

Foreword by Kevin Glass

Volunteering in Motorsports

Volunteers are Motorsport. Whether it's a local autocross event or a prestigious Formula 1 Race, the one thing they have in common are the volunteers. Whether you're working as a marshal, pit crew member, or event organizer, volunteers play a critical role in ensuring that races run smoothly and safely. For many, it's an opportunity to be immersed in the fast-paced world of motorsport while gaining hands-on experience.

Volunteers have the chance to interact with professional teams, drivers, and fans, offering an insider's perspective on the behind-the-scenes action. This is a perfect avenue for motorsport enthusiasts to deepen their knowledge, network with industry professionals, and contribute to the success of events, all while being part of the excitement.

In 2014, while working at an event at a small local track in Quebec, I met Terry Dale. He was part of a racing series visiting our track and shared valuable advice on volunteering at larger events and facilities. This led me to start working at Calabogie Motorsports Park for local and regional events, sparking an incredible journey that has taken me to renowned tracks like Daytona, Sebring, and Watkins Glen. Along the way, I've had the privilege of working alongside amazing people and lifelong friends.

Fast forward to today, and I still volunteer at Calabogie Motorsports Park, taking on various operational roles such as Race Director and Assistant Clerk of the Course. I also dedicate time to training new volunteers eager to learn about motorsports. Whether it's a club event, a regional race, or a national series, there's a good chance you'll find me at the track.

Getting Involved

Generally speaking, becoming a volunteer is easy! There are a wide range of volunteering positions and activities, and some critical areas – called ' Hot Zones ' are reserved for volunteers 16 years or older.

Some positions also ask for certifications, such as first aid or fire safety, particularly for roles that involve direct interaction with race vehicles or accidents. Positions, like marshaling or pit official, may require you to have prior experience or attend a training session to understand safety protocols and the responsibilities of the role.

Thankfully, there are a number of opportunities to learn how to volunteer in a low pressure environment such as the Calabogie Challenge series. The Ottawa SportsCar Club has a large contingent of volunteers that constantly assist with training newcomers to the sport.

For more information on becoming a volunteer, check out the pages below.

<https://ottawasportscarclub.ca/volunteering/>
<https://calabogiemotorsports.com/join-our-team/>

Calabogie Challenge Series Volunteers Guide

The Calabogie Challenge Series is a collection of grassroots races held at Calabogie Motorsports Park throughout the summer. Each of the series comes with its own unique style of racing in an effort to provide a place to race for anyone.

The Calabogie GT Challenge is designed around novice drivers who are using street cars that may not have all of the safety equipment that race cars provide. It is all about camaraderie, safety, sportsmanship and just good fun!

Calabogie Platinum Challenge is an advanced race series, the next step after the GT challenge. This series is designed for fully prepared and caged cars (According to CASC rulebooks) and qualified drivers.

Calabogie Libre Challenge is open to single seaters, Open wheel cars, Legends, Radicals, and Sports Racers.

Calabogie Miata Challenge is an advanced race series, open to qualified drivers who are looking for a Spec Racing series. The challenge series is open to Mazda Miata NA & NB Chassis and must conform to the safety regulations set out by the CASC Road Racing Regulations.

The Calabogie Challenge Series operates with eight volunteer Race Officials for every event to cover the necessary responsibilities of – Starter, Pit Lane, Paddock, False Grid, Race Director, Stewards and more.

As in all types of Motorsports, Volunteers fulfill a vital role for the safe functioning of an event. It is also one of the 'Best Seats in the House', as it puts you behind the scenes and close to the action.

We provide full training in every area and everyone gets a chance to rotate through and work in each area through-out the season.

Our Race Officials work throughout North America & the world in many different capacities and right here is the place where it all starts!

If you're interested in knowing more about it, there are two great ways to reach out.

- The Ottawa SportsCar Club - <https://ottawasportscarclub.ca/volunteering/>
- Calabogie Motorsports Park - <https://calabogiemotorsports.com/join-our-team/>

Grid Marshal – False Grid

Before any race car makes it out on track, they have to first present themselves to the False Grid, or Mock Grid. The grid is staffed by Grid Marshals, who are responsible for making sure that all race cars are positioned correctly before a race and verifying that drivers are safely in their vehicles. The grid team communicates with race control to inform them when the grid is ready, and also to relay information from race control to the drivers, such as the count down to when cars are being released.

