....	15
The Protest Hearing.....	16
Some Tactical Advice.....	17
Appeals.....	18
6. Mechanical Protests.....	19
Protest Form.....	19
Protest Process.....	20
Appendix: GCR References of Interest to Drivers and/or Entrants.....	22

Introduction

This document is intended as a 'quick reference guide' for drivers trying to navigate the thicket of rules and process in SCCA Club Racing. It provides an outline of your rights and obligations under the Club's General Competition Rules (GCR), and the processes which will most affect you as a driver.

It is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of all the rules in the GCR; for that, read the relevant GCR sections to which the guide points. References are to the 2009 GCR.

The GCR is a living document. It is constantly being modified. Read each month's Fastrack (you can sign up for email notification on the SCCA website) to keep abreast of changes.

I welcome your comments or suggestions for the next edition. Please contact me at JohnNesbittSCCA@gmail.com.

Acknowledgment

I wish to thank my fellow stewards Dennis Dean, Dave Gomberg, and Clyde Kiser for their feedback during the revision of this document. Any errors or omissions which remain are mine alone.

1. The GCR and Event Supplementary Regulations

Take a closer look at the next entry form that you fill out. In the signature block, it will always contain language similar to the following: "I agree to abide by the current General Competition Rules of the SCCA and the Supplementary Regulations for this event. I declare the car which I entered complies with all the requirements as specified in the GCR for the Class, Category and Race in which it is entered."

The GCR is a self-contained world; it does not refer to any other document. By signing an entry form (or applying for a license) you agree to be bound by the GCR (all 600 pages of it), and the event Supplementary Regulations (or supps) [4.1.1].

The GCR governs all of SCCA Club Racing [1.2.1]. Each event's supps establish the 'specific conditions for an event' [3.5.1], and may modify the GCR for local conditions. Any such modifications must be approved by the Club Racing Board.

It is very much worth reading the supps for every event which you enter. The event rules may entail significant modifications to the GCR (such as a lower sound limit, or specifying that cars without transponders won't be timed), and will lay out track-specific rules (such as quiet hours, or restrictions on support vehicles).

Driver Responsibilities

Drivers (and entrants, if different) are responsible for 'conduct of their crew' [2.2.3], for any minors for whom they sign a waiver [2.2.4], for their car [8.3.3], and for their personal safety equipment [9.3.19].

Entrants

Typically, the driver is also the entrant (that is, there is not a separate entrant listed on the entry form). However, it is worth considering having a member of your crew be listed as your entrant. There is no additional cost for doing this, and it provides some utility.

For example, there may be circumstances in which the driver is unavailable or tied up, but still wants to file a protest. There is a limited time period in which to do this. The entrant has the same protest rights as the driver, and can file on your behalf.

Participant Conduct

Section 2.1 of the GCR specifies a set of general rules, in addition to specific rules elsewhere, governing participant behavior. Some of these are very general, and can cover many different acts:

- Bribery [2.1.1].
- Any action intended to enter an ineligible car or person [2.1.2].
- Fraud or any act prejudicial to SCCA or car racing [2.1.3].
- Reckless or dangerous driving [2.1.4].
- Failure to obey a direction or order of an official [2.1.5].
- Refusing to cooperate with, or obstructing, the Chief Steward, the Stewards of the Meeting (SOM), any court, or the Court of Appeals [2.1.6].
- Unsportsmanlike conduct [2.1.7].
- Physical violence toward any participant or spectator [2.1.8].

These general rules are typically invoked by the Chief Steward, but can also be the basis of a protest.

2. Grid, Start, and Race Rules and Procedures

Schedules

It is worth noting that, in the course of your racing, you will likely encounter two different philosophies on race schedules as published in the supplementary regulations. It's important to understand the implications of both.

The first is a time-specific schedule, which specifically details the time for each session on the track. The second is a non-time-specific schedule which schedules only the opening session of the day and also tells you how long each session will be.

Under a time-specific schedule, while sessions may run long, thereby causing succeeding sessions to start late, sessions may not be started early without the approval of the Stewards of the Meeting [3.5.5]. As a practical matter, that means that sessions don't start early.

However, under a non-time-specific schedule, since no times are published after the first session, the schedule may be accelerated in order to have a time cushion for contingency purposes later in the day. With this kind of schedule, the onus is on the driver and crew to know what session is on track and, therefore, when they should be prepared to come to the grid.

