

The Portable Driver's Advisor

What every driver should know about SCCA rules and process.

By John Nesbitt, May 2008
Third Edition May 2018

Introduction.....	3
Acknowledgment	3
1. The GCR and Event Supplemental Regulations.....	4
Driver Rights and Responsibilities	5
Chief Steward or Race Director	5
Entrants	5
Participant Conduct.....	6
2. Grid, Start, and Race Rules and Procedures	7
Schedules	7
Grid	7
Start	8
Flags	8
Yellow Flags	8
Blue Flag.....	9
White Flag.....	10
Stopping and Restarting the Race	10
Impound	11
Inspection.....	11
Sound Control	11
Medical Issues.....	12
Insurance	12
Avoid Physical Contact.....	13
Racing Room	13
Shared Responsibility	13
Types of Stewards.....	14
Chief Steward’s Action (CSA)	14
Request for Action (RFA).....	15
CSA or RFA?.....	15
5. Protests and Appeals	16
Alternatives to a Protest	16
Who May Protest?.....	16
Filing a Protest	16
The Protest Hearing	17
Some Tactical Advice.....	18
Appeals	19
6. Mechanical Protests	21
Protest Form.....	21
Protest Process	22
Appendix: GCR References of Interest to Drivers and/or Entrants.....	24

Introduction

This document is a “quick reference guide” to help you navigate the thicket of rules and process in SCCA Club Racing. It provides an outline of your rights and obligations under the General Competition Rules (GCR) and the event Supplemental Regulations, and the processes that most affect you as a driver.

This is not a comprehensive explanation of all the rules in the GCR. For that, the guide points to the relevant GCR sections. References are to the 2018 GCR.

The GCR is a living document. Read each month’s Fastrack to keep abreast of changes. Note that the current electronic edition, posted on the SCCA website, is the official version. It supersedes all earlier publications (GCR, Fastrack, etc.)

I welcome your comments or suggestions for the next edition. Please contact me at John@JohnNesbitt.com.

Acknowledgment

I wish to thank my fellow stewards Dennis Dean, Dave Gomberg, and Clyde Kiser for their feedback on the first edition of this guide and Paul Gauzens on the second edition. Any errors or omissions in this document are mine alone.

1. The GCR and Event Supplemental Regulations

Take a closer look at the next entry form that you sign. The signature block will always contain language like, “I agree to abide by the current General Competition Rules of the SCCA and the Supplemental Regulations for this event. I declare the car which I entered complies with all the requirements as specified in the GCR for the Class, Category, and Race in which it is entered.”

The GCR is self-contained. It does not refer to any other document. By applying for a license, you agree to abide by the GCR (all 900+ pages) [4.2].

The GCR governs all of SCCA Club Racing [1.2]. Each event’s Supplemental Regulations (or supps) establish the “specific conditions for an event” [App. B 1.4.1], and may modify the GCR for local conditions. The Division Executive Steward approves all supps.

The supps cannot obviate the GCR (e.g., they cannot remove the right to protest and appeal). They can extend the GCR (e.g. establish a blend line at Pit Out and provide penalties for crossing it). They may modify certain provisions of the GCR (such as a lower sound limit). The supps will also lay out track-specific rules (such as quiet hours, or restrictions on support vehicles).

The supps also establish eligibility for competition licenses and car classes. They can add Optional Regional Classes (provided they point to the appropriate ruleset) or restrict GCR classes.

Together, the GCR and supps provide the rules for an event.

The GCR is the same at every event. However, supps may vary a great deal from one event to the next. It is a very good idea to read the supps for every event that you enter. There may be a provision that affects you directly. Even if you read them last year, read them again. Something may have changed.

Driver Rights and Responsibilities

Drivers and entrants are responsible for the conduct of their crew [2.2.2], for any minors for whom they sign a waiver [2.2.3], for their car [8.3.3], and for their personal safety equipment [9.3.20].

You have a right to fair, impartial treatment and due process according to the GCR. You should expect polite and professional behavior at all times. Other participants should expect the same from you.

If you have a problem with an official, speak to the Chief Steward. He or she supervises all event officials except the Stewards of the Meeting (SOM). If you are not satisfied with the Chief Steward's response, or if your issue is with the Chief Steward, speak to the Chairman of the SOM, who may be able to intercede. If the Chairman cannot help you, contact the Division Executive Steward after the event.

Chief Steward or Race Director

The SCCA appoints Race Directors for Majors and Super Tour events, in addition to the event Chief Steward. The Race Director has a few additional powers. However, for purposes of this guide, the two titles are equivalent and we shall refer only to the Chief Steward.