At Calabogie Motorsports Park, Grid Marshals also help control the access to and from Pit Lane, by ensuring that all crew members and visitors are properly dressed (Pants, Closed Shoes) and a minimum of 16 years of age.

When working as a grid marshal, it is beneficial to have a whistle and a watch or stopwatch that can be used to easily reference the time. One of the most important roles is communicating the countdown to drivers before the start of the session.

What happens as a Grid Marshal?

For the Calabogie Challenge Series nights, after the Driver's Meeting, cars will start arriving to the grid in anticipation of qualifying. For Qualifying, it is a First-Come, First-Out basis and there is no gridding. Cars should line up single file along the chain fence that separates the Pit Lane from the Paddock.

After Qualifying, cars will quickly return to Grid for their Race. You'll be provided with a Grid Sheet that has the car number, and the position that they are in. The grid positions are marked along the fence.

Once all cars are in position, it is a great time to send a message to Race Control that the Grid is Ready.

When nearing the start of the session, either Practice, Qualifying or Race, the team in Race Control will communicate a countdown to the Grid Marshals before the start of the session.

The countdown includes a 5 Minute, 3 Minute and 1 Minute call outs that are relayed to drivers.

The Grid Marshals can use their hands, or the large number boards to communicate this.

When the grid reaches 1 minute, it is a great time to look over at your fellow teammates in Pit Lane, and ensure that the traffic has been cleared and they are ready to receive the cars.

At the end of the count, Race Control will call for the release of cars.

Congratulations – You've just helped put on a race!

Key Points for a Grid Marshal

- Positioning cars: Making sure each car is in their designated grid spot.
- Safety checks: Checking that drivers and crew members are wearing all necessary safety gear.
- Communication with race control: Signaling to race control when the grid is ready to start.
- Communication with drivers: Signaling to drivers when the cars are being released.
- Assistance to drivers: Offering a helping hand to drivers as they prepare to start, if needed.
- Monitoring activity: Keeping an eye on the grid area for any potential issues before the race starts.

Pit Lane Marshal

A Pit Lane Marshal is responsible for maintaining safety within the pit lane during any on track session, whether it is a practice, qualifying or a race. Marshals ensure that all personnel and vehicles adhere to regulations, by monitoring pit lane activity, including any pit stops that may occur. Marshals are also responsible for responding to any incidents that may occur while cars are within the pit area; essentially acting as a safety officer in the pit lane.

At Calabogie Motorsports Park, the primary entry & exit to Pit Lane is done via the centre cross-over gate. This is where vehicles will enter from the False Grid and exit to the Paddock area.

What happens as a Pit Lane Marshal?

During the Calabogie Challenge series, the primary role for Pit Lane Marshals is to ensure the safe flow of traffic to and from the Paddock Area. This is done by communicating with the Grid Marshals to ensure that Pit Lane is ready to receive traffic, or to hold traffic in Pit Lane if the path to the Paddock is not clear.

If a vehicle enters Pit Lane during a session, there typically an underlying issue that has caused the driver to enter into the pit lane. A Marshal should approach the vehicle to determine the reason for entering, and verifying that there are no safety issues such as: Leaking Fluids, Flat Tires or any damage to the vehicle that would prevent it from continuing. This information should be relayed to the driver and/or their crew member, in addition to advising the team in race control, especially if there is a safety concern.

When vehicles are transiting in the Pit Lane, it is a good idea to monitor their speed with the handheld Radar. Vehicles are permitted a maximum of 60 kph in Pit Lane, and 20kph in the Paddock.

Always remember: Pit Lane is a 'Hot Area', and with it comes some additional precautions. Always face oncoming traffic (Pit In) critical when standing or walking in Pit Lane. Try and stay behind the walls as much as possible.

Splitting

Pit Marshals also double for 'Splitters' at the start of the race. As cars are released from False Grid, the Splitter will provide an indication to the drivers that they are to start on the Left Side, or Right Side.

Key responsibilities of a Pit Lane Marshal include:

- Communication with race control: Relaying important information to Teams and Drivers, Reporting any violations or incidents to race control immediately.
- Enforcing pit lane rules: Monitoring pit speeds, ensuring not too many crew members are working on a car and checking for any violations of pit lane or event regulations.
- Controlling access: Managing entry and exit points to the pit lane, ensuring only authorized personnel and vehicles are allowed in.
- Incident response: Quickly assessing and responding to any accidents or issues that happen within the pit lane, including directing emergency services if necessary.
- Safety checks: Performing visual checks on cars entering the pit lane to ensure they are safe to continue.