Grid

The grid workers will give you 5-minute and 1-minute warnings (and some regions give a 3-minute warning, as well). While these warnings are usually timed pretty well, you must remember that there may be other things happening around the track which might cause a delay after the warning period has started. If you are not at the grid on time for your session, the clock will keep on ticking without you.

At the 1-minute warning, your crew must clear the grid. Cars not in position at the 1-minute warning forfeit their position, and start from the back [6.1.2.F]. Push starts are permitted, as long as the car is in position by the 1-minute warning; otherwise it forfeits its position [6.1.6].

Start

As you leave the grid for the pace lap(s), you come under starter's orders. Pace laps are run under a double yellow. While under starter's orders, you may not improve your position in the field for any reason [6.2.2.J]. This means also that, if you lose position during the pace lap(s), you may not pass cars to get back to where you started. If a car drops out of place during the pace lap(s), all cars that were behind it in the column (left or right) advance a place in order to fill the gap. This is not considered a pass under yellow.

There may be a second, un-scored, pace lap. This frequently is done for larger fields. The Chief Steward will announce this at the drivers meeting.

If the start is waved off, the field does another pace lap, with the pole-sitting car as the pace car. This lap, and any subsequent waved-off laps, counts as a race lap.

Frequently, the Chief Steward will employ start judges. They will be looking for cars which get out of their line, or otherwise 'start early'. A start judge's decision cannot be protested [5.11.3.B].

Flags

The GCR section on flags contains the following statement in its preface: "They shall be obeyed immediately and without question" [6.11.1]. This is one of the strongest statements in the GCR, and should give you a hint about how seriously offenses will be treated.

Flags are the only means that race officials have to communicate with drivers on the track. You owe it to yourself, your fellow competitors, and the race workers to respond to them.

In SCCA Club Racing, several flags have meanings different from the meanings used by other racing organizations. If you are coming to SCCA from another organization, it would be prudent to review Section 6.11 in order to confirm the meanings we use.

Yellow Flags

Local yellows indicate an incident ahead - on the racing surface for a waving yellow and off for a standing yellow. A yellow can also warn of a worker in an unprotected position. In all cases, you are required to moderate your pace sufficiently to safely clear the

The Portable Driver's Advisor

incident zone. Whenever a yellow flag is displayed, there will very likely be workers in exposed positions.

Any sort of secondary incident resulting in contact in a yellow flag zone will be treated very severely by the stewards. A spin under yellow indicates a lack of control, and will be treated similarly to a pass under yellow.

Passes under yellow (PUY) are often misunderstood. A PUY can be simply defined: if the nose of car A is (even 1 mm) behind the nose of car B when entering the yellow flag zone, and the nose of car A ever passes (even by 1 mm) the nose of car B while in the yellow flag zone, then a pass under yellow has occurred. For a very good discussion of PUY, see: <http://offtotheraces.net/passunderyellow.html>.

If there is a full course yellow (FCY), close up with the car in front of you. The purpose of an FCY is to get the field under control so that the emergency workers can deal with a situation too dangerous for a local yellow. Until the field closes up, it is not under control, and rescue work may be delayed, and the FCY period extended.

When the FCY is first displayed, the lead car should slow down even further as it approaches the final turn before the staging location for the safety car, in order to provide it a gap into which to launch. This is often, but not always, from pit lane. It is important that you know what that point is for each track at which you race. Often, a race official will brief the first few drivers on the grid on safety car procedures.

If there is no safety car, the lead car will assume the role of the safety car, and control the field. It should proceed at pace car speed, not near-race speed.

If a car cannot maintain the pace or is disabled under the FCY, it shall not hold up the field [6.3.2]. Signal that your car is disabled by raising an arm, and pull off the racing line. Other cars may pass. This is the only situation in which you are permitted to pass under yellow.

At the end of the FCY period, the safety car will shut off its lights and enter the pits. The field will continue in single file until the starter drops the double yellow (and all corner stations do so at the same moment). Racing resumes all around the track as soon as the double yellow is dropped.

Blue Flag

“Another competitor is following you very closely or is trying to overtake you. This flag may be displayed standing or waving, depending upon the speed with which you are being overtaken.” [6.11.2.C]

The Portable Driver's Advisor

The blue flag is informational. You are not required to move over for the faster car. In fact, altering your line to let a faster car pass can be very dangerous. The driver of the faster car will have seen you long before you see his or her car, and will likely have made a plan to pass you. Altering your line as the car approaches can easily cause a collision. Be predictable, hold your line, and point the faster car by at an appropriate moment.