Entrants

Typically, the driver is also the entrant (there is not a separate entrant listed on the entry form). However, it is worth listing a member of your crew as your entrant. There is no extra cost for doing this, and it provides some utility.

For example, there may be circumstances in which the driver is unavailable or tied up, but still wants to file a protest. You have a limited time in which to do this. Your entrant has the same protest rights as you, and can file on your behalf.

Participant Conduct

Section 2.1 of the GCR specifies a set of behavior rules for all participants. Some of these are very general, and can cover many different acts:

- Bribery [2.1.1]
- Any action intended to enter an ineligible car or person [2.1.2]
- Fraud or any act prejudicial to SCCA or car racing [2.1.3]
- Reckless or dangerous driving [2.1.4]
- Failure to obey a direction or order of an official [2.1.5]
- Refusing to cooperate with, or obstructing, the Chief Steward, the Stewards of the Meeting (SOM), any court, or the Court of Appeals [2.1.6]
- Unsportsmanlike conduct [2.1.7]
- Physical violence toward any participant or spectator [2.1.8]
- Firearms [2.1.9]

The Chief Steward typically invokes these rules, but they can be the basis of a protest.

2. Grid, Start, and Race Rules and Procedures

Schedules

During your racing career, you will encounter two philosophies on race schedules. It is important to understand the implications of each.

The first is a time-specific schedule, which sets a time for each session. The second is a non-time-specific schedule. This specifies only the start time of the first session of the day and the length of each session.

Under a time-specific schedule, while sessions may run long, causing succeeding sessions to start late, sessions should not start early without the approval of the SOM [3.4]. As a practical matter, this means that sessions do not start early.

A non-time-specific schedule publishes only the start time of the first session. The stewards may accelerate the schedule in order to have a time cushion for contingencies. With this kind of schedule, the driver and crew must know what session is on track and when they should be prepared to go to the grid.

Grid

Grid will give you 5-minute and 1-minute warnings. Some regions give a 3-minute warning, as well. While these warnings are usually accurate, remember that there may be other things happening around the track that might cause a delay after the warning period has started.

If you are not at the grid on time for your session, the clock will keep ticking without you.

At the 1-minute warning, your crew must clear the grid. Cars not in position at the 1-minute warning forfeit their position, and start from the back [6.4.2.F]. You may push start your car. You must be back in your grid spot by the 1-minute warning; otherwise, you forfeit your position [6.4.5].

Start

Pace laps run under double yellow. While on the pace lap(s), you may not improve your position [6.52.C]. This means also that, if you lose position during the pace lap(s), you may not pass cars to regain your position.

If a car drops out of place during the pace lap(s), all cars that were behind it in the column (left or right) advance a place to fill the gap. This is not a pass under yellow.

There may be a second, un-scored, pace lap, especially for a larger field.

If the Starter waves off the start, the field does another pace lap, with the pole-sitter as the pace car. This lap, and any subsequent waved-off laps, counts as a race lap.

The Chief Steward may employ start judges. They look for cars that get out of their line, or otherwise “start early.” A start judge’s decision cannot be protested [5.11.3.B].

Flags

The GCR section on flags contains the following statement in its preface: “They must be obeyed immediately and without question” [6.1]. This is one of the strongest statements in the GCR.

Flags are the principal means that officials have to communicate with drivers on the track. You owe it to yourself, your fellow competitors, and the volunteers to respond to them.

In SCCA Club Racing, several flags have meanings different from those used by other racing organizations. If you previously raced with another organization, review Section 6.1 in order to confirm the SCCA meanings.

Yellow Flags

Local yellows indicate an incident ahead - on the racing surface for a waving yellow and off for a standing yellow. A yellow can also warn of a volunteer in an unprotected position. In all cases, you must moderate your pace sufficiently to safely clear the incident zone. Whenever there is a yellow flag, there will very likely be volunteers in exposed positions.

The stewards will treat harshly any secondary incident resulting in contact in a yellow flag zone. A spin under yellow indicates a lack of control. We treat this like a pass under yellow.

Passes under yellow (PUY) are often misunderstood. The definition is simple. Car A's nose is (even 1 mm) behind Car B's nose when entering the yellow flag zone. If Car A's nose ever passes (even by 1 mm) Car B's nose while in the yellow flag zone, this is a pass under yellow.

If there is a full course yellow (FCY or Double Yellow), close up with the car in front of you. You may carefully pass emergency vehicles as you close up. The purpose of an FCY is to gather the field in a single pack. This provides the space that the emergency team needs to clear the incident.

