



# SPEED CHAMPIONSHIP

## An Introduction to Sprinting

*Entry Level Motorsport for TVR Car Club Members*



**“Go on, put some numbers on it”**



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# **TVRCC SPEED CHAMPIONSHIP**

## ***Entry Level Motorsport for TVR Car Club Members***

Many TVRs offer such huge performance that it would be irresponsible to use their full potential on the road. There are several alternatives open to TVR owners, the most popular ones being Track Days, Speed Competitions and Racing.

Track days offer a safe environment in which a driver and a fast car can get to know each other a little better. If you find the prospect of hurtling round a track with a bunch of would-be racing drivers a little daunting, you should take comfort from the fact that these events are very safe and well organised with instructors available and so there is no reason why anyone with basic driving skills shouldn't thoroughly enjoy the experience.

The important thing to remember about track days is that they are non-competitive. There are strict safety guidelines and the emphasis is on driving within your own limits and being courteous to other drivers at all times; racing and aggressive driving are simply not tolerated. Having got to grips with the car at track days it is understandable that some drivers will want an opportunity to drive more competitively. This is where Speed Competitions come in.

### **What are Speed Competitions?**

Speed competitions are a friendly and low-cost form of motorsport organised by and for motoring enthusiasts. Not to be confused with autotests (three-point turns around cones against the clock), trials (stuck in a muddy field or grassy hillside) or 12-car rallies (getting lost on public roads). Speed Competitions are high-speed events on well prepared circuits where the performance of your TVR can be exploited to the full.

Competitors drive individually around a course of about a mile against the clock. Courses vary from a lap (or two) of a racing circuit, through courses laid out at disused airfields, to more specialised hillclimb venues which are more like your favourite twisty country lane, often complete with rather solid bits of scenery to catch the unwary. The hillclimb venues have the best facilities and are generally seen as more “challenging”.

In the TVRCC Speed Championship our entrants run just about every TVR ever made and fortunately, most TVRs can compete in absolutely standard condition with no special preparation required.

There are various prizes at each event, but the main reason to come along is that it gives you a chance to drive as fast as you dare without any worry about traffic jams, speed limits, flashing blue lights or some other idiot pushing you off the road. It is very easy to join and new competitors are always welcome. For those considering having a go, here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions:

### *Is it Dangerous?*

Some events take place on race circuits, and some of these have fast corners with wide run-off areas or gravel traps, but there are others where more discretion is required. Some events take place on airfield circuits that have lots of space and nothing to hit other than the odd traffic cone. Hillclimb events present a different type of challenge and are characterised by narrow tracks and the presence of trees, walls and Armco during the ascent.

Whatever the type of course, you are alone on the track so there is no danger of colliding with another car. Also, in the interests of safety, under MSA rules, rescue crews and paramedics must be present at all events.

However, it must be noted that any time you drive your car at any motor sport event; there is the possibility of damage. Normal road insurance will not cover competitions of any kind but you can arrange specialist competition insurance at a daily rate if you wish. You may want to consider taking out this insurance if you're planning to compete in something expensive.

Above all this is a low-cost, and relatively low-risk form of motor sport but competitors are advised to view safety as their first priority.

### *Will it Hurt the Car?*

Speed competitions involve a busy day with several runs of the course, but each run lasts only a minute or so. In that time the tyres and brakes have barely got warm, wear and tear is minimal and no special preparation is required to a regular roadgoing TVR.

However, speed events are a form of motor sport and there is always the possibility of mishap. Misjudgements generally result in a spin or trip across the grass, but it is possible to make contact with the scenery.

### *Will I be Fast Enough to Compete?*

Many sprint competitors are new to motor sport and it is unlikely that they will win their first event, but they soon find they're keeping up with others and even beating them from time to time. TVR never made slow cars and you can enter an event in any TVR and be competitive. That isn't a reason to enter, though; the whole point is to have fun with like-minded souls. You will meet people of all ages and driving abilities; the one thing they have in common is they are all have a good time in their TVRs. If you take home a trophy once in a while that's a bonus.

### *How Much Does it Cost?*

Protective gear for the driver starts from about £400 up to whatever you want to spend. Annual fees and subscriptions will cost about another £70 and entry fees for each sprint or hillclimb event cost between about £70 and £140. Insurance, should you choose to buy it, will cost between £100 and £200 per event.

Depending on which events you choose to do, you may also need to budget for accommodation and fuel to drive to and from events.

