

# INSTRUCTOR'S CORNER

Issue #4-August 6, 2014

## Student Evaluations

### Example #1

A student signs up with us for the Spring 2014 school. This is the first HPDS ever for this student. He is assigned to D group. His instructor scores him with 4s, 5s, and 6s and recommends C group for next school.

The same student returns in June, now in C group. His instructor scores him with an overall of 11, with lots of 9s, 10s, and 11s. His instructor now recommends the student be moved to B group for the next school. Apparently, somehow between April and June, without attending any driving events, this student went from 5s to 11s.

So, is it credible to you that a student is so gifted that he or she would move up so quickly, and if so, what gifts do they have? Or, is it possible that we as instructors are falling into the trap of "fast car=skilled student."

### Example #2

A novice student is assigned to D group. They had one other school 6 years ago. The scores were 2s (2) 3s (2) 4s (5) 5s (6). The instructor recommended the student be moved up to C group in the next school as they were the "2<sup>nd</sup> fastest car in D group." Isn't it more reasonable to expect high skill scores (all 5s and 6s) before advancement is recommended?

### Information from the June event at VIR Full

A quick review of the students whose instructor recommended promotion to the next higher group:

**Almost every student was driving a "fast car", usually a late model m3 or m5.**

In the evaluations, the instructors often refer to the speed of the student, less often to high skill levels.

As Instructors, our role is to teach and then coach students to become more skilled drivers. The skills we look for and the level of performance we anticipate for each run group are all outlined in a document on our website. It can be found at:

<http://www.tarheelbmwcca.org/skill%20sets%20by%20run%20group%20final%20draft%202014.pdf>

We do a disservice to a student when we advance them too quickly. They rely on our input and opinion, and when we tell them they are ready to move to the next group, or tell them that they are performing at a very high level in a particular skill, they have every reason to trust our judgment.

In addition to skills, seat time should be a component of the evaluation before a student is recommended as ready to move up. We know from experience that there are students out there who just “get it” very quickly, and whose apparent skills really do meet some standards for promotion. But if they have not had a reasonable amount of seat time, their reaction to an on-track event may not be based on experience, and may be the wrong reaction. Talking about counter steering and having to do it without thinking are two very different things.

### **Recommendation from the Chief Instructors:**

"We have a lot to offer every student, including those with fast, capable cars. If we focus our instructing attention on ALL aspects of track driving -- safety, technique, planning for the unexpected, vehicle dynamics, smoothness and accuracy -- our students will build way more capability and experience than just speed. They will be better track drivers for it."

### **Technique Question**

I think we all agree that for an advanced student, there are many options for the “line” at each part of the track. However, for a beginner, that may be unsettling. So, here is the question:

**Are you in favor of, or opposed to having an established “ideal line” for D students, one we would all try to use as a basis for instruction?**

This would be the baseline from which all our students develop their skills. It should be the most efficient, safe line. Once a student can demonstrate proficiency at this line, Instructors will begin to offer alternatives.

We do value your input and comments. Please send them to

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