The Safety Car usually dispatches from Pit Out. If you are the leader, slow down a little more as you approach the launch point to give the Safety Car a clear space.

If there is no safety car, the lead car assumes the role of safety car, and controls the field. It should proceed at pace car speed, not near-race speed.

If a car cannot maintain the pace under the FCY, it should not hold up the field [6.6.2.B.3.iv]. Signal that your car is disabled by raising an arm, and pull off the racing line. Other cars may pass. This is the only situation in which you may pass under yellow.

At the end of the FCY period, the safety car shuts off its lights and enters the pits. The field continues in single file until the Starter drops the double yellow. All corner stations drop the double yellow at the same moment. Racing resumes all around the track as soon as the double yellow comes down.

Blue Flag

“Another competitor is following very closely or is trying to overtake. This flag may be displayed standing or waving, depending upon the speed differential.” [6.1.1.C]

The blue flag is informational. You are not required to move over for the faster car. In fact, altering your line to let a faster car pass can be very dangerous. The driver will have seen you long before you see his or her car, and will have made a plan to pass you. Altering your line as the car approaches can easily cause a collision. Be predictable, hold your line, and point the faster car by at an appropriate moment.

The presence or absence of a blue flag does not absolve you of your responsibility to watch your mirrors and to be situationally aware. (The flagging community calls the blue flagger the “yellow flag backup.” His or her primary job is to protect the yellow flagger,

who is facing downstream and cannot see oncoming traffic. Showing a blue flag is a secondary duty.)

White Flag

“Caution and take care for a slow moving race car, ambulance or other emergency vehicle on the racing surface.” [6.1.1.E] The two flag stations prior to the slow vehicle will display the white flag.

In addition, each flag station displays a standing white during the first lap of each group’s first session of the day to indicate the station’s location.

In SCCA Club Racing, a standing white flag does not indicate the last lap of the race. (Start may wave a white flag to indicate last lap.) It is an informational flag. You may keep racing, and pass. However, you must do so with caution, knowing that there is a slow moving vehicle ahead. Colliding with an emergency vehicle may cause damage and perhaps injury. Expect a severe penalty.

Stopping and Restarting the Race

If conditions demand it, the operating steward may stop the race in one of several ways [6.7]:

1. Black Flag All: Cars must stop racing immediately and proceed to the pits.
2. Red Flag: All cars stop on course as quickly as safely possible. Followed by a Black Flag All. Cars then proceed to the pits.
3. Checkered Flag: If the race is 50% complete, the CS may order a checkered flag. As a practical matter, if the race is close to the end, the CS will likely order a checker. This avoids a restart with a short distance to run and the consequent last-lap shootout.

You may work on your car during a stopped practice or qualifying session. You may not work on your car during a stopped race [6.7.2]. You may not refuel your car in the pits unless permitted by the supps or the Chief Steward [6.3.3].

Once the incident clears, the CS can restart the race in two ways [6.8]:

1. Restart in the original starting order
2. Single-file restart in the on-track order of the last completely scored lap

On a restart, each pace lap counts as a race lap.

Impound

Impound normally takes the top three finishers in each class. Check the supps; they may specify a different number. As you come through the pits, watch for signs like “Impound All.” The Pit team may also direct you to impound.

It is your responsibility to report to impound. If you are not sure whether you are in the top three (or whatever), report anyway. Failure to report will expose you to penalty.

Inspection

Tech will inspect your car for conformity to its class rules. This entails weighing the car and performing at least two other inspections. Impound is mandatory at Majors and recommended at other events.

If your car is underweight on first weighing, Tech will immediately re-weigh it twice (once in each direction). If Tech confirms the car to be underweight, they will note this in the car’s logbook, and you must have the car weighed again before receiving a tech sticker at its next event. This will also expose you to penalty.

Unless the event supps specify it (for example, the Runoffs or Majors), Tech may not perform any inspections requiring teardown of your car. Exceptions to this rule are for removal of a wheel, intake chokes, or restrictors, all of which may be required.

Sound Control

The GCR specifies a process for measuring sound [5.7]. The standard sound limit is 103dB [5.7.3], but it may differ at some tracks. The supps will specify the actual sound limit, if different from 103dB.

The Division Executive Steward may waive sound control at a track. In this case, the event may still take and post sound readings, but not enforce them. The supps will indicate if the Exec has waived sound control.

The Chief Steward must post sound readings. The supps must state the posting location. There is no notification requirement beyond that. The competitor is solely responsible to ensure that a vehicle complies with the event sound limits [5.7.2].

