

Formula SCCA
December 2004

Formula SCCA certainly got off to a rocky start. The hope and intent of your Board of Directors was to provide our racing members with a fast, reliable, inexpensive automobile for closely matched competition, much like the Spec Racer Ford which has enjoyed such popular success for a number of years. It's no secret that we faltered on the reliability part of that vision.

But, when Andy Porterfield, Director of Area 11, proprietor of Porterfield Enterprises, and famous SCCA racer was appointed Chairman of the SCCA Enterprises Board of Directors, the tide began to turn. Andy is an intense businessman and a dedicated SCCA member and he quickly saw that the whole structure of the FSCCA program had to change. It was clear to Andy that we would never solve our quality problems within the current structure so Andy stopped delivery of new cars until a new contract with a new organization having objectives consistent with the SCCA vision could be negotiated and implemented.

Enter Mr. David Bowes, Chief Executive Officer of Elan Motorsports Technologies, a member of the Panoz organization based in Braselton, Georgia U.S.A. which controls Van Diemen, the manufacturer of the FSCCA Formula and Sports Racers as well as the new Star Mazda racer which has recently been approved for SCCA competition. Working together, Andy and David quickly realized that the objectives of both the manufacturer and the marketer of the FSCCA racer had to be concentric and parallel or the business would never be successful for either party.

When Porterfield and Bowes reached a classic "meeting of minds" on the FSCCA business venture, the stage was set for the revitalization of the program but this was only the beginning of the hard work required to put the program on track. Working with the manufacturer of the transmission, improvements were made and an understanding was reached to warrant the gearbox as delivered while also allowing certain tweaks to be performed by owners of the cars. Similarly, other improvements to the clutch and engine were made, with the cooperation of the CRB to improve reliability. However, one critically important element which has, in the past been neglected by SCCA had to be worked out; a proper contract to implement and enforce the mutual understandings and vision of the parties.

Last Monday, on the 29th of November, 2004, Andy Porterfield, Jim Dickson (President of Enterprises) and I made a final review of the contract, including all drawings and schedules, which had been signed and transmitted to us by Elan. Finding the contract to be exactly as we had negotiated, Jim executed it for SCCA Enterprises and, with the assistance of Enterprises and Elan engineers, the first new car was disassembled and inspected in anticipation of beginning the revitalized FSCCA program.

See you at the track!

Gary Pitts