### *Where are the Competitions?*

The TVRCC Speed Championship offers approximately 25 rounds per year at venues spread throughout England and Wales.

## **The TVR Car Club Speed Championship**

The TVR Car Club Speed Championship is run to enable TVR Car Club members to compete against each other in a single nation-wide TVR championship. All you need to do is enter the TVR Car Club Speed Championship and you will receive invitations to compete in up to 25 events per year and of those your best 8 scores count towards your Championship total. There is no minimum number of events that entrants must attend.

### *Championship Contacts*

There is a discussion forum at <http://www.tvr-car-club.co.uk/forum> where you can ask your fellow TVR competitors for help or advice

(members only) or you can view Championship activity at the website: <http://www.tvrccspeedchampionship.co.uk>. Or you can contact Championship Administrators Steve Hunter and Jo Briars at [tvrjosteve@yahoo.com](mailto:tvrjosteve@yahoo.com) or MSA championship coordinator Peter Humphries at [peter.humphries@greenv8s.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:peter.humphries@greenv8s.freeserve.co.uk).

### *Handicap Scheme*

To keep the TVRCC Speed Championship fair, a sophisticated handicapping scheme is utilised to level the playing field across cars of different sizes, weights and powers. In practice this handicap scheme results in a very close match between the various models. There is no reason to believe that any model has an advantage over any other.

## **Getting Started**

Here is a list of the things you need to do to join in the TVR Car Club Speed Championship:

1. If you are not already a member, join the TVR Car Club. The TVRCC Speed Championship is only open to TVRCC members. See <http://www.tvr-car-club.co.uk/>
2. Join the TVRCC Speed Championship discussion forum by sending your TVRCC web username to [TVRJoSteve@yahoo.com](mailto:TVRJoSteve@yahoo.com). In January, download a set of Championship Regulations and Championship entry form from the forum.
3. Send your TVRCC Speed Championship registration form by email to [tvrjosteve@yahoo.com](mailto:tvrjosteve@yahoo.com), along with electronic payment (or you can print and post the form along with a cheque if you prefer). In return, you will receive a Championship Registration Card which you will need to show when signing on at events.
4. Apply for a National B Non-Race competition licence on the MSA website: <http://www.msauk.org> (or call the Motor Sports Association on 01753 681736 for paper forms). In order to get the licence you need to be a member of an MSA-recognised car club such as the TVRCC.
5. Go to your local race accessories shop and buy a helmet. It must comply with one of the following standards:

- FIA 8860-2004 (expires 31/12/20)
- FIA 8860-2010
- FIA 8860-2015
- SNELL SA2015 (expires 31/12/23)
- SNELL SA2010 (expires 31/12/23)
- SNELL SAH2010 (expires 31/12/23)

Most good quality helmets comply with one of these standards. If you're going to drive an open-top car then a full-face helmet is advisable. Note that if you're wearing an open-face helmet and driving an open-top car, you will need to wear goggles. Helmet prices start from around £100, but again you can spend as much as you wish. Make sure the helmet is comfortable and fits properly (put it on, do up the strap and then try and remove the helmet by rolling it forward from the back. If you can get it off, it's too big. Alternatively, if it makes your head hurt, it's too small!) Note that motorcycle helmets do not comply with these standards, principally because they are not flame resistant.

6. Go to any race accessories shop and buy a race suit. You can buy a fire-proof Nomex suit from about £300 from any of the suppliers listed in Autosport or the MSA Blue Book (which arrives along with your MSA Speed Licence). You also need a pair of flame-proof (Nomex) driving gloves.

It is advisable to wear flame proof socks and driving boots, although not compulsory. You may want to consider a set of Nomex underwear and a balaclava too.

(Note that "Proban" overalls are no longer legal for sprinting.)

7. Get a pack of stick-on 9" racing numbers in a contrasting colour to your car while you're there. The Championship will provide stick on door panels if you require them.
8. Make up a "timing strut" to fit the front of your car (This breaks a beam of light on the start and finish lines to record your time). The exact dimensions are given in the MSA Blue Book, but basically when viewed from the side of the car it has to be twelve inches high, stick forward two inches and be black. See section 10.9 of the MSA Blue Book for detailed guidelines for making one, or there

are directions here:

[http://shengltd.com/shpub/tvrbooks/sprint\\_timing.html](http://shengltd.com/shpub/tvrbooks/sprint_timing.html).

