**2023 Sprite Midget Race Series End of Season Report & Overview**

**(revised August 15, 2023)**

1. **Overall** - It is hard to believe that we have been having this great fun on and off the track for 12 years as the Sprite Midget Race Series. Before SMRS we would be excited if we had 5 Spridgets racing for the weekend. This year we had up to 17 at several events. In the beginning there was a lot of time spent promoting through magazine article and internet social media. In my opinion we have grown to a self-sustaining point that is comfortable requiring less promotion. Our numbers have allowed us to have our own exclusive race at all 3 designated points race weekends. I have seen other groups try to have their own exclusive races with less success. Thanks to all of you we have been able to keep up the numbers that allows for these exclusive races.
2. **Grattan – P**arking was less of a problem than in the past. I will continue to encourage a Spridget Paddock, but am not going to over organize where everyone locates. This year’s Grattan Finale started off with a glorious comfortable Friday, with an oily unpredictable track. The overnight heavy rain gave us maximum adhesion for our 13 inch tires Saturday and Sunday. We broke out the Cape of Good Hope Friday night. Janet Carloss provided a really cool Cape of Good Hope keg end with Cape of Good Hope on it to add to the display! We recognized our friends that passed last year. Duane (Ottie) Ottman remembered for his positiveness and a big smile that will never be forgotten, particularly when racing his Bug Eye. Jeff Kelly (Don’s Father) had many remember his calmness and passion for Family and Sprites. Ron Soave reread the eulogy he presented at Jeff’s memorial. Our end of season awards were cool navy blue wool look baseball caps with tan bills including SMRS logo on front and SMRS overall finishing positon in the rear for the top 3 in each class. We had enough brats and food, but I realize that we have less people contributing. This lunch only works if we have everyone contributing. It only takes going to a grocery store and picking up beans, cole slaw or potato salad at your deli and precooked brats. Thanks to all our SMRS Chefs: Clancy, Jeff, Brad and Stan, along with table organizers Janet and Sheryl Carloss. Bruce Newcomer raced a Midget with us and his brother Greg has a Bug Eye and hoping to race more with us in the future. We have a new Paddock member created by the Burress Racing family. Dad put baby Jensen in Ron Soave’s Sprite and he started to cry. In the background we heard “I don’t want to sit in a Square Body” in a high voice. Dad moved him to a BugEye and he stopped crying (is anybody shocked by this result?). Lots of laughter throughout the weekend, but that was the funniest. The end of season results are attached. Rick Fisk graciously volunteered to take over the responsibility of compiling results and has done an outstanding job. Please let us know if any inaccuracies occurred.
3. **SMRS Account** – If you have any interest in being a sponsor of have some suggestions of someone that maybe interested, please let me know. Our treasury is minimal and probably can make it through next year if we keep award cost down and collect more funds from hats, posters and stickers.
4. **Contributors** - Jeff Carloss who has been providing our fantastic posters over the past 10 plus years, which helps contribute to our treasury so we can purchase awards, plates, condiments, propane and propane accessories. Cana and Colin Comer’s contribution towards our annual stickers is also greatly appreciated. Recently our awards have been baseball hats and we ordered additional hats for sale.
5. **Driver Incidents Spridgets and Group 2** – As the VSCDA Group 2 representative I can say this past year has maintained less incidents equal to or better than last year. Thanks to all of you that maintain the Vintage Spirit while on the track. I will provide any additional details from the Driver Committee as they become available
6. **Race Attendance** – Below is a highlight of the Sprite Midget race attendance numbers. These numbers are as accurate as I can make them. In cases where I was not in attendance there may have been more Spridgets than results reported due to mechanical issues or Driver School attendees that may not have raced after Driver School.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Race Track** | **2012** | **13** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** | **21** | **22** | **2023** |
| **Gingerman** | 14 | 14 | 12 | 16 | 9 | 12 | 18 | 17 | 0 | 21 | 16 | 17 |
| **Blackhawk** | 13 | 11 | 11 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 9 | 26 | 10 | 17 |
| **Grattan** | 17 | 14 | 20 | 23 | 15 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 12 | 28 | 15 | 17 |
| **Pittsburg GP** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 21 |  |
| **Waterford H** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 6 |
| **ELVF 60th** |  |  |  |  |  |  | 47 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Blacktober** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 15 | 9 |  |  |
| **SMRS Total** | 44 | 39 | 43 | 53 | 36 | 38 | 93 | 49 | 21 | 84 | 62 | 57 |

6.       **Season Overall Winners** (requires having a perfect score of 48 points from at least 2 of the 4 race weekends)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2013 | Cana Comer |
| 2014 | Greg Cory and Nathan Burress |
| 2015 | Colin Comer and Randy Byboth |
| 2016 | None qualified |
| 2017 | Ashley Burress, Nathan Buress and Jim Donato |
| 2018 | Ashley Burress and Ron Soave |
| 2019 | Doug Bruce and Jim Donato |
| 2020 | John Salisbury |
| 2021 | John Salisbury, Doug Bruce & Nathan Burress |
| 2022 | None |
| 2023 | David Lee |

7**.       Special Spirit and Driver Awards**:

***Gary Kropf Spirit Award*** (started in 2015 in honor of Gary’s attitude that we all admire). This Huge piston award was donated by Paul Fitzsimmons and polished up with name tags by Charlie Hall’s vision of this spirit award.

