

INSTRUCTOR'S CORNER

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A CONVERSATION WITH THE CHIEF INSTRUCTOR TEAM

After all the fun and excitement of 2016, we thought it might be a good idea to have a conversation with the CIs about the year.

It turned into a discussion about expectations. The expectations that Instructors have of the Driving Events Committee AND the Chief Instructor Team at Tarheel Chapter BMW CCA, and the expectations that the DEC and the CIs have of our Instructor Group. Let's start with what Instructors expect.

- We Instructors expect the DEC to make the kind of policy and financial decisions that makes it possible for the Tarheel Chapter to continue to support HPDS's in particular, but also to support Street Survival, and other Driving events. Many of our Instructors participate in these other events as well as HPDS.
- We expect our DEC and CIs to run HPDS's which have a strong focus on Safety, Driving Education, and Enjoyment.
- We expect our DEC to manage the relations with VIR, to administer the process of registration for the events, including placing students into run groups which are the likely place for them to be. The CIs and the registrar review the student sign ups and make pairings with Instructors, based on experience, registration details and past history.
- We expect on-site registration to smooth the initial interface with students and Instructors.
- We expect the Custodian to have everything at the track that needs to be there.
- Most of all perhaps, we expect the Chief Instructor Team to respond to our concerns, and to make every effort to resolve issues quickly and fairly.
- All of the above, and more, involve many people spending many hours, all for the love of what we do.

Expectations are typically a two way street, so what expectations does the DEC/CI team have of us? Here are some.

Registration:

- The DEC team expects your msr information is kept up to date. If you have changed your email, please change it on msr. Without accurate information, communications will suffer.
- If you register for an event, you should receive a follow up from msr pretty quickly. If you don't get this, something has happened, and you may not be registered.
- **REGISTER AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS.** This is in caps for a reason. Without early Instructor registration, the registrar and the CIs cannot accept students into an event. The longer we wait to register, the more difficult it becomes to manage the event properly. The CIs often have to send out emails just prior to the event, asking for Instructors, and we have to accept Guest Instructors in place of regulars.
- Once we have registered, the DEC counts on us being there. Last minute cancellations create really big problems, especially if they are close to the event date. If you really must cancel, please do it as soon as it becomes necessary, and if it is later than Wednesday evening before the weekend, do it by text to the CIs.
- If you have registered, the DEC expects you to attend and instruct even if you don't have a car to drive on track, and to continue to instruct if your car has issues at the event. In 2015, we had Guest Instructors from Boston Chapter whose vehicles were not track worthy, who drove all the way to VIR to Instruct without a track car.
- All of this applies to all events, but typically, the summer HPDS event is the most difficult to manage, and cancellations are very problematic.

Give your student what they paid for.

Remember that many students may get open track or solo time with other groups, but come to us because they value high quality instruction. Don't feel obligated to sign off A's and B's too quickly. Consider staying in the car if you can help them improve their skills every session.

- Here are some "guidelines" for staying in the car with your students:
- **Exercise sessions:** Please be in the car.
- **In Dry Conditions:**
 - D Group-All sessions, both days
 - C Group- C sign-offs are relatively rare. But if your student is doing exceptionally well, you can work with the CIs to let them run some laps solo. If so, please wait out at the grid, so if your student starts to feel ragged, she/he can pit in and pick you up.
 - B Group- Use your best judgment, but First session on Saturday, and First session on Sunday at a minimum. Make yourself available at all times
 - A Group-Use your best judgment, but First session on Saturday, and First session on Sunday at a minimum. Make yourself available at all times.
 - Before any sign offs, be certain the student understands and is aware of flags and protocol, just being fast does not mean they can be safely signed off.
- **In Wet Conditions:**
 - If the student is signed off, and the track becomes wet, get back in the car. If the student proves they can handle wet conditions, they can continue to drive as signed off in subsequent wet sessions. When conditions are wet, please emphasize deliberate and smooth inputs.

Representing the club:

- Instructors are the face of the club to most students. Be calm and polite, even if you are stressed. Don't talk about students with other students, or when other students are around. Put students first, even if you will miss a track session. Remember who evaluates you: Your student, your CIs, other instructors, other students, and the track staff.

Evaluations:

- On Sunday after lunch, please have an informal discussion with your students about their progress. Defer the evaluation until you get home, and have time to do it properly. Be sure that your online evaluation mirrors your discussion at the track.
- Use the tools of the SLIP evaluation system to help you objectively score student skills. Show them the skill measures so they understand the origin of the scores and the performance goals. Be positive about their progress and honest about their scores.
- **Score at the level at which they are consistent**, not the one they only achieved occasionally. Dangle that carrot as their improvement goal. Feel-good generic evaluations are of no value to the student for goals and development, or the next instructor in terms of continuity. Think in positive terms of what you'd like to know from the last person who taught them

Much of this will sound familiar. I am sure that we understand these issues. But just as we expect the DEC/CI team to meet our expectations whenever possible, the DEC team should be able to count on us as well.

Your comments are always welcome. Please send them to:

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