



INTRODUCTION

You've watched car racing on television - Michael Schumacher in his Ferrari going flat out through Eau Rouge, or some "good old boy" in a Pontiac roaring around Darlington in a 500 mile left turn.

Like most people watching in car camera shots, you've probably thought, "I can do that....". But, short of a surprise phone call from Sir Frank Williams inviting you to drive his new Formula 1 Williams/BMW (**very unlikely!**), you think that you'll probably never have a chance to see what it is really like to drive a race car.

Well, don't be too sure! There is an affordable way to experience the thrill of driving a race car in a safe environment - **Vintage Racing**.

In Canada, the controlling body for Vintage Racing is VARAC - the Vintage Automobile Racing Association of Canada. Read on to find out more about Vintage Racing and how VARAC can help you live your dream.

WHY VINTAGE RACING?

In most forms of car racing, the cars are expendable - they are generally purpose built cars or modified production cars. Replacement parts are easily available - often no more than a quick phone call away - so it's quite easy to run a modern race car as any damage can be easily fixed.

This expendability of modern cars usually results in racing where contact between cars is common - after all, if you "bend it", you can easily fix it.

You see this any weekend on television -NASCAR cars "rubbing" as they go around corners or Formula 3000 cars driven aggressively by young men who are all trying hard to win a seat in a Formula 1 car.

This approach to racing is exactly the opposite of Vintage Racing. The Spirit of Vintage Racing can be expressed as a wish to preserve, restore and race historically significant cars in a form as close to the original specification as possible.

The focus in Vintage Racing is on the cars - not the drivers. And since the cars are rare, and getting replacement parts can be difficult, Vintage Racing is strictly "**NO CONTACT**".

This makes Vintage Racing more "controlled" - there's no aggressive driving, no cutting people off and absolutely no contact. When in tight situations, cars will not pass until "pointed past" by the driver of the car being overtaken.

Additionally, since cars of varying engine power race together on a Vintage Grid, it really is not possible to "win" a vintage race - we all simply drive our cars to the best of our ability, have fun and don't even think of who came in first!

We feel that Vintage Racing should be enjoyable and rewarding to both the participant and spectator with a minimum emphasis on trophies and awards.

UNDERSTANDING OUR CLASSES

All vintage race cars fall into five different groups, depending on the car's age, and into different classes within each group, depending upon the car's design. These groups and classes are:

1. PRE-WAR GROUP

This class includes Pre-War Single-seat and Sports cars plus post-war T-Series MGs. All these cars race as a single class

2. VINTAGE CAR GROUP

These are usually cars that were produced before the end of 1961. They include the following:

a. Vintage Open Wheel Class

A class that incorporates cars built to many different formulas including the Formula Junior specification. It's common to see cars such as Cooper, Lotus, Elva, Gemini, and Lola in this class as well as Sadler and Stebro, two rare Canadian built cars.

b. Vintage Production Sports Car Class

These are the most common vintage racing cars and usually the most affordable to get on the track. This class consists of cars like Austin Healey Sprites or 3000, Lotus Seven, Triumph TR3/4, MGA, Porsche 356 and other mass-produced "street" cars.

c. Vintage Sports Racer Class

The "exotics" of the cars with fenders, these were usually built as limited production racing cars such as Elvas, Lotus, Lola MkI, Porsche RS-60, Devin. They are rarer than vintage production cars and usually faster. Others in this group may be one-off road racing "specials" of the period with documented histories.

3. CLASSIC SEDAN GROUP

Following the FIA definition of a sedan, i.e. a roof and room for four, this is a very exciting and affordable VARAC class for cars built up to December 31, 1965

More Historic than Vintage, this class is dominated by one car - the Mini Cooper S both by numbers and performance although other cars like Volvos and Lotus Cortinas are popular. All cars in this Group race together as a class

4. HISTORIC CAR GROUP

Historic cars fill the timeslot after Vintage and up to the end of 1972. They include the following:

a. Historic Open Wheel Class

This class is dominated by Formula Fords but also consists of Formula B/III/Vee and single seat cars built to a recognized specification.

b. Historic Production Sports Car Class

Similar in definition to Vintage Production cars except the cut off date for this class is the end of 1972. Class cars could be a Sprite/Midget, MGB, Lotus Elan or a Shelby GT350, or a Trans-Am racing car.

c. Historic Sports Race Class

These once again are purpose-built racing cars, but dated past the Vintage cut-off. This class includes everything from homebuilts of the period to manufactured marques like a Lotus 23 or Elva 7 right-up to Can-Am cars.

