

# **Harbinger Press - Editorial**

## **World Drag Racing Championships**

### **Concept Discussion**

There are a lot of people make a living playing golf, tennis, baseball, cricket or any of the ball sports? How many people make a living involved with F1 or other world championship motorsports? Personally I don't play any of the ball sports and I imagine neither do you or if you do, it's a hobby. For me Championship Drag Racing is no hobby and if all you want from drag racing is a hobby then stop reading here right now because none of this applies to you. If you want to make Championship Drag Racing your career then this is very important you. Read on.

A World Drag Race Championship series would be good for the manufacturers and the competitors. This is a marketing opportunity that is going begging. Unlike other motor sports where they have a small number of competitors (manufactures customers) drag racing is the world leader in competitor numbers. To sell more products you need more competitors so why not go to a market place that is an untapped resource and promote your products and the environment to use them in. It is these new markets where the WDRC will concentrate its efforts because the WDRC must produce good results for the manufactures. If we don't, the manufactures will not continue to support us.

Will the WDRC series produce results for the manufactures? History has already proved that it will. What made drag racing grow to Championship Drag Racing in the US was Wally Parks and the NHRA guys taking a Plymouth station wagon and a trailer travelling through the country holding local drag races with the NHRA Safety Safari. Within a few years from 1955 to 1960 the growth of drag racing in the US was phenomenal. Hundreds of manufactures sprung up to supply the growing industry. Names today that are the foundation of our sport started as small back yard businesses. Hilborn and Edelbrock are only a couple of the pioneers that started supplying a fledging industry. Today, how would a manufacturer like to be the first with his foot in the door to a new market? Any manufacturer or distributor that knows anything about advertising will see the power of this opportunity. Who would not jump at the chance to become the first name a new customer would hear as a product supplier. When this

customer decides to purchase who is he going to call? Someone he knows something about.

The World Drag Racing Championships (WDRC) will create a market place of unparalleled opportunity.

We will select up to 30 manufactures to be WDRC exclusive sponsors. In exchange for their sponsorship of the WDRC they get an exclusive marketing right to the particular product they want to sell to the new market. When was the last time they got a change to not only be the first to be in the market but to be the only product of that type displaying in the market.

Naturally we will have a manufactures midway at all races to support the manufacturers who are supporting the WDRC. The WDRC is going to be the "Safety Safari" of the next millennium.

New markets means new sales new opportunities.

Manufactures in low population countries like Australia have a problem developing satisfactory sales levels due to the small population base. Why not go where the customers are?

Manufactures in the US have a problem because the market place is so congested with competition. Why not go where there is no competition?

The answer is the World Drag Race Championships – WDRC

If you are a manufacturer and want to be part of this golden opportunity please contact me now so you can lock in your product as the exclusive for the WDRC.

## **What class structure will the WDRC have?**

A world drag racing championship is not a new idea. It has been a dream of a lot of racers over the last 20 years. Most racers would like to compete on a world level. What is missing is the structure to support it.

Some of the problem is that most racers want to race the particular class they are currently in. We all have a soft spot for our particular class of racecars, after all that is why we race that class isn't it?

I want you to think outside the square for a little bit. Lateral thinking is what it's called. What is being proposed may not be what you would particularly like to do but it is a terrific spring board that is unique to drag racing.

A true world championship in drag racing is not a new idea. It has been discussed many times before, but barely went past the discussion stage. Why? Several reasons. Most drag racers want to promote "their" class structure;. Pro Stock, Top Fuel, Top Alcohol etc. Initially, the logical decision was to contest the top of the performance field in drag racing; the Top Fuel dragsters. Although it seems like a good idea at first, when you examine all the problems it soon starts to fall apart. At the top of the list is cost. Anyone who knows Top Fuel from the inside will attest to the costs. Top Fuel requires carefully prepared surfaces that not everyone in an international environment can provide.

The biggest factor in the decision not to contest Top Fuel, as an eliminator is the future participation factor of the spectators. Every racer today was a spectator before he was a racer. If none of the spectators in the stands think they could be successful doing what they are watching, they will never participate. Future participation is the key factor in the growth of Championship Drag Racing. So, let's say at this point the possibility of running TF in a World Championship Drag Racing circuit is not an option. At the outset I would like to see TF cars as Exhibition vehicles to show what the spectators what his future possibilities are.

The next idea was Top Alcohol (Supercharged Methanol) (Dragsters or Funny Cars both have been considered). Much more financially viable than the fuel classes, but still no small financial challenge. The problems with Alcohol are that you still need high quality track preparation and the transportation challenge of both long cars and all the spare parts that you need. Supercharged Methanol could become the leading edge of the World Championship Drag Race promotions when the time is right.