The presence or absence of a blue flag does not absolve you of your responsibility to watch your mirrors and to be situationally aware. (In the flagging community, the 'blue flagger' is actually called the 'yellow flag backup', since his or her primary job is to protect the yellow flagger, who is facing downstream and cannot see oncoming traffic. Showing a blue flag is a secondary duty.)

White Flag

“Caution – you are approaching a slow moving race car (e.g. with mechanical trouble), ambulance, or other emergency vehicle on the racing surface. Take care. This flag shall be shown standing for two (2) flag stations prior to the vehicle. A standing white flag shall also be displayed during the first lap of a practice or qualifying session to indicate the location of the flagging stations.” [6.11.2.E]

In SCCA Club Racing, the white flag does not indicate the last lap of the race. It is an informational flag. You are permitted to keep racing, and to pass. However, you must do so with caution, knowing that there is a slow moving vehicle ahead. Colliding with an emergency vehicle, in addition to causing damage and perhaps injury, will expose you to penalty.

Stopping and Restarting the Race

If conditions demand it, the Chief Steward (CS) can stop the race in one of several ways [6.4]:

1. Black Flag All. Cars must stop racing immediately and proceed to the pits.
2. Red Flag. All cars stop on course as quickly as safely possible. Followed by a Black Flag All when safe. Cars proceed to the pits. Note that cars may not be refueled or serviced while the race is stopped [6.4.C].
3. Checkered Flag. If the race is 50% complete, the CS may order a checkered flag, depending on circumstances. As a practical matter, if the race is close to the end, the CS will likely order a checker in order to avoid a restart with a short distance to run and the consequent last-lap shootout.

Once the incident has been cleared, the CS can restart the race in several ways [6.5]:

1. Complete restart according to the original grid.

The Portable Driver's Advisor

2. Single-file restart in the order of the last completely scored lap.
3. Restart from a scoring tape or lap chart, depending on the conditions.

On a restart, each pace lap counts as a race lap.

Sound Control

Sound control is a necessity in today's world. As suburbs are built ever-closer to our tracks, noise becomes an issue which threatens the future of our venues. Maintaining good relations with our neighbors is critical. As we enter 2009, the SCCA Board of Directors is considering making sound control optional. Even if this happens, most tracks will continue to enforce sound limits.

The GCR specifies a process for measuring sound [5.7]. The standard sound limit is 103dB [5.7.3], but this may be lowered for local requirements. The event supps will specify the actual sound limit, if different from 103dB.

The Chief Steward is required to post sound readings, and the supps must state where they are posted. There is no notification requirement beyond that. The competitor is solely responsible for ensuring that a vehicle complies with the event sound limits [5.7.2].

If a car registers over sound, it cannot be black flagged for the first occurrence. Race officials are not required to show the offending car a sound board or other warning, although they will typically try to do so. Once a car is black flagged, it cannot re-enter the course until its crew attempts to remedy the problem [5.7.2].

The GCR is silent on how many over sound readings will trigger a black flag. The general custom is '3 strikes and you're out', but local practice may vary. At Summit Point, for example, the limit is two.

A car black flagged for sound during qualifying will typically lose all its times set so far in the session; during a race the car will typically be disqualified.

Medical Issues

We should start by clarifying something: the SCCA cannot, and will not, make you submit to any particular medical treatment. That is purely a matter between you and your physician.

However, the SCCA can, and will, require certain medical clearances as a condition of your participation or licensing.

The Portable Driver's Advisor

You cannot obtain a competition license without a medical clearance (clearance frequency depends on your age). If you develop a medical condition which affects your fitness to compete, you must report it, and be cleared for competition [2.3.2.B]

If you are involved in an accident involving significant impact or a rollover, or are injured, you will be directed to go to Race Medical by an official. This is not optional [2.3.2.E]. If you are transported to an off-site medical facility, you must obtain a signed release from the attending physician or event Chief Medical Officer before returning to competition.

There are rules governing loss of consciousness which recognize the emerging body of evidence around the cumulative effect of concussions [2.3.2.F]. If you suffer a loss of consciousness, you will not be permitted to compete for at least 24 hours, and until rechecked or cleared, depending on severity.