5. GROUP 70+

Group 70+ includes production based and purpose built race cars that were designed to race in series such as IMSA, TransAm, SCCA and CASC GT classes. This Group currently includes the 1973 to 1987 racing period.

Showcasing an exciting mix of style and speed, the Group 70+ grids feature everything from ground pounding Corvettes and Mustangs to 2.0L Sports Racers and Porsche 911s.

CHOOSING YOUR CAR

So how do you decide which car is right for you?

First, you'll probably have some preferences for cars you've owned or admired, but it is important to remember that race cars are not built for their comfort, so they do tend to be quite small.

So ensure that you fit comfortably into your car, and remember that it will have a roll cage or hoop (depending on the class) and that this might restrict your movements, so make sure you get one of the right size.

Next, consider the power and be careful not to get too powerful a car. While your normal road car may have 300 h.p., it probably weighs 3,000 lbs and has traction control, anti-lock braking etc.

Remember that a race car will usually be very light - often under 1,000 lbs., and won't have any driver aids, so make sure that you choose an appropriate power level - you can have just as much, if not more, fun in a 100 h.p. light car as in a 300 h.p. heavy car!

So how to choose - the VERY FIRST thing you should do if you are interested in Vintage Racing is to check the VARAC classifieds - the cars there will usually be acceptable for racing with VARAC. Also, contact the Eligibility Secretary for the class of car you are interested in - see the 'links' section for contact info.

The Eligibility Secretaries will be pleased to help you choose a car, and more importantly, will be able to advise you whether a car you are considering will meet our Vintage Acceptability criteria.



VINTAGE OPEN WHEEL - LOTUS 18



VINTAGE PRODUCTION SPORTS CAR - A-H SPRITE



VINTAGE SPORTS RACER - VAY SPECIAL



CLASSIC SEDAN - AUSTIN/MORRIS MINI

VINTAGE ACCEPTABILITY

What does this mean? Simply it is important that the cars race in as close to their original specifications as possible.

Since these cars are often over 40 years old, many will have had 40 years of “tinkering”, so that the car, its engine and systems may now be very different to those originally installed. This is particularly the case for cars racing with the SCCA in the U.S. - often they are brought up to modern standards and will not meet our vintage acceptance standards.

So before you prepare your own car, or head off to buy a car for Vintage Racing, it is VITAL to make sure that we'll accept it by calling the relevant Eligibility Secretary and discussing it with him.

In particular, find out whether a Log Book comes with the car (since race cars are not registered by the Province, the car's log book is the main ownership document), and if so, which racing body issued the Log Book as this will indicate its acceptability for vintage racing.

Finally, there have been many improvements in motor racing safety equipment since these cars were built and you are encouraged to incorporate and take advantage of these improvements - where they can be incorporated WITHOUT diminishing the vintage character of the car. Again, your eligibility Secretary will tell you what safety items MUST be in your car for it to be accepted - another reason to call them!

PREPARING YOUR CAR

Before you will be allowed on to the Track, you must show the organisers that your car is fit to race and complies with the relevant VARAC Technical Standards. (see the VARAC web site at www.varac.ca and follow the links for Technical).

After you have prepared your car to these standards, you will need to have your car pass its Annual Technical Inspection (the “Annual Tech”). You can have this done on your first event each season - the Inspector will check your car and your own personal equipment to ensure that everything meets current VARAC technical and safety standards.

These “Annual Techs” are done by Certified Inspectors from within VARAC who will usually be available at most events. Please remember that they are volunteers - they don't get paid for this and do it for the love of the game. So don't be too demanding of them - they'll probably be racing just as you will be, so their time may be limited.

Also, remember that their only concern is to keep YOU safe - if they find a problem with your car, then you should listen carefully to what they say and correct the problem. Don't get involved in an argument with them - you won't win!

After your car has passed its Annual Tech, the Inspector will put an “Annual Tech” sticker in your car's log book - that will last for the year unless the car is damaged, in which case the Scrutineers will endorse the logbook with details of the damage and you will then need to have another Technical Inspection before you are allowed to race the car again.