Throw out all your prejudices. Lock away your personal likes and dislikes and consider something. (Lateral thinking) To generate interest around the world, you need a level playing field for all the competitors, where anyone with driving and tuning skill can win.

Dial Your Own is the answer. Yes, open bracket racing is the answer to the World Drag Racing Championship series.

Local racer participation is the key to success of the WDRC and selling more products. Remember we must make this good for the manufactures that are supporting us. DYO is the only

format where a local can have a real shot at winning a championship round.

The thought about starting the WDRC with DYO cars is only to create a level playing field initially. After the WDRC is a few years old and has some growth and has stability we could introduce heads up Pro type cars as headliners. But not at first, as some of the places that the WDRC is going to race doesn't have the local racers to compete at this level and it is the local racers that is the back bone of this concept.

Remember the manufactures have to have someone to sell their products to. This is what the WDRC is all about-creating a format for the growth of drag racing throughout the world by using the marketing opportunities the new markets represent.

If it costs less to race then when you win you get to keep more money. A suggestion was made to make the international transportation of race vehicles for the WDRC more efficient. The most efficient vehicle for shipping is the dragster. It has been worked out how to package four cars/teams to a container and the packing system allows the cars to be removed from the container in a few minutes and ready to race in less than an hour by a crew of just one person per vehicle. No other type of vehicle provides this opportunity. Four teams sharing transportation costs per container drastically reduces the cost to each team.

There is nothing that says that you must have a dragster to compete in the WDRC-it is just that a dragster stacks and packs more easily. You could get two FC's or Pro Stocks or similar cars in a 40' container as well. Shipping one 20' container is not 1/2 of a 40' but more like 70% of a 40' so therefore a 40' is much better value, if you fill it with race cars and not air.

The standard DYO car would be inexpensive enough so that almost everyone could afford one and some could afford two or more. They could have one "on the water" going from race to race and one at home for racing between WDRC events. How many Fuel or Alcohol teams could do this with their current cars? None, one or two? - Therefore it is not viable. A WDRC car would cost them less than they have in a spare engine. The DYO format levels the playing field to where even countries where drag racing is new have a real chance at winning the championship and if they don't, its not the money, its the skill and preparation that will win or lose the race for

them. Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Germany, Sweden, UK and anyone else who wants to participate would all be eligible. No other format is financial viable and this is the best way to introduce countries to Championship Drag Racing, not just racing street cars on a bit of asphalt somewhere. This is a level playing field where anyone with driving and tuning skill can win and anyone can practice at his or her local track every weekend. This makes the WDRC good for the local race promoters as well as it encourages local weekly participation. Besides we may hold a WDRC event at their facility some day.

A set of plans to accurately construct the stackable shipping carton would be provided so everyone could build their own shipping carton.

For drag racing developing countries a recommended chassis design could be provided and both of these would be made available to anyone who wants a set of plans and even to the local automotive publications for reprinting. A "how to" video could be provided as well. Locally available engines would power many of the cars keeping the racer/builder in their comfort zone thus encouraging participation.

Events with this international scope can be marketed and sold to international companies to create the prize money to drive the WDRC competitors. Sharing 1/4 of the cost of a container in many situations would be equivalent to the cost of fuel in driving to Adelaide or Perth but this would be for World Championship Points and money.

In drag racing we are so focused on quicker and quicker and faster and faster we overlook the opportunities that are right on our doorstep. Sometimes you have to take a lateral view of what you are doing and look for new opportunities. Drag racing has the quickest, fastest and most powerful race cars in the world. Obviously, power alone does not make us successful. Indy car, Formula One, NASCAR and Group A, all pale by comparison when it comes to making horsepower when compared to drag racing. Every one of the above mentioned types of racing generate more money for the racers than drag racing does, why is that? It is marketing and packaging that makes success. Drag racing needs some of this success. The WDRC was created to generate that type of success. There have been several current Professional class racers interested in participating in the WDRC for all the reasons that make sense. They would keep their current car for racing in their home country and keep a WDRC car on the road (water) going from race to race. The WDRC race in their

home country would not be scheduled to conflict with domestic championship race schedules.

Once the WDRC is operational with DY0 type of racing, the new countries will grow to where they can support supercharged alcohol as an exhibition class. Then supercharged alcohol funny cars, dragsters, and altered could become the main event in a heads up race environment. The old adage applies "You must walk before you run".