Insurance

The SCCA carries medical insurance for all event participants (those who signed SCCA waivers, not spectators or others who signed track waivers) for injuries suffered during the competition.

In order to qualify for coverage, you must present yourself to Race Medical in the event of injury. You will be given an insurance 'green card' with insurance information.

3. Rules of the Road

The fundamental rules for on-course conduct are found in a few paragraphs in section 6.8.1. In practice, many drivers fail to appreciate the proper application of these rules.

Avoid Physical Contact

All drivers are responsible for avoiding physical contact [6.8.1.A]. In everyday terms, this means that whatever harebrained, low-percentage, late-braking move the other driver makes, you are not allowed to hit him or her if you can avoid it. Many driver-to-driver protests for contact end up with both parties being reprimanded for not avoiding contact.

Contrary to popular belief, the concept of 'incidental contact' does not exist in the GCR. Making avoidable contact is never acceptable in SCCA Club Racing.

Racing Room

All drivers have a right to racing room on the track [6.8.1.B]. This is defined as 'sufficient space on the marked racing surface so as to allow a competitor to maintain control of his car in close quarters'.

You must always allow your competitor at least a car width, plus a bit, on the racing surface. Any attempt to 'impede or affect the path' of a competitor attempting to pass can be interpreted as denying him racing room. Thus, if your competitor comes alongside you as you approach a turn, even if he or she has not completely passed you, you cannot simply turn in and force him or her off the road. You must give him or her racing room. In this example, your competitor has the corner; give it up, and try to re-pass on exit.

Shared Responsibility

The passing driver is responsible for 'the decision to pass another car and to accomplish it safely' [6.8.1.D]. The overtaken driver is responsible to 'be aware that he or she is being overtaken and not to impede the overtaking car'. A driver who 'fails to make use of the rear view mirror, or who appears to be blocking another car seeking a pass' may be penalized.

4. Stewards' Actions

Within the SCCA rules, there are two basic means by which rules are enforced, and disputes resolved: stewards' actions and protests. Section 8 of the GCR is devoted to these.

The GCR makes it clear that there is a shared responsibility among the stewards and the drivers/entrants for enforcing the rules. Stewards are expected to act upon what they observe or on which they receive reports; drivers are expected to protest actions against the rules.

The most common stewards' actions are the Chief Steward's Action (CSA) and the Request for Action (RFA). Both are filed by the Chief Steward (or an Assistant Chief Steward to whom he or she has delegated authority).

Types of Stewards

At every event, there are two different groups of stewards. The Chief Steward and the Assistant Chief Stewards are responsible for the execution of the event. They run the show. Assistant Chief Stewards will sometimes be referred to simply by their function (e.g. Safety Steward, Tech Steward, Steward of the Course etc.).

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM) are responsible for enforcing rules and resolving disputes. They fulfill a judicial function and cannot take part in running the event.

Stewards rotate through all the various assignments in the course of their stewarding career, so you will see the same person in different roles at different events.

Chief Steward's Action (CSA)

A CSA describes 'a breach of the GCR or the supplemental regulations and the corresponding action taken' [8.1.2]. Think of it as 'summary justice'. The process is as follows:

- The Chief Steward (CS) observes an infraction (e.g., a pass under yellow), and decides to deal with it in summary fashion.
- The CS completes a Chief Steward's Action form, describing the infraction with reference to the GCR and/or supps, and the penalty imposed.
- The offender (you) will be summoned to meet the CS, either by being stopped at the Black Flag station in the pits as you leave the course, or by a call over the track PA system.

The Portable Driver's Advisor

- The CS will typically discuss the incident with you before imposing the penalty. This is done as a courtesy, and is not required by the GCR.
- The CS will file the CSA with the SOM.
- You have the right to protest the CSA (see section below on protests). Be aware that you must file your protest within a limited period of time.

Request for Action (RFA)

An RFA is a document which the CS files with the SOM 'describing a suspected breach of the GCR or the Supplementary Regulations' [8.1.3]. In this case, the CS simply identifies an infraction; the SOM investigate and judge it, and impose any applicable penalties. The process is as follows:

- The Chief Steward (CS) observes an infraction (e.g., a pass under yellow), and decides to deal with it by RFA.
- The CS completes a Request for Action form, describing the infraction with reference to the GCR and/or supps, and files it with the SOM.
- The SOM act on the RFA 'in the same manner as they would act on a protest'. See the section below on protests for a description of this process.
- If the SOM impose a penalty on you, you have the right to appeal their decision (see section below on appeals).