PREPARING YOURSELF

One of the items that contributes to safety in Vintage racing is that all drivers must hold a valid competition license issued by the local FIA body (the International Governing Body of Motorsports). In Ontario, this is C.A.S.C.-O.R., and outside Ontario it is A.S.N.

In order to obtain a license, you must pass a medical and then take, and pass, an approved Race Driving Course. Such courses are held in the early part of the racing year and are run by the Motorsports Club of Ottawa and HRC Horizon Racing Club



HISTORIC OPEN WHEEL - LOTUS 61



HISTORIC PRODUCTION SPORTS CAR - MG MIDGET



HISTORIC SPORTS RACER - ELVA MK.7



GROUP 70 - BMW M1 PROCAR

These courses are usually held at Shannonville and are attended by a wide variety of drivers who intend to go into all types of racing.

Since Vintage Racing has a strict "NO CONTACT" policy, you will find it useful to let the Race Director know which course you will be attending. He will then try to arrange for Vintage Driving Instructor for you so that you can be given your basic training with Vintage Racing standards in mind.

Once you have your "Pass Certificate", you should download the Medical Form (that your Doctor will use to examine you) and a License Application form from the CASC website (see above). Send both forms back to CASC, with your Pass Certificate and License Fee and they will send you a "Novice" License and Log Card.

This Novice License allows you to race under the observation of the Chief Steward, and you should advise him when you turn up for your first three events that you will require observation.

After each event, you should meet with the Stewards to have your Log Card signed off - when you have done three events, and have been signed off each time by the event Stewards, you may apply to CASC for a Regional License that will not require you to be observed in the future.

In order to show other drivers that you are a Novice License holder, you must carry a triangular sign on the rear of your car - details of the size of this for your class of car are available from CASC.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

To race, you will need to be properly outfitted with personal safety equipment and you must always wear this when on track - random inspections are held and fines are levied if you are not properly dressed.

You will require:

- a three layer Nomex driving suit, or
- a 2 layer Nomex Suit and full Nomex underwear.
- Nomex socks
- Approved driving shoes/boots - again, Nomex lined is preferable. Remember that pedal boxes in race cars are set up for "heel and toe" gear changing so there's not a lot of room - you can't wear regular boots as they will be too wide.
- Nomex Gloves
- Nomex Balaclava
- An SA2000 or SA2005 full face helmet - the Snell sticker must be visible inside the helmet. Note that a Motorcycle Helmet will be the M2000 Snell standard and is not acceptable as the interior lining is not fireproof. You MUST have the SA Snell standard.

GETTING YOUR CAR TO THE TRACK

After you've decided on your car, remember that usually it would not be street legal, so you'll have to tow it to the track on a trailer. Obviously, this will mean that you'll also need a tow car - how big depends on your trailer.

Trailers used by VARAC members usually fall into three classes - front wheel "dollies", open trailers or enclosed trailers. Each type has its pros and cons:

"Dollies" are the cheapest approach as they take only part of the weight of the car and so are easy to tow. However, you do risk damage from stone chips etc. and may have difficulty in getting your race car onto it if it is damaged at track.

Open trailers are next cheapest but will require a heavier towing vehicle as they support all of the weight of the race car. They can be used to load up

additional equipment (spare tyres, tools etc.) but you will need to secure everything from the elements and from theft en route to the circuit.

Closed trailers offer the best protection from the weather, they are secure and can often be used as temporary sleeping quarters at track. However, they are the most expensive, are heavier and therefore require a larger tow vehicle.

CHOOSING YOUR FIRST EVENT

By this time, you should be pretty well prepared - your car will meet VARAC eligibility standards, will have the necessary safety equipment and you will have a means to get it to the track. You will be properly dressed and clutching your brand new license in your hot little hand.

So where to go racing? The VARAC website shows the Vintage events in Canada and Ontario, and you'll also notice members posting on the VARAC Discussion Group asking who is going to which event.

Unless you have some history of racing, we'd suggest that your first event should be at Mosport so that you will meet the maximum number of VARAC racers. They are a tremendous resource - they will be sharing the track with you and will all, without exception, be prepared to show you around the track, describe the racing line and "lead" you around with their cars.

