

MY EXPERIENCE BECOMING AN MX-5 SPORTING MEMBER

BY Rob Jones

I went along to an MSCASA Super Sprint meeting just over a year ago. After watching the events of the day and talking to other sporting members, I decided I would like to have a go even though I had never participated in anything like this before.

First thing to do was contact Sue Stephenson, the Sporting secretary for Marque Sports Car Association South Australia [MSCASA]. Easy enough; there is a link from the MX-5 website to MSCASA with all contact and email available. Upon contacting Sue the whole process was quite easy. I printed a membership application form off and filled it in. I then posted this off with \$20 for my membership fee and \$95 to cover the cost of my CAMS licence. After Sue had received my application I was granted a temporary license and was able to enter the next super sprint. I was issued with a number for my car and the only requirements were an appropriate fire extinguisher, a blue triangle (which are available at the track for \$2.00) to mark where the battery is located, and an approved helmet. I was ready to run.

When I arrived at the track I was feeling a bit apprehensive but the other members were very helpful and showed me to ropes. First I had my car checked and then I went down to the officials office where I picked up my temporary license and scrutineers report. From there I placed the scrutineers form under my wiper and proceeded to scrutineers' area and waited my turn. Once my car checked out the next thing was to do 4 practice laps because I was a first timer we were taken aside and explained the rules of sprinting and the meaning of the flags. I took my car to the form up area where they let us first timers out onto the track last. After very one else had practised we were let on the track about 30sec apart and proceeded around, getting familiar with the track as I went. At first I was a bit slow warming up tyres, brakes etc. but then I got faster and finally after doing 4 laps my fastest time was taken which gave me a qualifying time of 1 minute.42 seconds.

After practice we all assembled for drivers briefing and I listened intently to all that was said. It was explained that we would grid up in groups of 10 at a time with the fastest group going first and so on. All first timers would hold their hand up at the start so they can be started separately. I waited my turn and drove down to the form up area and waited for my number to be called out. I then proceeded onto the track entry and wait till the last group has cleared the track, once the all clear is given we are allowed to proceed onto the track to commence warm up. The grid marshals will then indicate where you are to be positioned on the grid and they then start you off in pairs.

Because this was my first time on the track I raised my right hand out the window to show them this. They let the car next to me go and then it was my turn. The starter pointed to me and dropped the flag I was racing; I felt the rush of excitement and nerves all rolled into one. Once I was around the first turn I was amazed at how nimble and sure footed the car was. After each lap I felt more confident with myself and the performance of the car. It was an amazing experience and something I have wanted to do for many years and I am so pleased I finally did it.