CSA or RFA?

Most infractions can be dealt with by either CSA or RFA, and the CS has complete discretion in deciding which to use. Generally, a CSA requires less process than an RFA, and may be used for less serious offenses, or very clear-cut cases (e.g., over sound), but this is entirely at the discretion of the CS.

A CSA permits an array of penalties [5.12.2.C] which is less severe than those available for an RFA [7.2]. In addition, a CSA does not accrue penalty points against your license. If the SOM penalizes you for an RFA or a protest, then penalty points accrue automatically. If you protest a CSA, and the SOM uphold the CSA, they have the option of assigning penalty points in addition to the CSA penalty.

Often, the CS will use a CSA because it provides two levels of review (protest and appeal), where an RFA permits only one level of review (appeal).

5. Protests and Appeals

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM) serve primarily in a judicial capacity, with 'the duty of enforcing compliance with the GCR and the Supplementary Regulations' [5.12.1]. They are responsible to the SCCA alone, not to the Chief Steward or event organizers.

Any SOM you appear before will be very concerned with providing due process, within the GCR, to all parties.

Alternatives to a Protest

The GCR provides a formal process (protests and appeals) for resolving disputes. You might also consider using an informal approach before invoking the Club's processes. Try talking with the other party about the problem. If that does not work, or is not possible for some reason, discuss the issue with your drivers' representative, if you have one. One of a drivers' representative's duties is to help resolve disputes. Finally, speak informally with the Chief Steward. Any of these approaches may resolve your issue.

Remember, though, that the GCR provides time limits (discussed below) for filing protests.

Who May Protest?

A protest can be filed by 'any entrant, driver, organization, or official taking part in the competition' [8.3.1]. For mechanical protests, only entrants or drivers may file [8.3.3]. You can protest 'any decision, act or omission of the organizers, an official, entrant, driver or other person connected with the competition' for a breach of the rules.

The rules (GCR or supps) may explicitly exempt certain acts from protest (e.g., sound readings or failure to display a "1" sign signaling the last lap of a race).

Filing a Protest

Complete and sign an SCCA Protest form [8.3.2]. The form is available from the Chief Steward or Chairman of the SOM. It is also available online at scca.com. You must specify which provisions of the GCR and/or supps have been violated. There is no such thing as a group protest; it must be filed by an individual (but nothing prevents several

The Portable Driver's Advisor

individuals from filing protests for the same incident). Evidence such as a witness list and/or witness statements, in-car video, etc. should accompany the protest.

Some events will offer the services of a 'Driver's Advisor' to assist in filing your protest. This person (usually a steward) will be able to advise you about the forms and process; he or she will not help you with the specifics of your protest (i.e. identifying what you want to protest, or drafting the body of the protest). In the absence of a driver's advisor, the Chief Steward or an Assistant Chief Steward can answer your process questions.

Members of the SOM cannot advise you on filing your protest, nor advise you about the rules, since they may be called upon to judge the incident which prompted the question.

Deliver the protest and applicable fee (\$25 for Regionals and Schools, \$50 for Nationals) to the Chief Steward, who will forward it to the SOM. Please note that the only role of the CS in this process is to receive and transmit the protest.

There are time limits in which to file your protest [8.3.2.B]. Here is a synopsis; read the applicable GCR paragraphs for a complete description:

- Mechanical protests must be filed no later than one hour before the race.
- Other protests (driver-to-driver protests, protests against an official's action, and protests against results) must be made within 30 minutes of the relevant action.
- The SOM may extend these limits in exceptional cases, where evidence was not available within the time limit or the protestor was unable to meet the deadline due to unavoidable circumstances.

As a practical matter, if you file a protest, the Chief Steward must transmit it to the SOM. The SOM may uphold it or not, and/or may decide to extend the time limits for filing or not.

The process for mechanical protests involves more steps, and is discussed in its own section below.

The Protest Hearing

Once the SOM have received a protest or an RFA, they will notify all the parties (if you are the subject of an RFA, you are basically the protested party), and collect their licenses. The next step is to establish a time and place for a hearing, and notify the parties.