9. Mark the positive terminal on the battery with yellow tape.
10. If your car has a plastic brake fluid reservoir mounted on the master cylinder, you need to fasten it to the master cylinder with a cable tie or similar.

## **Car Modifications**

The TVR Car Club Speed Championship doesn't restrict modifications to the car, however all cars must comply with the technical regulations issued by the MSA. You should consult the MSA Blue Book for specifics but here's a summary:

### *Tyres*

To compete in the TVRCC Speed Championship, your car must be shod with tyres appearing in list 1A or list 1B in the MSA Blue Book of the current year. List 1A tyres do not affect your handicap, but list 1B tyres will attract a loading of 2.5% to your handicap algorithm. Slick tyres or Race Wets are not permitted.

### *Dampers*

Generally, you will find the handling improves if you stiffen up the dampers by about 25-50% from normal road settings. If you are replacing the dampers at any point, it is recommended you buy those that can be adjusted on the car.

### *Harness*

A competition harness is recommended as a safety measure, but it also holds you in your seat and improves your control over the car. Once you've tried one you'll never go back. Costs start from around £40, some work is generally required to fit them and the best advice is to come and see how someone else has done it. It is not advisable to fit a competition harness without also fitting some form of roll-over protection.

### *Roll-Over Bar*

These are recommended but not always easy to fit to TVRs. If you want to fit one of these you can expect to spend several days making one up yourself or a few hundred pounds getting a

professional to sort it for you. Again, come and see how others have managed it.

Road legal TVRs can compete in the “*Roadgoing Series Production Cars*” category. As TVRs were produced in numbers greater than 1,000 cars per year, full roll cages are not required. TVRs competing in the “*Modified Series Production Cars*” category will require additional safety features (see MSA Yearbook).

#### *Seat and Seat Mount*

You are allowed to fit a competition seat if you prefer it. Many people get by with the standard TVR seats.

The standard seat mountings used on many early TVRs do not meet the full MSA safety guidelines (because the floors were sometimes quite thin). Although the standard seat mounts are permitted, it is preferable to reinforce them to bring them up to the full MSA specification.

#### *Engine Modifications*

Engine modifications are permitted but will affect the car's power to weight algorithm. Any changes affecting the power to weight ratio of competitors' cars must be declared to the Championship Administrators so that the handicap algorithm can be updated.

#### *Crankcase Breathers*

If your car's engine has an open loop crankcase re-breather system (the Rover V8 is a particular offender in this case) you need to fit an oil catch tank of at least 1 litre capacity to the breather. It doesn't need to be an expensive arrangement of braided hose and aluminium tank, a length of rubber pipe, jubilee clips and a plastic bottle (well away from the exhausts!) will suffice. Alternatively, you can just blank off the breather. Ask on the forum if you want assistance with this.

### **Your First Sprint**

You will receive an application form a few weeks before each event. Availability of entry forms is also announced on the forum. If you intend to enter you should apply immediately – many events are oversubscribed and places are usually allocated on a first-come first-served basis. You should receive an acknowledgement within a week or so. In the week before the sprint you will receive a set of final



instructions telling you your individual competitor number, how to find the circuit, timetable for the day, and the competition order of event.

### *Preparations*

There are no special preparations, but any competition car needs to be well maintained and kept in optimum running order. Make sure you have plenty of fuel – some of the venues have limited availability and although you won't be using much in competition, the engine could be idling for long periods.

What to take with you:

- Race suit
- Gloves
- Crash helmet
- Flame-proof boots, socks & underwear (if you use them)
- Timing strut (and means to attach it to the car)
- Competition numbers / number backgrounds
- Groundsheet or pop-up tent to protect any tools etc. from the elements
- MSA competition licence
- TVRCC membership card
- TVRCC Speed Championship registration card
- RTA driving licence (normal road licence)
- V5 registration document (aka "logbook") if your car is road-going, otherwise MSA logbook.
- Toolbox
- Jack
- Tyre pressure gauge
- Foot pump or electric inflator
- Oil for topping up
- Spare fuel in container
- Pre-mixed coolant
- Bucket and chamois
- Windscreen cleaner and/or squeegee
- Duct tape
- Chair to sit on
- Warm/waterproof clothes and umbrella
- Sunscreen/hat in the summer months – you're going to be out in the open all day!
- Money for the burger van

If you're competing in a road-going car, you also need:

- Insurance certificate & Road Tax
- MOT certificate (if applicable)

Or, if you're competing in a non-road-going car, you need:

- An MSA Log Book, or registration documents and a recent colour photo of the car showing the front driver's side three quarter view with the number plate visible, so you can buy a log book on the day.