They will also make sure you actually DO get on track - it can be very confusing at first with warm up, practice, qualifying and racing sessions - sometimes, you don't know where, and when, you are supposed to be ready. If you introduce yourself to other VARAC members, they will make sure you get out to your sessions on time.

PRE REGISTRATION

To race at any particular event, you'll need to Pre-Register with the organising club - remember that CASC is the "sanctioning" body - usually member clubs of CASC-OR actually organise the races.

You'll find a handy download on the CASC website that will allow you to easily Pre register using a single form for multiple events - fill in all the car's and your details once, put a check mark in the boxes to indicate those events you think you'll attend and fax the form back to CASC. They will then send it to each of the organising clubs for the races you will be entering - it will save a lot of time to pre-register this way.

Note that if you've pre-registered for an event and find that before you go to the track that your car is not ready, don't worry - you won't be charged.

REGISTRATION AT THE TRACK

If you've had your Annual Tech done, and have the sticker in your logbook, then you should go to Registration to formally sign up for that event. You will not be allowed to Register without your own Competition License and your Car's Logbook, which must have the current Annual Tech. Sticker in it.

With these in hand, simply give the Organisers a cheque, sign the Track Insurance waiver and the copy of the Pre-registration form that you filled in earlier (CASC will send it to the Organisers so you won't have to fill in the form again) and they will give you a wristband and a sticker for the car.

Don't lose this sticker - it must be visible to the track marshal or you won't be allowed to get on the track! You should put it in a very conspicuous place - on the roll bar if an open cockpit car, or on the top corner of the wind-screen if your car has a "lid".

IN THE PADDOCK

After you've signed up at Registration and have your wrist band, you'll be allowed into the Circuit - drive to the Paddock and set up for the weekend.

With the exception of the VARAC Vintage Festival, which is an “all vintage” event, all other events at Mosport will have modern car grids as well as the Vintage Grid. Drive around until you find the Vintage cars - we tend to cluster in groups - and set up with us. You'll then have lots of support from the VARAC members, as well as assistance with mechanical problems if they occur.

THE EVENT STRUCTURE

The typical event has one or two un-timed Practice sessions, a timed qualifying session (to establish grid position) and then 2 or 3 races, over a 2 day period. You'll get details of the times of all of this in your Registration Package - be aware it's rare to stick to the timetable. However, if you are with other VARAC members in the Paddock, they'll keep you advised as to when to be ready to go out.

Usually there will be a compulsory Drivers Meeting on Saturday Lunchtime - this will be after the practice sessions and before qualifying and racing. The Chief Steward will be at the Drivers Meeting- you should approach him after the meeting, introduce yourself and advise him that you hold a Novice License and will need observing.

You should then remember to make your way after the event to the Steward's Office (it's the right hand end of the low building the opposite side of the straight at Mosport) to have him sign your License.

MOCK GRID

The “Mock Grid” is the waiting area for access to the track - at Mosport it is behind the tower (although some Organisers use the other end of the pits, so watch for and follow the track marshal's signals)

...and finally...

When you see the green flag, take a big breath and enjoy yourself - you're actually doing something that most people only dream about. We'll be waiting for you.....

If you are going out for practice or qualifying, then you'll be directed back through the pits and down the exit chute to reach the track after Corner 1 - watch your speed in the pits and be very careful about the Blend Line - don't cross it as cars will be approaching corner 2 very quickly from behind and your left.

If you are going out for a race, you'll be started with a rolling start. You'll be signalled out directly on to the track at Corner 10 and positioned in one of two lines of cars by a track marshal - stay in your line as you lap the track and approach the Start area.

USEFUL LINKS

VARAC

Website - <http://www.varac.ca/>

Eligibility Reps - <http://www.varac.ca/contacts.html>

Member Cars for Sale - <http://www.varac.ca/classified.html>

Licensing Bodies

C.A.S.C. - Ontario Region (<http://www.casc.on.ca/>)

A.S.N. - (<http://www.asncanada.com/>)

Driver Training

Motorsports Club of Ottawa - (<http://www.mco.org>)

Horizon Racing Club - (<http://www.tractechracing.com/hrc/>).

Equipment:

Leaf Racewear - <http://www.leafracewear.com/>

CSC Racing Products - <http://www.csc racing.com/>