The current proposed structure of the WDRC would be a board of directors for the WDRC with 2 people representing each country. Today the Internet and email make this a piece of cake. Occasional conference calls will be arranged to keep everyone in touch.

The WDRC will travel with its team of racetrack professionals who know how to operate a race from track prep to timing. The WDRC would have its own clocks, lights and track spray. We would instruct locals on how to operate a race track and prepare the facility. This will create the environment for the introduction of supercharged cars in the future.

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## **Current proposed race structure plan**

The race structure that is currently on the table is:

Sixteen car fields with 25% of the qualifying spots held for contestants from the host country. We take 12 cars to each international event. If a "traveling car" does not function then a local racer can fill the slot.

### **Race Format:**

#### **Main race.**

From qualifying positions Standard ladder 1-8 races 9-16  
Three World Championship point per round

One World Championship point for low qualifier

One World Championship point for top speed.

### **Qualifying points explanation**

To encourage quicker cars we award one World Championship point for each position you qualify.

Low qualifier gets 16 + 1

Number 2 gets 15

Number 3 gets 14 and so on down to the 16 qualified car gets 1+1

Lane choice is determined by qualifying time or ET from previous round. Duplications are determined first by MPH but if that was identical as well then by whom ran the number first. Disqualification's are based on first or worst.

### **Last chance race**

All the racers who lost first round use their ET for the losing run as a qualifying position for the "Last Chance" race.

Standard ladder 1 - 4 races 5 -8

One World Championship point per round

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World Championship pay out at the end of the year would be determined by points. The total contested purse divided by the total number of points and then pay for each point earned.  
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No bye runs break rule in effect. If you win your round and cannot return you get the points but the racer you defeated gets back in with a chance at the next round.

### **Money, travel and time.**

The WDRC will work once the money is right. This is not a hobby venture. This is full time professional racing. This means payrolls and overheads must be covered. The sale of the naming rights to the series and each race will create some money but the real power is with the promotion and marketing of the race teams and vehicles. In this format the ad space on the car will be valuable and if a team sells their soul for \$10,000 annually they will be working for much less than the value of the space on the car.

It has been suggested we create guidelines that set up minimum values for the teams to market their services for. Obviously, if the team does well it is worth more or the team manager is a better salesman then he deserves it.

Don't scoff at the money that is being proposed. We have to take ourselves serious before anyone else will. One thing for sure if we don't try to make it happen it never will. Race winning pay out is separate from the World Championship payouts. Race pay out structure is yet to be decided but the current consideration is \$20,000 win down to \$2,000 if you lose first round. I know this looks like a lot of money but I feel this is where we need to be if we are chasing World Championship points.

The value of the naming rights for the World Drag Racing Championship series is under consideration at this time. We have been consulting various sources to ensure we

do not undersell the value of the product. Current considerations set the value at \$100,000 dollars. The value will increase as it grows. Host countries for the World Championship would be determined by the promoters in that country's ability to sell the advertising for naming rights to the World Drag Racing Championship in that country. The value of the naming rights to the race is \$10,000.

### **Which countries do we race in?**

Any country that can provide the "entry fee" into the WDRC is eligible to be considered as a WDRC points race venue. Sales of the naming rights to the event can be sold to generate the entry fee for the host country to the WDRC. 50% of the host country's entry fee must be paid to get on the race schedule.

Prerace promotion can be made available to support the host nation race promoter. Heavily sponsored racers would want to make

### **Is their support for the WDRC?**

I have sent this via email to 150 people and organizations around the world. There a few who are not interested, though most expressed interest in participating. Let me know what you think. Give me your ideas on format and structure of the events and the series. I want everyone's opinion and ideas.

Email at [kenlowe@onthenet.com.au](mailto:kenlowe@onthenet.com.au) or

Phone / fax on Australia 7-5573 4535 or 0411-699 535.

### **Transportation / shipping containers**

The race schedule would be set up to suit current local championship races as well as the weather in some of the countries. Also, the schedule could coincide with shipping discounts for shipping on back load routes where ships sometimes carry empty containers in one direction.

I can see an international airline giving discount air fares to the participants to get to and from the races. Currently we are talking to an airline that is interested in being the WDRC designated airline in exchange for free tickets for race drivers and crew.

With good planning we anticipate crews to be gone one week per championship event. It takes that much to make a race in Adelaide if you live in Brisbane and the shipping cost would equal the cost of fuel to drive to Adelaide. This for a World Championship event in another country !

