

MG Trophy Championship Driving Standards

The MG Trophy Championship Driving Standards (TDS) exists to help ensure that drivers are able to enjoy the very best in club motor sport, it is run by drivers, for drivers. By making sure that everyone understands the rules we hope to eliminate on-track incidents or at least ensure that accident damage and risk of personal injury are minimised.

Following a detailed discussion at the MG Trophy Drivers meeting on the 12th November 2022 at the Wroxton House Hotel it was decided to dispense with the original document and implement a brand-new policy. The reasons behind the change are documented in the minutes of that meeting which were issued on the 29th December 2022 and are available on request.

There is a committee (TDSC) made up of five drivers who can be approached at any time if you want to raise an issue. This committee changes periodically so please ask who the current members are and you will be advised their names.

The totally revamped procedure is now a penalty system whereby championship points will be deducted automatically following a Clerk of the Course decision on a given incident. These penalty points are then to be applied to the championship scores when the subsequent points table is published. The benefits of this system were detailed in the meeting notes and are as follows: -

- 1) It should improve discipline among drivers knowing that they can lose championship points
- 2) It largely removes the need for a time-consuming TDSC process that serves only to examine rather than educate and
- 3) It stops the bizarre possibility of a situation where the TDSC can go against the decision of the Clerk.

With the above in mind, the TDS has now been repurposed as an educational panel. As in, every time a competitor has championship points deducted, the TDSC can offer guidance on how to avoid such an event in future. (This part is not essential, but is desirable) In summary, the above changes not only streamline the TDS and penalty process, but also provides a greater incentive to avoid incidents on track.

Subsequent research found the following regulation wording relevant and this is now incorporated into the 2023 MG Trophy Championship Regulations.

4.2.2 For every penalty a competitor receives that includes Motorsport UK licence points a '3x points multiplier' championship penalty will also be incurred,

whereby the number of licence points for the penalty will be multiplied by three and that number of championship points will be deducted from their championship total. This deduction will still apply even if the competitor regards their race score as a dropped score.

When a round takes place outside of the UK and is run under the regulations of the local ASN, a driver will not normally receive points on their Motorsport UK competition licence to accompany a penalty. In this instance, the licence points that would have accompanied the same penalty in the UK will be assumed and the '3x points multiplier' still applied, even though licence points have not been received.

Over the years we have regularly updated additional notes to drivers to help eliminate on-track incidents to ensure that accident damage and risk of personal injury are minimised. These are as follows: -

Frequent Driving Standards Issues

We have highlighted below some of the key issues that continually lead to safety concerns and damage together with an expansion of some of the MSA Blue Book Regulations.

Yellow Flag

MSUK Blue Book Q 12.24.3 e/f

You must slow down sufficiently to maintain full control over your vehicle and NO OVERTAKING. Passing under yellow is not only gaining an unfair advantage but is putting the lives of marshals and fellow competitors at risk. Use the green flag lap to ensure that you are aware where all the marshals posts are (that's what its intended for). If you *do* pass under yellows, try to give the place back as soon as you can but be aware that there is still a good chance you will be called to the Clerk of the Course to explain your lack of observation. But please do not attempt to give a place back until you pass the green flag, because the driver behind cannot overtake you, whether you are telling him to or not, while within the yellow flag zone.

There seems to be lots of confusion regarding when you can/can't overtake. It is quite simple though. You can race until you PASS the first yellow flag (i.e., you can overtake if you are in front by the time you pass the flag) after which you must slow down sufficiently to retain full control of your car (and stop, if necessary, as the circuit may be blocked) and you must not overtake until you pass the green flag signifying the end of the yellow flag zone.

Occasionally a green flag is not shown, so if you pass the next flag marshals post and it is not displaying a flag at all, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the yellow flag zone has been passed.

Red Flag

Should any race session need to be stopped, you will see the red flag.

When you see the red flag, you should cease racing and slow down, with due regard to the driver behind you.

You should not slam on the anchors, unless you are about to dramatically encounter the incident, as the driver behind may not have seen the flag or, as with the traditional M25 traffic jam, all the cars behind you will back up quickly to the point where the flag may not yet be displayed. Some drivers raise or wave an arm to warn the drivers behind that the race has been stopped. You then proceed to the start line, or as directed.