If a car registers over sound, it cannot be black flagged for the first occurrence. Race officials are not required to show the offending car a “Sound” board or other warning,

although they will typically try to do so. Once a car is black flagged, it cannot re-enter the course until its crew attempts to remedy the problem [5.7.2].

The GCR is silent on how many over sound readings will trigger a black flag. The general custom is “3 strikes and you’re out”, but local practice may vary.

A car black flagged for sound during qualifying will typically lose all its times set so far in the session; during a race, the typical penalty is disqualification.

Medical Issues

We should start by clarifying something. The SCCA cannot, and will not, make you submit to any particular medical treatment. That is purely a matter between you and your physician.

However, the SCCA can, and will, require certain medical clearances as a condition of participation or licensing.

Obtaining a competition license requires a medical clearance (clearance frequency depends on your age). If you develop a medical condition that affects your fitness to compete, you must report it, and obtain medical clearance before competing. [2.3.2.A.1, 2.3.2.A.3]

If you are involved in an accident involving significant impact or a rollover, or are injured, an official may direct you to go to Race Medical. This is not optional [2.3.2.A.4]. If you go to an off-site medical facility, you must obtain a signed release from the attending physician or event Chief Medical Officer before returning to competition.

There are rules governing concussion and loss of consciousness. They recognize the emerging body of evidence around the cumulative effect of concussions [2.3.2.D]. Please read this section of the GCR, as it specifies the procedure for dealing with these conditions.

Insurance

The SCCA carries medical insurance for all event participants (those who signed SCCA waivers, not spectators or others who signed track waivers) for injuries suffered during the competition. This is secondary insurance, covering what your personal insurance does not.

3. Rules of the Road

You will find the core rules for on-course conduct in a few paragraphs in section 6.11.1. The rules are very simple.

Avoid Physical Contact

All drivers are responsible for avoiding physical contact [6.11.1.A]. In everyday terms, this means that whatever harebrained, low-percentage, late-braking move the other driver makes, you may not hit him or her if you can avoid it. Many driver-to-driver protests for contact end up with both parties reprimanded for not avoiding contact.

Contrary to popular belief, the concept of “incidental contact” does not exist in the GCR. Making avoidable contact is never acceptable in SCCA Club Racing.

Racing Room

All drivers have a right to racing room on the track [6.11.1.B]. We define this as “sufficient space on the marked racing surface that under racing conditions, a driver can maintain control of his car in close quarters.”

You must always allow your competitor at least a car width, plus a bit, on the racing surface. Any attempt to “impede or affect the path” [6.11.1.C] of a competitor attempting to pass can be interpreted as denying him racing room. Thus, if your competitor comes alongside you as you approach a turn, even if he or she has not completely passed you, you cannot simply turn in and force the other car off the road. You must give racing room. In this example, your competitor has the corner; give it up, and try to re-pass on exit.

Shared Responsibility

The passing driver is responsible for “the decision to pass another car and to accomplish it safely” [6.11.1.D]. The overtaken driver is responsible to “be aware that he is being passed and not to impede or block the overtaking car.” A driver who fails to use his or her mirrors, or who appears to be blocking another is liable to penalty.

4. Stewards' Actions

In Club Racing, we have two basic means of enforcing rules and resolving disputes: stewards' actions and protests. Section 8 of the GCR is devoted to these.

The GCR makes it clear that there is a shared responsibility among the stewards and the drivers/entrants for enforcing the rules. Stewards act on what they observe or on officials' reports; drivers protest actions against the rules.

The most common stewards' actions are the Chief Steward's Action (CSA) and the Request for Action (RFA). The Chief Steward (CS) takes these actions.

Types of Stewards

At every event, there are two groups of stewards. The CS and the Assistant Chief Stewards (ACSs) are responsible for the execution of the event. They run the show. We usually refer to ACSs simply by their function (e.g. Safety Steward, Tech Steward, Steward of the Course, etc.).

The Chief Steward (CS) delegates authority to the ACSs so they can perform their duties. For simplicity, I shall just refer to the CS, but this includes ACSs.

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM) are responsible for enforcing rules and resolving disputes. They fulfill a judicial function and cannot take part in running the event.

Stewards rotate through the various assignments in the course of their stewarding career, so you will see the same person in different roles at different events.

Chief Steward's Action (CSA)

A CSA describes "a participant's breach of the GCR or the Supplemental Regulations and the action taken according to 5.12.2." [8.1.1]. Think of it as "summary justice." The process is as follows:

- An official observes an infraction (e.g., a pass under yellow). The CS decides to deal with it in summary fashion.
- The CS completes a CSA form, describing the infraction with reference to the GCR and/or supps, and the penalty imposed.
- The offender (you) will be summoned to meet the CS, either by being stopped in the pits as you leave the course, or by a call over the track PA system.