The SOM will not make a judgment without holding a hearing, and listening to the parties and witnesses. Only those members of the SOM who have heard the entire protest will judge it. SOM members with significant personal or business ties to any of the parties will recuse themselves. The hearing process is as follows:

The Portable Driver's Advisor

- All parties have the right to call witnesses, and to state their case. You must state your case individually (you cannot have anyone with you or represent you) and in private.
- All parties, once notified, must remain at the track until released by the SOM. In the absence of a party, the SOM may issue a judgment by default.
- You, and your witnesses, will be asked to complete and sign witness statements, if you have not done so already, confirming your testimony.
- If you have submitted an in-car video, you will be asked to show it. The court will retain videos, etc. entered in evidence until the time for appeal has lapsed.
- The SOM will deliver their judgment as soon as possible after the hearing. You are bound by this judgment, but have the right of appeal (see below). The SOM Chairman can explain the appeals process for you.
- If you are assessed a penalty, the SOM will give you the bottom portion of the Protest/RFA form, with the penalty noted.
- If your penalty includes probation, the SOM will retain your license, and give you a probation letter detailing the provisions of your probation. During the period of your probation, this will serve as your license.

Some Tactical Advice

An SOM hearing is not like an episode of a television drama, but it is required to provide you with due process, as provided by the GCR. The court will make its judgment based solely on the GCR, the supps, and the evidence presented. Here are some tips for presenting your case:

- Presenting your case in a calm and reasonable fashion is really the best way. As upset as you may be feeling, try to make a clear and logical case to the court, citing rules and evidence.
- A protest can be withdrawn.
- Videos, while useful, are not compulsory.
- There may be corroborating evidence (especially in driver-to-driver actions) in the race log or reports from corner stations. The court will examine any relevant documents.
- Bring all of your evidence and/or witnesses to the hearing. Don't assume that the court will have enough evidence without it/them. If the SOM are presented with incomplete evidence, they may not have enough information to reach the correct conclusion. It is extremely unlikely that any member of the court will have witnessed the incident in question, so the SOM will depend entirely on the evidence presented.
- The court is looking for a 'reasonable' case – one which is 'logical, and based on sound evidence, thus well-founded' [8.3.5]. If your protest is not well-founded, you may forfeit your protest fee. Furthermore, a protest made 'in bad faith or a vexatious manner' will expose you to penalty.

The Portable Driver's Advisor

- When filing a protest, ask yourself what your objective is. What do you hope to accomplish? If somebody punts you going into Turn 3, the SOM cannot make you whole. You will still be repairing your damage yourself. Is there something the court can do to help prevent a repetition?
- Finally, remember that, while this is not a court of law, the SOM will need compelling evidence in order to impose a penalty or to change a result.

An SOM hearing can't always be a friendly thing, but it can be done in a professional and businesslike way.

Appeals

Any named party to a protest or RFA has the right to appeal the judgment of the SOM [8.4.1]. The SCCA Court of Appeals will render a final decision on any appeal.

If you come to file an appeal, please read the detailed description of the appeals process in section 8.4. The following is a brief outline:

- You must file your appeal within 10 days of the SOM judgment [8.4.3]. Normally, the clock starts ticking on the weekend day when the SOM met and delivered their judgment to you. The one exception to this rule is for National races held less than 28 days before the Runoffs; in this case, you have 48 hours to file your appeal [8.4.8].
- You must state your case, citing those sections of the GCR and/or supps which you believe were not correctly applied, and submit any relevant evidence, within the 10-day window, together with the \$175 appeal fee.
- You will not normally be contacted by the Court about your appeal, nor are you entitled to a 'live' hearing. If you have evidence or witness statements relevant to your appeal, include them in your original submission.
- All named parties to the case will be notified and given an opportunity to make submissions.
- An appeal can be withdrawn, except in very specific circumstances [8.4.3.C], any time before the court starts its review.
- The Court will meet privately, normally within 30 days of receiving your appeal, reach its decision, and deliver a written judgment. It may confirm, overturn, or modify the original SOM judgment, including penalties. It will not order a race to be re-run.
- The Court will determine whether your appeal was well-founded, and, if so, may direct that some or all of your appeal fee be returned. Bad faith appeals will expose you to penalty.
- The Court's ruling is final, and cannot be appealed further.

6. Mechanical Protests

Mechanical protests are often a mystery to participants, partly because the process is fairly complicated, and partly because mechanicals have the potential for becoming costly and therefore folks shy away from them. Hopefully this section will demystify them.