Blue Flag

MSUK Blue Book Q 12.24.3 c

(b) Blue flag -Stationary: Another competitor is following close behind. (c)

Blue flag -Waved: Another competitor is trying to overtake.

Blue flags in national racing do *not* mean the same as F1s blue flags -they are just "for information" and carry no instruction to do anything other than to "be aware"! They usually mean that a faster car is trying to overtake you - most usually shown when someone is being lapped. If you are being lapped then there is nothing in the rules which says you must let them through it is their responsibility to pass you safely. However, if you are running on your own and being lapped, why spoil the race for the leaders?

If you can, give a clear hand signal pointing to the side you wish them to pass. Do not make any sudden unexpected move to get out of their way as the overtaking car may have already committed themselves to passing you. Do not try to make a pass easy by lifting off when a car is slipstreaming very closely behind you it will probably run into you!

Re-joining the Circuit

MSUK Blue Book Q 12.21.3

If all four wheels have left the track you must re-join at the nearest point compatible with safety. It is unfair and unacceptable to simply re-join the circuit as quickly as possible without any regard for the drivers around you who have been able to retain control of their car. If this means stopping at the side of the circuit until safe to re-join then that is what you must do, even if that means you re-join last. One of the biggest errors made by drivers (and not just novices) when they go off the circuit is to keep their foot planted on the accelerator and attempt to return to the circuit without losing any time or places. More often than not this results in them shooting across the circuit at right angles and off again the opposite side of the circuit, assuming they are fortunate enough not to wipe out a following car in the process.

Although it is understandable in the heat of battle that if you go off you should want to regain the circuit without losing places, there should only be one thought in your mind as soon as you go off.

That should be, how can I return to the circuit safely? If you lose places as a result, or even if you end up last, that is your problem as you shouldn't have gone off in the first place. Remember, it is not the responsibility of the car you pull back on in front of to try and avoid you.

Avoiding the Racing Accident and Blocking/Weaving

MSUK Blue Book Q 4.1 Drivers must at all time drive in a manner compatible with general safety.

MSUK Blue Book Q 12.21.1 Manoeuvres liable to hinder other drivers such as premature direction changes on the straights, crowding of cars towards the inside or outside of the curve or any other abnormal change of direction, are strictly prohibited and will be subject to penalties ranging from a fine to exclusion from the race. The repetition of such driving, even involuntary, may result in exclusion.

The MGT Driving Standards Committee interpretation is that this precludes competitors from blocking, weaving, squeezing, **making unnecessary contact and generally driving in a manner that causes avoidable damage.**

So, no blocking of following cars on the straight, by weaving, moving in front of them deliberately to block them, or pushing them to the side of the track if they get a wheel alongside.

Leaning on another car going around a corner, and pushing them off the outside (or inside) of the track is not allowed.

Defensive driving is fine, and is all part of racing, and generally involves protecting the inside line into a corner. Again, however, moving from an inside line to the outside because the following car attempts to go around the outside is simply blocking, and is not allowed.

We also want to eliminate the desperate diving-up-the-inside overtaking manoeuvres that are normally dismissed as racing accidents. There is no more predictable or more common incident that happens on a race circuit, but there is a common feeling of blamelessness on the part of those involved.

Do not drive on your mirrors just reacting to whatever the car behind is doing!

To Avoid "The Racing Accident":

Car-1 (leading):

1. Think about whether to take a conventional or defensive approach to the next corner as soon as you BEGIN the straight. Do not take this line at the last moment.
2. Check your mirrors and what is around you, before every turn-in manoeuvre.

3. Do not "slam the door" unless you are totally in front of Car-2. If it then hits the rear panel of your car, Car-2 is 100% to blame. If Car-2 hits your rear wing, you are about 20% at fault. In most cases, the impact will probably cause you to spin, and Car-2 to continue with light damage, so it is obviously worth making room if Car-2 is anything other than entirely behind you.