* 1. Previous Winners: 2015 Salisbury, 2016 Donato, Salisbury, 2017 Soave, Kelly, Mason, 2018 Kropf, Salisbury, Hall, 2019 Bruce, 2020 cancelled, 2021 Hall, 2022 Clancy Schmidt and Mark Maehling (who may still have award).
  2. Criteria: Promotes the Vintage Spirit, Assists others within the paddock, with repairs, parts, advice and encourages racer in making next session. Quick to organize group activities with race and banquet. Volunteers with other VSCDA activities and committees.
  3. This year’s winners were David Lee

***Jim Donato Most Respected Driver*** (started in 2016 in honor of Jim’s contribution and example of a great respected driver)

Criteria: A driver that exemplifies the meaning of a Vintage Sports Car Most Respected Driver includes:

**Predictable** (Stays on racing line and points racers by when being passed or when passing. Makes sure that over taking driver knows they are about to be passed and allows room and good judgement),

**Confident & Observant** (Uses mirrors and is aware of others racing nearby)

**Respectful** (Confirms that their race car is mechanically sound and will not cause others to be injured from improper maintenance. Can sit down with other competitors and enjoy their company after any session)

**Objective** (open to other’s comments) Drives Defensively (adjusts for conditions safely regardless of other driver’s interaction).

**Previous Winners:** 2016 Namesake Jim Donato, 2017 Mal Fay, 2018 Ashley Burress, 2019 Buzz Merchlewitz, 2020 John Salisbury, 2022 Charlie Hall & Nathan Burress.

This year’s winners is David Lee

***SMRS Perseverance:***

All of us as Sprite / Midget Racers recognize that our cars are not for the weak of heart and require lots of time to keep our temperamental little friends running so we can make the next race session. We know of many examples over the years where this dedication by many has allowed what we all know as comradery and is probably greater in SMRS than any other race groups I can think of. There were many examples of providing parts and time in the late hours of the day this past weekend. It is great to see someone who has come from outside our group doing the same thing. David Lee is that person. I want to thank him for his generosity and knowledge to everyone he helped this weekend.

8.       **Spridget Contributors to VSCDA** - We appreciate our group’s unselfish contribution to VSCDA and the Sprite Midget Race Series making us one of the best groups within VSCDA for volunteering their time and making this club continue to thrive for our enjoyment, which is listed below (I was at Gingerman and Grattan and apologize if I overlooked any names. Please let me know who those omissions were):

a.       Tom Wilcox Blackhawk Event Chairmen.

b.      Carl Goodwin, Brad & Jeff Carloss for their contributions to Scrutineering / Tech Barn

c.       Stacey Donato for her overall running of VSCDA registration and all that she does along with her family. Registration assistance from Sheryl Carloss & Janet Carloss.

d.      Charlie Hall, Gary Kropf, Roger Heil & Jim Donato for Drivers Committee. Gary Kropf initiated the Driver’s Committee Summary of actions, which is greatly appreciated and time consuming. I think measuring something as important as safety is the key to reducing incidents and allowing us to improve.

e.  Doug Bruce for Homologations and Corner / Paddock Worker Sprite Door Annual Award selected for the best Grattan worker selected by their peers.

f. Jim Donato as VSCDA Vice President

j. Bob Danielson continuing to support the Donato Most Respected Driver Award that he crafted and provide updated driver plaque.

h. Charlie Hall continuing support of the Kropf Piston Spirit Award that he initiated and continues to provide updated plaques for.

i. Stan Mason as VSCDA Group 2 Representative and SMRS lead.

I apologize for anyone I have overlooked from this great group. Please let me know other that may have helped.

**9. End Of Season Awards** -Every driver that met the 2 race weekend or more requirements received awards if they attended Grattan finale. Results are attached to this email. We traditionally distribute points by having 3 sessions that go towards end of season awards. We try to balance out points for everyday of weekend of a 3 day race weekend, so anyone with mechanical problems has an opportunity to recover.

**10**. **Classifications** - I would like to revise our SMRS classifications for the 2024 season and I have several thoughts of how we can improve. If you have some thoughts of how we can group Spridgets for fair competition I would like to hear from you. Our criteria up to this time has been to follow VSCDA requirements, which include conformance to SCCA 1972 GCR/PCS guidelines and exceptions as spelled out by VSCDA. Even under these conditions there is varying shades of gray that we need to clarify for fair classifications.

**11. SMRS Past / Future** - Like all organizations including SMRS we will only be successful if we have new people stepping up to fill positions. I have been at the helm for the past 12 years and will step down on or before 2026. It would be nice to have someone that is retired or will retire in the future to pick up this baton before my departure. Maybe even mirror me and assist before 2026. I have started a job description / overview of what I currently do. I know there are others out there that can take SMRS to a higher level, learning from our past and improving the future. If you have an interest now or in the future please let me know.

**12. VSCDA Upcoming 2023 events**:

1. Elkhart Lake Vintage Festival Road America September 15-17, much more than racing with reenactment of the original street course and car shows in a fabulous lake tourist area.
2. New! Ozark International Raceway October 13-15 This track is praised by the racers that attended last year and allows for late season fun further South.

Thanks for a Great 12th Season and Enjoy a Spridgetly Life of Relative Speed! Now back to working on our favorite ride!

Stan Mason