- The CS will typically discuss the incident with you before imposing the penalty. This is a courtesy; there is no requirement in the GCR.
- The CS will file the CSA with the SOM.
- You have the right to protest the CSA (see section below on protests). Be aware that you must file your protest within a limited period.

Request for Action (RFA)

The CS files an RFA with the SOM “describing a suspected breach of the GCR or the Supplemental Regulations” [8.1.2]. In this case, the CS simply identifies an infraction; the SOM investigate and judge it, and impose any applicable penalties. The process is as follows:

- An official observes an infraction (e.g., a pass under yellow). The CS decides to deal with it by RFA.
- The CS completes a Request for Action form, describing the infraction with reference to the GCR and/or supps, and files it with the SOM.
- The SOM process for an RFA is the same as for a protest. See the section below on protests for a description of this process.
- You have the right to appeal the SOM decision (see section below on appeals).

CSA or RFA?

The CS decides whether to deal with an infraction by CSA or RFA. A CSA requires less process than an RFA. The CS may use it for less serious offenses or very clear-cut cases (e.g., over sound).

A CSA permits penalties [5.12.3.C] which can be less severe than RFA penalties [7.2]. In addition, a CSA does not accrue penalty points against your license. If the SOM penalizes you for an RFA or a protest, then penalty points accrue automatically. If you protest a CSA, and the SOM uphold the CSA, they may assign penalty points in addition to the penalty.

Often, the CS will use a CSA because it provides two levels of review (protest and appeal), where an RFA permits only one level of review (appeal).

5. Protests and Appeals

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM) serve primarily in a judicial capacity, and “enforce compliance with the GCR and the Supplemental Regulations” [5.12.1]. They answer to the SCCA alone, not to the Chief Steward or event organizers.

The SOM will be very concerned with providing due process, within the GCR, to all parties.

Alternatives to a Protest

The GCR provides a formal process (protests and appeals) for resolving disputes. You might also consider using an informal approach before invoking the Club’s processes. Try talking with the other party about the problem. If that does not work, or is not possible for some reason, discuss the issue with your driver representative, if you have one. One of a driver representative’s duties is to help resolve disputes. Finally, speak with the CS. Any of these approaches may resolve your issue.

Remember, though, that the GCR provides time limits (discussed below) for filing protests.

Who May Protest?

Any "entrant, driver, crew, organizer, or official participating in an event” may file a protest [8.1.5]. Only entrants or drivers may file a mechanical protest against a car in his race group [8.3.3]. You can protest, “... any decision, act or omission of another entrant, driver, crew, organizer, official, or any other person connected with that event” for a breach of the rules.

The GCR or supps may explicitly exempt certain acts from protest (e.g., sound readings or failure to display a “1” sign signaling the last lap of a race).

Filing a Protest

Complete and sign an SCCA Protest form [8.3.1]. The form is available from the Chief Steward or Chairman of the SOM. It is also available online at scca.com. You must cite provisions of the GCR and/or supps. There is no group protest. Only an individual may

file. Several individuals may file protests for the same incident. Start gathering evidence, witnesses, in-car video, etc.

Some events will offer the services of a Driver's Advisor. This person (usually a steward) can advise you about the forms and process. He or she may not help you with the specifics of your protest (i.e. identifying what you want to protest, or drafting the body of the protest). Absent a Driver's Advisor, the CS can answer your process questions.

Members of the SOM cannot advise you on filing your protest, nor advise you about the rules, since they may have to judge the incident that prompted the question.

Deliver the protest and applicable fee (\$25 for Regionals and Schools, \$50 for Majors) to the Chief Steward, who will forward it to the SOM. Please note that the only role of the CS in this process is to receive and transmit the protest.

There are time limits for filing your protest [8.3.1.F]. Here is a synopsis; read the applicable GCR paragraphs for a complete description:

- You must file mechanical protests no later than one hour before the race, or 30 minutes after the race for cars in impound.
- You must file other protests (driver-to-driver protests, protests against an official's action, and protests against results) within 30 minutes of the relevant action.
- The SOM may extend these limits in exceptional cases, where evidence was not available within the time limit or the protestor was unable to meet the deadline due to unavoidable circumstances.

As a practical matter, if you file a protest, the Chief Steward must transmit it to the SOM. The SOM may uphold it or not, and/or extend the time limits for filing or not.

The process for mechanical protests involves more steps. We cover these in a separate section below.