Car-2: (following)

1. Do not dive up the inside unless you can be fully alongside before the apex.
2. If you cannot quite get alongside, slow down enough to let the door be slammed in your face without contact. Better still; hang back slightly before the corner so that you can attack the corner with a greater exit speed than Car-1. Coincide your faster exit with catching Car-1 as the next straight begins.

Deciding the amount of blame apportioned is not an exact science. Much depends on Car-2's sudden lunge factor. Contact arising from a side-by-side battle for a corner is not the same as an over-optimistic and sudden lunge from way-back that does not pay off.

Contact incidents happen when two drivers both attempt to put their car in the same place at the same time. And such incidents can be avoided by either one of the drivers anticipating what the other might do and choosing *not* to put their car in the same place. And it is usually the following driver who has the best view of what is happening and who is thus best placed to take avoiding action.

If you *are* following another car and manage to get an overlap, but not fully alongside, what are you going to do? The leading car *should* be aware of you and *should* allow space for you. But if the driver hasn't seen you, contact could result.

It's your choice to doggedly stick to your line and risk being punted off, or pull out of the manoeuvre and keep your car intact to try again.

The point is that it takes two to tangle. Sometimes you may feel that your car's position means that you are in the right. But being right is not much consolation if you're also in the tyre wall!

Guidelines for racing between cars of different classes

Having 190, 170 and 160 cars in the same races allows the Trophy to field a good-sized grid and makes single make ZR racing possible.

Inevitably there are times when different class cars are on the same part of the track, and in these cases the guiding principle is that the drivers should work together and minimize time lost by both drivers while the faster car safely gains the position.

All drivers should read all sections.

Blue Flag

Applies to all classes, usually a 160 or 170 being lapped at a shorter track. The driver shown the blue flag must allow the following driver to overtake at the first available opportunity. Using indicators or moving the car so it is clearly off the racing line is a good way to signal to the following car that you are aware of them and will allow a pass. Sometimes this will compromise the lapped driver's lap time or race position, but they must still allow the pass.

For the 190 driver

190 catching a 160 or 170 on the same lap:

Usually this is because the 190 qualified out of position, or has dropped down the order.

The 190 has no priority as they would if lapping the car in front. The 190 should aim to get a strong corner exit in order to use the performance of the 190 to be ahead or at least fully alongside by the next corner. The 170 should allow the 190 past (acknowledging with a wave, indicator or track position may be useful) and focus on maintaining their own momentum through the corner which may be compromised by the passing car. If the 190 has to compromise corner entry in order to pass, the 170 may have more momentum initially out of the corner so may want to ease off slightly and gain the slipstream.

The 190 driver should not make a half move, (e.g. make as if they are going to overtake on the inside) or just dive up the inside. This is a lose-lose as it slows down the 190 with a poor corner and exit, and also slows down the 170 with a compromised corner. Far better for the 190 driver to focus on a fast exit, even if this means easing off slightly, as they can then be clear of the 170 by the end of the following straight.

190 catching two or more 170s racing for position:

If this is early in the race then the 190 driver will want to make progress as above. However, especially towards the end of the race the 190 driver should consider if passing the 170s will enable them to either gain or defend a position in class and if not, let the 170s race without hindrance.

For the 170 Driver:

For a 170 catching a 160 on the same lap, or two or more 160s in close racing, the same applies as in the 190 driver situation above.

For a 170 driver being overtaken by a 190 driver:

A good principle is the track day approach. If a car catches you, it is faster, and you should let it go. So work with the 190 where you can to allow a clean pass. This may mean blending off the throttle slightly on the straight to allow the 190 to take the following corner quickly and cleanly, in which case you can then follow closely and benefit from slipstream.

For a 170 driver being overtaken by a 160 driver:

This is more likely in damp conditions when 160s and 170s are more equal but can happen at any time. The 170 driver should recognise that it is not a battle for class position and consider whether to let the 160 go if it seems to be a quicker car, especially if there are 2 fast 160s racing each other.

For the 160 Driver

Reading the above should give you an expectation of what other drivers should/will do. Recognise that when you either pass, or are passed by, a 170 or 190, it is not a race for class position so should not be fought hard.

Pete Macwaters

Chair MG Trophy Championship