**SSC** is a stackable shipping container long enough to hold the car and some tools, parts and accessories.

**SSB** is a stackable shipping box made long enough to use the remaining space in a 40' container after the SSC is loaded. Large items could be placed in the SSB's such as extra wheels, engines and transmissions or tools.

SSC 1100 mm wide x 1100 mm tall x 8 meter long  
SSB 1100 mm wide x 1100 mm tall x 3.5 meter long

Current consensus is to make the SSC (stackable shipping containers) 8 meters long so later a TAD car will fit inside so when the organization grows we can move up to class cars without having to remake the SSC's. Each team would have an SSB (stackable shipping box) to house the larger spare parts the total combined lengths of the SSC and the SSB will just fit inside a 40' container. Therefore 4 cars / 4 teams one container and one shipping price per container. Divide the shipping costs by a 1/4 for just one car (SSC) and one parts box (SSB). For example it is reported that one TF team used one 40-foot container to ship their car and parts to Japan and back for \$4000.00. This is a lot of money for one car but dirt cheap for 4 cars. The round trip took 8 weeks. During this time they had no racecar at home to participate with in other events. With an economical DYO car you would have an extra car at home to race with or if you are an ANDRA Pro racer your Australian Pro Car.

It has been suggested that it would be smart to purchase a used 40' shipping container for about \$3000 dollars since it is always going to have to be shipped back to me with the cars in it as opposed to renting one.

### **SSC plan A**

The stackable shipping cartons would have fork lift slots in the bottom of the sides so they could be picked up with a fork lift and then the car lifted out by putting the forks under the chassis and picking it up and putting the wheels on the car. Stick the headers on and you are ready to race.

### **SSC plan B**

If you remove the rear wheels on the dragster and replace them with 34" tall cast aluminum wheels 2" wide (no tires) and then remove the headers the car is only as wide as the front axle. On KLRC cars this is 900 mm and this leaves enough room to roll the car into the SSC from one end. Block the car up and clamp the chassis down and it is ready to transport anywhere. The space above the car in front of the driver could be made into a shelf to store the tires and headers. Most racers who have considered the WDRC have preferred plan B.

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Today you may have a TF, TAD or a Pro Stock car at home but you race for the world championship in a reasonably inexpensive DY0 dragster. In a few years, after the WDRC is solid then heads up cars go on the circuit. A driver who has had experience in an ANDRA Pro car must surely do well in a simple DY0 dragster. Winning is winning - in a TF, TAD or a DY0 car; it will be a World Championship. -- Give it some thought if you want to be a World Champion

#### Points

All cars must carry WDRC sponsors stickers but do not have to use the product. If the product is not used the percentage of payout is deducted from the racers payout money.

All cars may not carry competitive product stickers to WDRC sponsor products.

TF the Americans have the technology and the experience to dominate, and if the outcome of a race is a forgone conclusion then what is the attraction for a spectator or the racer for that matter? Except in the USA, TF racing costs are pushing the class to exhibition class only. From some of the TF racers themselves I have heard that it costs \$10,000 per pass. I have read reports that TF is dead in Europe.

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Let me ask two questions.

One - Why does Championship Drag Racing need a true World Championship?

Two - Why do we want a world championship series?

The answer to the need question is two part. One is respect and the other is money. Respect is important because it is the first step in getting media attention. Money generation (cash flow) is the second part because until Championship Drag Racing has respectable winnings we will never be taken seriously. A world championship series provides the opportunity for this to happen through promotion opportunities for the manufactures of race hardware.

There is a circle of cash flow that goes from the spectator through the racer and on to the manufacturer.

The answer to the question “Why do we want a world championship series”

Why bother creating a structure to drag race for a world championship?

A few reasons are money, prestige, money, and because we can.

Drag racing unlike F1, Indy and Nascar is open to the entry-level racer. This is a unique opportunity that is often not capitalized upon. Add up the money that is spent by entry level racers assembling their cars and a smart manufacturer will want to be part of this opportunity.

This is sales volume that manufactures need and want.

Another advantage is that the dragster is also the most stable of all the cars in its power range thus requiring less track preparation for the horsepower to weight ratio. In other words, more bang for the buck.

Furthermore, their size allows up to 4 cars per container with some room left over for spares and tools. (See section below-Transportation)

To create the drag racing identity you need a car that identifies only with drag racing - the dragster.

Sedan style cars could be just a rally car or a street car and for this challenge a car that defines drag racing is essential; the dragster.

All fees must be paid in full 90 days before the race date. Failure to make the final payment will result in forfeiture of the deposit and cancellation of the race.