

DOWN SHIFT



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March / 2011

Some Tips on Course Design

By Karen Babb from "Finish First" blog

So you're the course designer for an upcoming Solo event. At some point the site utilization plan has been finalized and you know where the pits, grid, boundaries, viewing areas, and maybe even the course area entry and exit will be. Finally, you can get to work on the actual course itself. What should you figure out first? Where to put the fast stuff? Where that diabolical C-box derivative you've concocted will fit in? How close to the stage line to put the timing start lights?

Nope. The finish should be done first. Too often the finish design is left to the last, after the rest of the course has been laid out. Doing this can lead to—among other things—insufficient runout distance, car-upsetting final maneuvers too close to the timing lights, and/or overuse of exit lane cones. The designer may have become so fond of the course route and planned content that he/she is reluctant to give up some of it toward the end of the course in order to allow space for a safe finish. That's putting the cart before the horse; safety is always first, and the sanctity of what Roger (Houston) Johnson humorously calls "Your Glorious Creation" is always a secondary consideration. (continued on page 5)



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Schedule of Events

03/26
Annual Tech & Trailer Clean Out
04/07
KYSCCA Board / Membership Meeting
04/10
Cob Web Shaker / Fun Event #1
04/01
Points Event #1
Papa John's

Links of Interest

scca.com
kyscca.com
502streetscene.net/
myautoevents.com
ckrscga.org/

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Douglas Conway Is 2010 G-Prepared Champ...but his

picture was missing from the January / February issue. My bad Doug. Sorry for the oversight. As a make-up call, your photo is bigger than any other of the 2010 champions. Congratulations.

—Ron Riffle editor



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Schedules for the 2011 Solo 2 Season. *GO SOLO!*

National Tour			
Date	Event	Venue	
3/12/11	Dixie National Tour South	Georgia Motorsports Park	
3/19/11	Houston National Tour	Houston Raceway Park	
4/02/11	San Diego National Tour	Qualcomm Stadium	
5/07/11	Atlanta National Tour	Atlanta Motor Speedway	
5/29/11	Lincoln National Tour	Lincoln Airpark	
6/04/11	Delaware National Tour	Dover Speedway	
6/11/11	Blytheville National Tour; Southern States Championship	Arkansas Aeroplex	
7/04/11	Toledo National Tour; Northern States Championship	Toledo Express Airport	
7/16/11	Packwood National Tour; Western States Championship	Hampton Mills	
7/30/11	Colorado National Tour; Mountain States Championship	Pikes Peak Int'l Raceway	
8/30/11	Tire Rack SCCA Solo National Championships	Lincoln Airpark	
10/1/11	Tri-State Challenge National Tour	Arkansas Aeroplex	
10/29/11	Nashville Road Tour	Nashville Super Speedway	
Pro Solo		SCCA ProSolo	
Date	Event	Venue	
3/26/2011	2011 Mineral Wells ProSolo	Mineral Wells Airport	
4/9/2011	2011 El Toro ProSolo	El Toro Airport	
4/30/2011	2011 Blytheville ProSolo	Arkansas Aeroplex	
5/21/2011	2011 New Jersey ProSolo	New Meadowlands	
5/27/2011	2011 Lincoln ProSolo	Lincoln Airpark	
6/18/2011	2011 Oscoda ProSolo	Oscoda Wurtsmith Airport	
7/9/2011	2011 Rocky Mountain ProSolo	Pikes Peak International Raceway	
7/23/2011	2011 Packwood ProSolo	Hampton Mills	
8/27/2011	2011 ProSolo Finale	Lincoln Airpark	
Kentucky Region			
Annual Tech & Trailer Clean-out	Saturday, March 26th 11:00 am	Unique Automotive	
Cob Web Shaker / Fun Event #1	Sunday, April 10th	UPS	
Points Event #1	Sunday, May 1st	Papa John's	
Points Event #2	Sunday, May 22nd	Papa John's	
Driver's School Saturday,	Saturday, June 4th	Papa John's	
Points Event #3	Sunday, June 5th	Papa John's	
Points Event #4	Saturday, June 25th	Papa John's	
Points Event #5	Sunday, July 10th	Papa John's	
Points Event #6	Saturday, July 30th	Papa John's	
Points Event #7	Sunday, August, 21st	UPS	
Points Event # 8	Sunday, September 11th	UPS	
Fun Event #2	Sunday, October 2nd	UPS	
Central Kentucky			
Event	Date	Location	
Spring Fun Event	Sunday, March 27 2011	Legends Stadium	
Solo School	Sunday April 03 2011	The Pad	
Points Event 1	Sunday, April 17 2011	The Pad	

**Central Kentucky** (continued from page 3)

Points Event 3	Sunday, June 19 2011	Eastern Kentucky University
Points Event 4	Sunday, June 26 2011	The Pad
Points Event 5	Sunday, July 10 2011	EKU
Points Event 5	Sunday, July 10 2011	EKU
Points Event 6	Sunday, July 31 2011	The Pad
Points Event 7	Sunday, August 07 2011	The Pad
Test and Tune	Sunday, August 14 2011	The Pad
Points Event 8	Sunday, September 18 2011	The Pad or Legends Stadium
Fall Fun Event	Sunday, October 09 2011	Legends Stadium