### *What Happens On a Sprint Day?*

Competitors start arriving shortly before the signing-on time in the final instructions. The normal order of business is to start by going along to "signing on" where the event organisers check your paperwork is in order.

Then, competitors check their cars (tyre pressures, oil and coolant level etc) attach their numbers to both sides and fit timing struts. They're now ready to join the queue for scrutineering, which is a basic safety check of the cars, crash helmets, race overalls and gloves. At a competitor's first sprint the scrutineer will check that the new crash helmet is of an approved type and sell the entrant an "MSA approved" sticker for a couple of pounds to show future scrutineers that it's OK.

Some clubs organise signing on and scrutineering differently so check the final instructions to see what has been organised.

The TVRs normally try and park together (at some events there is assigned parking – the details will be in the final instructions). Please make yourself known to the other TVR competitors who will be happy to help – it can be an intimidating process the first couple of times!

Having got all that out of the way competitors are encouraged to take the opportunity to walk the track if there is time before practice starts. This is your chance to visualise your line through each corner, look for useful reference points for braking and turning-in points, and to spot any hazards around the course. By the time you get back the burger van will probably be open for breakfast so you can tuck in to build up the calories you're about to burn off.

*Top tip:* Make sure you get back in time for the compulsory drivers' briefing where they'll remind everyone about how the runs are going to be organized and any special information or local regulations.

At some events entrants get a chance to drive round gently in convoy so you can see what the track looks like from the driving

seat. Try not to be too wild - it is considered very bad form to spin on the convoy lap!

Then the driving starts. First there are a couple of practice runs (which are timed but don't count towards the final results) followed by the competitive runs. Make sure you know how many practice runs there are, and how many laps the practice and competitive runs are (they aren't always the same!). Again, this information will be in the final instructions!

Official timed runs follow the same sequence: cars queue up in number order and are ushered up to the line one at a time. Once you get close to the line the start-line marshals will take control of the car and push it the last few inches until it is perfectly lined up with the timing beam. Don't try to help unless they ask you to; specifically, stay off the brakes since the start-line marshals may be trying to manoeuvre the car!

Timing is normally electronic. At the line you are faced with red light. A few seconds before your run starts one of the start-line marshals will direct your attention to the lights. The red light will change to green and you start in your own time but within 5 seconds of the light turning green. Note that the clock starts when the car breaks the timing beam and not when the light goes green.

Times are generally posted a few minutes after your run, so you can see how well you did and figure out how you're going to go even faster next time.

The day ends with a short prize-giving ceremony half an hour after the last runs. When packing up remember to take your timing strut and numbers off before you drive home - the police take a dim view of people driving on public roads with racing numbers on, and if you're reported your competition licence may be revoked.

### **End of year Awards & Dinner-Dance**

At the end of the year, the championship awards over 20 prizes at our Dinner and Presentations evening in November at a hotel in the midlands. This is a fabulous social opportunity where we all meet to recognise each other's season's achievements.

## **Spectating**

If you'd prefer to just come along and watch, that's fine too. Note that some events are not open to the public; check beforehand! Please come and say "Hello!" to the TVR drivers – we're a friendly bunch, honest!

## **Have a Go!**

If you would like to have a go, please see the contact information below. If you have any questions you can ask on the TVRCC Speed Championship Forum, or email the Championship Administrator at [tvrjosteve@yahoo.com](mailto:tvrjosteve@yahoo.com)

## **Contact Information**

Steve Hunter & Jo Briars  
(Championship  
Administrators)

[tvrjosteve@yahoo.com](mailto:tvrjosteve@yahoo.com)

TVRCC Speed  
Championship discussion  
forum

[http://forum.tvr-car-club.co.uk/tvrcc-speed-championship-forum\\_forum78.html](http://forum.tvr-car-club.co.uk/tvrcc-speed-championship-forum_forum78.html)

TVRCC Speed  
Championship website

<http://www.tvrccspeedchampionship.co.uk/>

TVR Car Club

[www.tvr-car-club.co.uk](http://www.tvr-car-club.co.uk)

Motor Sports Association  
(competition licences)

[www.msauk.org](http://www.msauk.org)

The MSA Yearbook (the "Blue Book") has many adverts for equipment suppliers and insurance providers.

Diamond Insurance  
(provides a combined road and  
specialist Sprint and Hillclimb  
insurance policy)

01442 828657  
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