The Protest Hearing

When the SOM receive a protest or an RFA, they notify all the parties and collect their licenses. (If you are the subject of an RFA, you are the protested party.) They next establish a time and place for a hearing.

The SOM will not make a judgment without holding a hearing, and listening to the parties and witnesses. Only those members of the SOM who have heard the entire protest may judge it. SOM members with significant personal or business ties to any of the parties must excuse themselves. The hearing process is as follows:

- All parties have the right to state their case and to call witnesses. You must state your case individually (you cannot have anyone with you or represent you) and in private.
- All parties, once notified, must remain at the track until released by the SOM. In the absence of a party, the SOM may issue a judgment by default.
- The court will ask you and your witnesses to complete and sign witness statements, if you have not done so already, confirming your testimony.
- The court will view any video that you submit. The court will retain videos, etc. entered in evidence until the time for appeal has lapsed. SCCA will return your video.
- The SOM will deliver their judgment as soon as possible after the hearing. You must abide by this judgment, but have the right of appeal (see below). The SOM Chairman can explain the appeals process for you.
- If you are assessed a penalty, the SOM will give you the bottom portion of the Protest/RFA form, with the penalty noted.
- If your penalty includes probation, the SOM will retain your license, and give you a probation letter detailing the provisions of your probation. During the period of your probation, this will serve as your license.
- If your penalty includes suspension, the SOM will retain your license. SCCA will return it at the end of the suspension period.

Some Tactical Advice

An SOM hearing is not like an episode of a television drama, but is required to give you due process, as provided by the GCR. The court will make its judgment based solely on the GCR, the supps, and the evidence presented. Here are some tips for presenting your case:

- Presenting your case in a calm and reasonable fashion is really the best way. As upset as you may be feeling, try to make a clear and logical case to the court, citing rules and evidence.
- Cite all the rules. For example, you protest another driver for on-track contact. You cite GCR 6.11.1.A (Avoiding Contact). The SOM decide that the other driver made contact, but also that 6.11.1.B (Racing Room) is the applicable rule. Some courts will disallow your protest because you cited the “wrong” rule. This is an incorrect interpretation, but it happens. You can avoid this problem by making a broad-based protest. Cite 6.11.1.A/B/C/D (On-Course Driver Conduct) and 2.1.4 (Reckless or Dangerous Driving).
- You may withdraw a protest.
- Videos, while useful, are not compulsory. The SOM will retain your video, but SCCA will return it at the end of the appeals period.
- There may be corroborating evidence (especially in driver-to-driver actions) in the race log or reports from corner stations. If necessary, remind the court to examine any relevant documents.

- Bring all of your evidence and/or witnesses to the hearing. Do not assume that the court will have enough evidence without it/them. If the SOM have incomplete evidence, they may not have enough information to reach the correct conclusion. It is extremely unlikely that any member of the court will have witnessed the incident in question, so the SOM will depend entirely on the evidence presented.
- The court is looking for a protest which is “reasonable, logical, and based on sound evidence” [8.3.2], thus well founded. If your protest is not well founded, you may forfeit your protest fee. Furthermore, protestors “whose actions are in bad faith or vexatious” may be penalized.
- When filing a protest, ask yourself what your objective is. What do you hope to accomplish? If somebody wrecks you, the SOM cannot make you whole. You will still be repairing your car yourself. Is there something the court can do to help prevent a repetition?
- Finally, remember that, while this is not a court of law, the SOM will need compelling evidence in order to impose a penalty or to change a result.

An SOM hearing is not always friendly, but it can be professional and businesslike.

Appeals

Any named party to a protest or RFA may appeal the judgment of the SOM [8.4.1]. The SCCA Court of Appeals will render a final decision on any appeal.

If you decide to appeal, please read the detailed description of the appeals process in section 8.4. The following is a brief outline:

- You must file your appeal within 10 days of the SOM judgment [8.4.3]. Normally, the clock starts ticking on the day when the SOM met and delivered their judgment to you. The exception to this rule is for Runoffs qualifying races held less than 28 days before the Runoffs. In this case, you have 48 hours to appeal [8.4.9].
- You must state your case, citing those sections of the GCR and/or supps that you believe the SOM applied incorrectly, and submit any relevant evidence, within the 10-day window, together with the \$175 appeal fee.
- The Court will not normally contact you about your appeal, nor are you entitled to a “live” hearing. If you have evidence or witness statements relevant to your appeal, include them in your original submission.
- The Court will notify all named parties to the case and give them an opportunity to make submissions.
- You may withdraw an appeal, except in very specific circumstances [8.4.3.D], any time before the court starts its review.
- The Court will meet privately, normally within 30 days of receiving your appeal, reach its decision, and deliver a written judgment. It may confirm, overturn, or modify the original SOM judgment, including penalties. It will not order a race to be re-run.