First, we need to clarify a few points. Mechanical protests are not related to post-race impound where the scrutineers find a car out of compliance when inspected. In this case, the Chief of Tech will make a report to the Chief Steward, who will deal with the infraction with either a CSA or an RFA, at his or her discretion.

Similarly, if a compliance team visits the event from National, its inspections are very similar in effect to post-race checks done by the local tech team, and should not be seen as protests. Any infractions that they discover will be reported to the CS, as above, and dealt with by a CSA or RFA. (Of course, a CSA can be protested, and an RFA outcome can be appealed.)

Finally, the CS has the power to order a teardown of a car (via a CSA). In practice, this process is very similar to a mechanical protest, with the CS being the 'protestor' and the organizing region responsible for any costs incurred by the CS.

Protest Form

Remember that you have a time limit under which to file a mechanical protest: 'no later than one hour before the start of the race' [8.3.2.B]. The SOM have the power to extend this limit, but this is normally done only in rare cases where the potential mechanical issue can be shown to have arisen after the normal protest period – for example, if a Formula Ford showed up on the race grid with a rear wing which had not been previously used during the event.

Complete the standard protest form. You may 'request that the car be disassembled, inspected, or any other test made' [8.3.3] provided that you post a bond sufficient to cover all the expenses entailed. Specify which parts of the GCR are violated. You cannot simply write 'illegal engine'; you must specify in detail which components are non-compliant, citing the relevant rules. The SOM Chairman may come back to you to clarify the details of your protest.

Submit the protest, with the appropriate protest fee, to the CS, who will transmit it to the SOM.

Protest Process

If the SOM accept your protest, they will notify all the parties, collect the licenses of all parties, collect the logbook of the protested car, and assign an official, either an SOM member or a scrutineer, to observe the protested car (i.e., to preserve the integrity of the protested car).

The SOM will meet individually with the protestor, the protested party, and the scrutineers to clarify any open questions, and to determine the factors necessary to establish the bond [8.3.3.A]. The bond will be sufficient to cover the costs of disassembly, inspection, and reassembly, and will include consumables, transportation charges, shop labor (if necessary), plus (commonly, but not always) a 10% administrative charge. The teardown tasks may be grouped, and executed in a logical order, with the protestor allowed to decide whether to proceed at the completion of each step.

The bond must be posted in cash or by check. The protested party may be required to post a bond or sign a repair order when a third party shop is used for some or all of the teardown/inspection. This bond will be established in the same manner as the protestor's bond.

If the car is found compliant, the protestor forfeits the bond; if found non-compliant, the protestor's bond is returned, and the protested party must stand the expenses [8.3.3.D].

The SOM will establish a secure area for inspection. Only the SOM, scrutineers, and the protested party will be allowed access. The protestor may not observe.

Refusal to allow inspection of a protested car will result in immediate penalty (disqualification, 6 month suspension, and \$250 fine) [8.3.3.C, 7.4.E].

If any protested part of the car is found non-compliant, per the GCR, Specification Book, or shop manual, the protested party will be informed and asked for an explanation. Measurements or other tests may be repeated for the protested party to observe. (If the inspection reveals non-compliant parts which were not protested, they will be dealt with as if found in post-race impound inspection.)

If a non-compliant part is found, the protestor has the option to stop the teardown at that point.

When the teardown is completed, both protestor and protested party will be given an opportunity to make additional statements or provide other witnesses or evidence. If they do, the SOM will conduct a hearing as described in the section on protests.

The Portable Driver's Advisor

The SOM will then deliver their judgment. If the protest is upheld, the protested party will receive a written notice, detailing the penalty imposed. As with any protest, all named parties have the right to appeal the SOM judgment.

If the inspection revealed any non-compliant parts, the facts will be noted in the vehicle logbook, and those parts inspected at the next event in which the car is entered. Non-compliant parts will be retained by the SOM.

The protest bond will be held by the SCCA Manager of Club Racing until the end of the appeal period, or until any appeal is decided.

As noted, all named parties have the right of appeal, as described in the section on protests. The appeal process is exactly the same in both cases.

Appendix: GCR References of Interest to Drivers and/or Entrants

Please note that these are references only; refer to the GCR for the complete text.