**Cincinnati Region**

Event	Date	Location
Fun/Test and Tune Event	March 27, 2011	Cincinnati Mall
Points Event #1	April 3, 2011	Wilmington Airport
Evo School, Phase 1	April 9, 2011	POSTPONED
Evo School, Phase 2	April 10, 2011	POSTPONED
Points Event 2	April 17, 2011	Turfway Park
Points Event 3	May 15, 2011	Turfway Park
Points Event 4	June 5, 2011	Wilmington Airport
Points Event 5	June 26, 2011	Turfway Park
Points Event 6	July 17, 2011	Turfway Park
Test & Tune	August 7, 2011	Turfway Park
Points Event 7	August 21, 2011	Turfway Park
Points Event 8	September 11, 2011	TDB
Points Event 9	September 25, 2011	TDB
Points Event 10 PAX CHALLENGE	October 9, 2011	TDB
Fun Event/Make Up Event	October 23, 2011	TDB

**Columbus Region**

Event	Date	Location
Points Solo #1	March 27	Walesboro
Points Solo #2 Indy/CSCC Challenge	April 17	Lucas Oil Raceway
Solo Drivers School	May 4	Walesboro
Points Solo #3	May 8	Walesboro
Points Solo #4,	May 30 Memorial Day - Monday	Walesboro
Points Solo #5	June 26	Walesboro
Points Solo #6	July 10	Walesboro
Solo Driver's School	July 23	Walesboro
Points Solo #7	July 24	Walesboro
Points Solo #8 Indy/CSCC Challenge	August 21	Walesboro
Points Solo #9 Day 1	September 4	Walesboro
Points Solo #10 SuperWeekend	September 4-5	Walesboro
Points Solo #11	September 25	Walesboro
Points Solo #12	October 16	Walesboro
Fun Solo	November 6	Walesboro

(continued from page one) You have to design your finishes for all kinds of potentially unpleasant scenarios; wet and/or dirty surface, fast approach, powerful heavy car, bald (or slick) tires, insanely late braking, no ABS, driver with more aggression than skill, brake system problems. Laying out the finish first allows you to decide important features like where it will aim (think of it as a loaded bazooka; where do you want it pointed?), and how long it needs to be (typical 60-zero braking distances of normal street cars are well over 100 feet, and while not all finish lines are crossed at 60 mph or more, almost no drivers hit the brakes immediately upon crossing that line). If your site dimensions or features constrain the length of your finish for some reason, you'll need to allow for that in designing your course's final maneuver(s) so that finishing speeds are reduced.

When I look at a designer's draft map, the most obvious sign that they did the course first and the finish last is an exit lane of something like 60-90 feet in length with tons of cones on both sides and a cone wall at the end, with something nobody wants to hit—or someplace very unsafe to go—shortly beyond it. That's not a calculated element, it's an afterthought. What should have happened is that the exit lane, finish line, and finish approach should have been designed first, and the rest of the course then made to flow into that sequence.

In the case of a course for something like a Divisional or Tour that will be used forwards and backwards, doing the finish job right should mean designing two finishes. Why? It's generally easier to change a finish that works into a start that works, than to do the inverse. A start doesn't typically require the kind of length, careful timing

equipment placement, or other safety margins that a finish does. If enough room is allowed—and enough care is taken—to create a successful finish, it's reasonable to think that the component should be safe and sane, with minimal revision, to use backwards as a start. You might have to add a bend to keep a relatively straight exit lane from becoming a drag-race start, and you'll probably (though not necessarily) have to move the timing lights. But if you thought about both uses of both ends when you laid them out, the switchover should be pretty easy and you should get to the Saturday night party before all the food and beverages are gone.

So what's a good after-the-line length for a finish? I'm happiest if I can get at least 200 feet, more at a big event like a Divisional, Tour or the Nationals (where the crazies really come out and nobody wants to brake early). That's not a hard-and-fast number by any means, just an order-of-magnitude guideline. It's entirely possible to have a safe finish-and-exit that's 150 feet long, or an unsafe one that's 250 feet long. But it's at least a place to start. Once the rest of the course is filled in, I may extend the exit if there is room and it turns out the last course elements allow greater-than-average speeds. If I don't have room to do that, I'll revise or move or delete some of those last elements. Shortening the course up a second or two is better than putting cars, drivers, workers, and property in jeopardy. 45 mph = 66 feet per second, so two seconds is 132 feet at a typical average Stock class speed. At 60 mph (88 fps) it's 176 feet. You can make that finish a lot safer by giving up a very small amount of course length in terms of time.

In all cases it's important to look at what's past the end of the exit, where that finish car is going

to slide when the driver comes in too fast. Open space? Paddock? Grid? Sanikans (yikes!)? Concessions? Curbing? Buildings? Another part of the course? If that exit lane can be aimed somewhere comparatively harmless, it's a good idea to do so. If not, it needs to not only be plenty long (with extra distance after the coned exit lane ends), but the last elements need to rein in the speeds. Like the rule book (2.2.A) says "the fastest portions of the course shall be those most remote from spectators and property." In most cases the finish and start will be in the same general area (to facilitate grid access), and that's not likely to be "remote."