- The Court will determine whether your appeal was well founded, and, if so, may direct the return of a portion of the appeal fee. Bad faith appeals will expose you to penalty.
- The Court's ruling is final, and cannot be appealed further.

6. Mechanical Protests

Mechanical protests are often a mystery to participants. The process is complicated. Mechanicals also have the potential to be costly. Therefore, folks shy away from them. I hope that this section will demystify them.

First, we need to clarify a few points. Mechanical protests are not related to post-race impound where the scrutineers find a car out of compliance when inspected. In this case, the Chief of Tech will make a report to the Chief Steward, who will deal with the infraction with either a CSA or an RFA.

If an SCCA compliance team visits the event, its inspections are very similar to post-race checks done by the local tech team. They will report any infractions to the CS, who will deal with them by a CSA or RFA. (Of course, you may protest or appeal any penalty.)

Finally, the CS has the power to order a teardown of a car (via a CSA). In practice, this process is very similar to a mechanical protest, with the CS being the “protestor” and the organizing region responsible for any costs incurred by the CS.

Protest Form

Remember that you have a time limit under which to file a mechanical protest [8.3.1.F]. The SOM have the power to extend this limit, but this happens only in cases where the protestor can show that the issue arose after the normal protest period – for example, if an FF came to the race grid with a rear wing not on the car before.

Complete the standard protest form. You may “request that the car be disassembled, inspected, or any other test made” [8.3.3] if you post a bond sufficient to cover all the expenses entailed. Cite specific sections of the GCR. You cannot simply write “illegal engine.” You must specify in detail which components are non-compliant, citing the relevant rules. The SOM Chairman may come back to you to clarify the details of your protest.

Submit the protest, with the appropriate protest fee, to the CS, who will transmit it to the SOM.

Protest Process

When the SOM accept your protest, they will notify all the parties and collect their licenses. The SOM will collect the logbook of the protested car, and assign an official, either a steward or a scrutineer, to observe the protested car. This preserves the integrity of the protested car.

The SOM will meet individually with the protestor, the protested party, and the scrutineers to clarify any open questions, and to determine the factors necessary to establish the bond [8.3.3.A]. The bond will be sufficient to cover the costs of disassembly, inspection, and reassembly, and will include consumables, transportation charges, shop labor (if necessary), plus (commonly, but not always) a 10% administrative charge. The SOM may group the teardown tasks, and execute them in a logical order, with the protestor allowed to decide whether to proceed at the completion of each step.

The protestor must post bond by cash, check, or credit card. The protested party may be required to post a bond or sign a repair order if a third party shop does some or all of the teardown/inspection. This bond for this work will be the same as the protestor's bond.

If the car proves compliant, the protestor forfeits the bond; if non-compliant, the SOM return the bond to the protestor, and the protested party must stand the expenses [8.3.3.D].

The SOM will establish a secure area for inspection. Only the SOM, scrutineers, and the protested party may enter. The protestor may not observe.

Refusal to allow inspection of a protested car will result in immediate penalty (disqualification, 6-month suspension, and \$250 fine) [8.3.3.C, 7.4.D].

If any protested part of the car is non-compliant, the Chairman will inform the protested party and ask for an explanation. Tech may repeat measurements or other tests for the protested party to observe. (If the inspection reveals non-compliant parts outside the scope of the protest, the CS will deal with them as if found in post-race inspection.)

If the inspection finds a non-compliant part, the protestor has the option to stop the teardown at that point.

When the teardown is completed, the SOM will give both protestor and protested party an opportunity to make additional statements or provide other witnesses or evidence. If they do, the SOM will conduct a hearing as described in the section on protests.

The SOM will then deliver their judgment. If the SOM upholds the protest, the protested party will receive a written notice, detailing the penalty imposed. As with any protest, all named parties have the right to appeal the SOM judgment.

If the inspection revealed any non-compliant parts, the Chairman will direct Tech to note the infraction in the vehicle logbook, and to inspect those parts at the car's next event. The SOM will retain non-compliant parts.

The protest bond will be held by the SCCA until the end of the appeal period, or until any appeal is decided.

As noted, all named parties have the right of appeal, as described in the section on protests. The appeal process is the same in all cases.

Appendix: GCR References of Interest to Drivers and/or Entrants

Please note that these are references only; refer to the GCR for the complete text.