- 1.2.4 The GCR will not be given a strained or tortured interpretation.
- 1.2.4 The Specification Book takes precedence over the GCR, in case of conflict.
- 2.1 Breach of the rules. Lists general rules for all participants.
- 2.2.1 The CRB or Exec Steward may disapprove a driver for competition.
- 2.2.3 The driver and entrant are responsible for their crew.
- 2.3.1.A Driver may not consume alcohol until all activity for his class has finished for the day. Driver and entrant responsible if crew members consume alcohol before end of the class' activities for the day.
- 2.3.1.B Participant who uses a narcotic or dangerous drug may not participate and may be excluded.
- 2.3.2.A Driver must have a current medical clearance.
- 2.3.2.B Any significant change in medical condition must be reported to Licensing Department.
- 2.3.2.E Drivers involved in significant impacts or suffering injury or directed by an official shall report to Chief Medical Officer.
- 2.3.2.F Loss of consciousness
- 2.4 Divisional Exec Steward may convene a court to review a driver's conduct, car legality, competition record, or other matters. This court may assign penalties, which may be appealed.
- 4.1.1 Submission to rules. License holder agrees to be bound by the GCR.
- 4.3.1 Drivers must hold appropriate competition license in order to enter an event.
- 4.4.2 Participation requirements. One race per race group per sanctioned event.
Novice drivers count only one race per sanctioned event.
- 4.4.6 While on probation, a competitor must use probation letter as license.
- 4.6.1 All participants must sign SCCA waiver.
- 4.7.1 Organizers may refuse an entry without giving a reason.
- 4.7.2 An entry containing false information may be nullified, and the entrant guilty of a breach of the rules.
- 5.7.2 Competitors are solely responsible for ensuring that their cars are sound-compliant.
- 5.9.2.B Notwithstanding tech inspection, participant is responsible for the safety of his car, equipment, clothing, and compliance with all SCCA rules and regulations.
- 5.9.3.C Driver responsible for reporting to post-race impound.
- 5.11.3 A judge's decision cannot be protested.
- 5.12.1 Powers of SOM.
- 5.12.2 Duties and powers of Chief Steward.
- 6.1.2.A Qualifying positions established by driver/car combination.
- 6.1.2.F Cars not in grid position at 1-minute warning forfeit their position, and start from the back.
- 6.2.2.J.1 A car losing its position on the grid or pace lap(s) must rejoin at the rear of the

The Portable Driver's Advisor

- pack, and may not improve its position.
- 6.3.2** Racing resumes around the track when a double yellow is dropped.
- 6.4.C** Cars may not be refueled or serviced while a race is stopped.
- 6.8.1** Rules of on-course driver conduct.
- 6.8.4** Driving or towing counter-race forbidden without permission of Chief Steward.
- 6.8.5** Drivers shall receive no assistance during the race, except from their crew in the pits or from race officials for safety reasons.
- 6.9.4** Crew in the pits must be SCCA members and hold an SCCA license.
- 6.9.5** Pit crews are at all times under the control of the pit marshal.
- 6.9.7** If a car overshoots its pit, it shall be pushed back by hand, or else continue for another lap.
- 6.10.2** A car entering the paddock, and subsequently reentering the track during a qualifying session, forfeits all times set in the session before entering the paddock.
- 6.11.2** Meaning of flags.
- 7.1** Any participant, guest, or SCCA member may be penalized.
- 7.2** Penalties which can be imposed by a court.
- 7.4** Automatic penalties and penalty points.
- 8.1.2** The Chief Steward may identify a breach of the GCR, and impose a penalty (CSA).
- 8.1.3** The Chief Steward may request the SOM to investigate a breach of the GCR (RFA).
- 8.3.1** Any entrant, driver, organization, or official may protest any decision, act, or omission by the organizers, an official, entrant, driver, or participant.
- 8.3.2** Protests shall be in writing, with a fee, and filed within time limits.
- 8.3.3** Entrants or drivers may protest a car. A protest against a car is also a protest against its entrant and driver.
- 8.4.1** Any party to a protest or RFA may appeal the SOM's judgment.
- 8.4.3** Appeals must be filed within 10 days.
- 8.4.5.E** Court of Appeals decisions are final, and cannot be further appealed.
- 8.4.7** Bad faith appeals are a breach of the GCR.
- 9.3.6** Appearance neat and clean, and suitable for competition.
- 9.3.19** Driver's safety equipment requirements.
- 9.3.22** Fire system requirements.
- 9.3.32** A car with missing bodywork may be black flagged for safety reasons, or may be penalized.