Maybe you should have a dense lane of cones after the lights to "make them be careful and slow down" for safety? Simple problem with this: they won't. This feature may be effective on a few newer drivers, but experienced competitors know that cones are just hunks of flexible plastic, and those drivers will take whatever chances they think they have to in order to finish as fast as they think they can. If they miscalculate and take out a wall of cones at the finish, workers will be scrambling to get them all back up when the next car comes through, likely as not in a similar out-of-shape attitude. That too is a safety issue. Keep the exit lane obvious but simple and easy to maintain.

In summary, the finish can be the most trouble-prone area of the course, just because of where it frequently is located and how people usually drive it. Safe finishes are a critical component of safe courses, and our odds of making them that way are much greater if we think about them first, not last.

RE's Corner, March 2011 Vegas Convention

I had the fortunate adventure of attending the SCCA National Convention in Las Vegas in February. I entertained a few slot machines with \$5 and saw a pair of \$95,000 earrings, but decided to pass those up for they wouldn't fit in my helmet. It was great to see some old friends, but the theme for this year was membership retention. SCCA has a great track record of attracting people to our multiple different types of events (autocross, road racing, rally, PDX, etc.). However, we tend to lose folks 1 to 3 years after they have signed up as members. In our region the board is discussing several items to address this problem and make our events more fun.

- **Fun Runs:** In order to give everyone a better bang for their buck we will be entertaining fun runs on a per event basis. However, we have to make sure that more than just a few folks are left cleaning up the event. So, if you play you also have to stick around to clean up afterwards.
- **Novice Drivers:** We need to especially make sure our novice drivers are welcomed and not forgotten when events get busy. We will have some designated folks to answer questions, but I would like for our experienced folks to be friendly and reach out to this important group.

- **Fun venue for membership meetings:** Not many folks like meetings, so we are looking into locations that have a fun activity rather than just discuss club business. Several possibilities are a slot car track and the indoor karting track that is currently under construction. Other suggestions are welcome, too.

Cheers!

Julia Aebersold

RE, KYSCCA



Minutes of the KYR SCCA General Membership Meeting February 4, 2010

Ky. Region SCCA

Membership meeting

February 3, 2011

Shoney's Restaurant

Regional Executive Julia Aebersold called meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

The following were present: Julia Aebersold, Bruce Domeck, Jamey McDaniel, Al Murrel, Rich Sinnock, and Mike Spence. Absent: Chris Schork.

There was no January meeting.

Treasurer Mike Spence gave the financial report. Club finances are tight at this time of the year, but do not foresee any issues.

Julia Aebersold reported that membership remained at 166 members.

Old Business: Election of Chairperson and filling vacant Board position. At January Board meeting, Board elected Al Murrell as Chairperson and nominated and voted to accept Bruce Domeck to fill vacant Board position. Trophy Expense update- Members present were advised about excess expenditure for year-end trophies. The invoice for the trophies was \$518 over approved amount. Al Murrell motioned to approve spending the additional funds to pay for trophies. Bruce Domeck seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Safety Steward School- Al Murrell will conduct a Safety Steward School. Tentative date of March 12, 2011 and a location to be determined. Any member interested in attending, please contact Al Murrell. Rulebooks & Myautoevents.com-The fee for the first 3 events on Myautoevents.com have been paid for, so head to Myautoevents.com for number registration and event registration for the first three events. Helmets- Al Murrell advised for members to check your helmets for current legal status.

New Business: Bowling Green-Board discussed formation and decided that KY Region has no issue with a potential new region. RE advised that she will communicate with organizers of potential Bowling Green region that KY Region has no issue with

their actions. Jaguar Club- Greg from Jaguar Club was present and talked about Region hosting an event using a spec track that they would provide. RE assured that Jaguar club members are welcome at our events. RE advised about tech process, waiver, and fees that are associated with events. RE advised that Jaguar club course design will not work for a normal event. Greg advised that his members would need to run the course provided so as to accumulate JCA points. Greg advised the he would seek more information about insurance so that if the Jaguar club acquires a site and insurance, there may be the possibility of KY Region running event (subject to KY Region site/insurance review). Event Chairs & Course Designers- Jamey McDaniel discussed need for volunteers for new Event Chairs and Course Designers. RE will advertise request to membership in Downshift, KYSCCA website and 502streetscene.net. Discussion of possible ways to gain more attendance at membership meetings. Mike Spence will look into possible meeting at slot-car establishment. Jamey McDaniel brought up issues with members not receiving their membership pins. Julia Aebersold will look into which members who have not received the pins when they should have.

Mike Spence motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jamey McDaniel. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted this March 3, 2011 by Secretary Rich Sinnock

*“There's no feeling in the world quite like meeting a goal in competition. Maybe it's to beat a long-time rival, or meet a specific lap time. But whatever it is, it boils down to knowing you did your best within the rules under which we compete.” —Jeff Dahnert
SCCA President & CEO*