- 1.2.3.A** We shall not give the GCR a strained or tortured interpretation.
- 1.2.3.C** A car's specification rules take precedence over the Category rules, which take precedence over the General Technical Specifications.
- 2.1** Breach of the rules: General behavior rules
- 2.2.2** The driver and entrant are responsible for their crew.
- 2.3.1.A** Driver may not consume alcohol until all activity for his class has finished for the day. Driver and entrant are responsible if crew consume alcohol before end of the class' activities for the day.
- 2.3.1.B** You may not use narcotics or dangerous drugs. Penalties may include expulsion.
- 2.3.2.A** Driver must have a current medical clearance.
- 2.3.2.A** You must report any significant change to the Licensing Department.
- 2.3.2.A** Drivers involved in significant impacts, suffering injury shall report to Chief Medical Officer. An official may direct you to go to Medical.
- 2.3.2.D** Loss of consciousness
- 2.5** Divisional Exec Steward may convene a court to review a driver's conduct, car legality, competition record, or other matters. This court may assign penalties, which you may appeal.
- 4.2** Submission to rules: License holder agrees to abide by the GCR.
- 4.3.4** Drivers must hold appropriate competition license in order to enter an event.
- 4.4.4** If you give false information in your entry, the organizers may nullify it. You are guilty of a breach of the rules.
- 4.4.6** Organizers may refuse an entry without giving a reason.
- 4.5.1** All participants must sign SCCA waiver.
- 5.7.2** Competitors are solely responsible for ensuring that their cars are sound compliant.
- 5.9.2.B** Notwithstanding tech inspection, you are responsible for the safety of your car, equipment, clothing, and compliance with all SCCA rules and regulations.
- 5.9.3.C** You are responsible for reporting to post-race impound.
- 5.11.3.B** Judge's decision not protestable
- 5.12.1** Powers of SOM
- 5.12.3** Duties and powers of Chief Steward
- 6.1.1** Meaning of flags
- 6.2.2** A car entering the paddock, and subsequently reentering the track during a qualifying session, forfeits all times set in the session before entering the paddock.
- 6.3.3** Fueling in the pits not permitted unless authorized by the supps or Chief Steward.
- 6.3.4** Crew in the pits must be SCCA members and hold an SCCA license.

- 6.3.6** Pit crews are at all times under the control of the pit marshal.
- 6.3.8** If your car overshoots its pit, you must have it pushed back by hand, or else continue for another lap.
- 6.4.2.A** Qualifying positions established by driver/car combination.
- 6.4.2.F** Cars not in grid position at 1-minute warning forfeit their position, and start from the back.
- 6.5.2.C.2** A car losing its position on the grid or pace lap(s) must rejoin at the rear of the pack, and may not improve its position.
- 6.6.2** Racing resumes around the track when the double yellow drops.
- 6.7.2** Cars may be serviced while a practice or qualifying session is stopped but not during a race.
- 6.11.1** Rules of on-course driver conduct.
- 6.11.4** Driving counter-race forbidden without permission of Chief Steward.
- 6.11.5** Drivers shall receive no assistance during the race, except from their crew in the pits or from race officials for safety reasons.
- 7.1** We may penalize any participant or SCCA member.
- 7.2** Penalties that can be imposed by a court
- 7.4** Automatic penalties and penalty points
- 8.1.1** The Chief Steward may identify a breach of the GCR, and impose a penalty (CSA).
- 8.1.2** The Chief Steward may request the SOM to investigate a breach of the GCR (RFA).
- 8.1.5** Any entrant, driver, crew, organizer, or official participating in an event may protest any decision, act, or omission of another entrant, driver, crew, organizer, official, or any other person connected with that event.
- 8.3.1** Protests shall be in writing, with a fee, and filed within time limits.
- 8.3.3** Entrants or drivers may protest a car in their race group. A protest against a car is also a protest against its entrant and driver.
- 8.4.1** Any party to a protest or RFA may appeal the SOM's judgment.
- 8.4.3** You must appeal within 10 days of the SOM judgment.
- 8.4.5.F** Court of Appeals decisions are final. You cannot appeal them.
- 8.4.8** Bad faith appeals are a breach of the GCR.
- 9.3.6** Appearance neat and clean, and suitable for competition
- 9.3.20** Driver's safety equipment requirements
- 9.3.23** Fire system requirements
- 9.3.33** A car with missing bodywork may be black flagged for safety reasons, or may be penalized.
- C.2.2** Participation requirements: You may count one race per race group per sanctioned event. Novice drivers count only one race per sanctioned event.
- C.3.A** While on probation, a competitor must use probation letter as license.