Timing & Scoring

How do you know who won the race? Timing of course! The role of the timekeeper is to operate the Timing and Scoring system (MyLaps X2 system). There are many components to the timing system.

The first is the Transponder. This is given to every driver as they register to compete at the event. The transponders are mounted onto the vehicle and transmit a beacon with a special ID number that corresponds to the driver.

The timing loop installed in the track. It acts as a large antenna to pick up the beacon from the transponders. As vehicles pass the Start / Finish line, they 'Ping' the timing loop.

In Race Control there is a computer that receives all of these signals.

The final piece is the most important. The timekeeper.

What happens as a Time Keeper?

As a timekeeper, you are responsible for running the software that the timing system connects to. The software is used to Start (Green Flag), Stop (Checkered Flag) or Interrupt the session (Full Course Yellow or Red Flag).

As cars exit the False Grid, a manual (Pen & Paper) list will be made with the of the cars as they pass Race Control. Once all cars have exited, the list needs to be verified with the scoring system which would have picked up the vehicles entering the track.

When the Green Flag is called in Race Control, that's the cue to press the Start Session button. Throughout the rest of the event, the system is monitored for any issues.

The Calabogie Challenge Series runs 25 or 30 minute races. The checker flag is shown to the leader of the race at the completion of this time. Calculating when the last lap & checker flag need to be shown is very important, and requires some basic math skills.

When the session is over and the timing stopped, the results can be printed out and given to the Event Steward for the post-race festivities.

Skills needed for a Timekeeper

- Focus and concentration: Maintaining focus throughout a race, especially during critical moments like the start and finish.
- Quick reaction time: Ability to react swiftly to the start and finish of a race to capture the accurate time.
- Data analysis: Interpreting and recording data accurately, including lap times and positions.
- Communication skills: Clear communication with other officials, race marshals, and race organizers
- Knowledge of race rules: Understanding the specific rules and regulations governing the race type to ensure accurate timekeeping
- Computer literacy: Proficiency with software used to record and analyze race data

Starter

The Starter is the primary official responsible for overseeing the start of a race by ensuring all competitors are properly positioned (2 by 2 grid formation) during the start and that the race begins fairly and according to rules of the series. The starter is responsible for making crucial decisions regarding false (jump) starts or other irregularities at the beginning of the race.

The starter maintains communication with the Control Tower throughout the entire session and is responsible for relaying the status of the track and any messages to the drivers while on track through the use of flags.

Green Flag – Starting of the Race, or Resumption of the race after a suspension (Yellow, Red).

Double Yellow Flags – Full Course Caution. The cars will circulate at a reduced speed under the control of the Safety Car.

Red Flag – Indicating a Shutdown of the Track

Last Lap Board – Indicating the Last Lap is in progress

Checker Flag – The end of the Race (Session).

What happens as a Starter

At Calabogie Motorsports Park, the starter's stand is located in the middle of the front straightaway. At 20ft tall, it allows for all of the drivers on the circuit to see the flags that the starter displays.

After the cars are released from Pit Lane behind the Pace Car (for the start of the race), the cars will form up on the track in a side-by-side configuration.

As the cars enter the front straight, they will be maintaining the speed that the Pace Car set.

When the moment is right – The Green Flag flies – and we have a race!

The starter is also responsible for displaying the Full Course Yellow flags, displaying the 'Last Lap' board to the cars, and waving the checkered flag at the end of the race.

Skills needed for a Starter

- Communication skills: Clear communication with race control & other flaggers
- Vision: Identify vehicles based on colour, type and number from a distance.
- Quick reaction time: Ability to react swiftly to the information received

Race Director

A race director is a senior official who is responsible for ensuring the event runs smoothly and safely. They are responsible for managing all of the activities both on and off the track and making decisions based on the information that they receive from the other officials both in the tower and on the ground.

It is a fast-paced job that requires good problem solving skills and being able to make logical decisions in a timely manner. Race directors are responsible for suspending the race (Full Course Yellow) if vehicles are in unsafe positions, or when track conditions are not favorable for racing (ex: excess water).

The race director is typically not involved in any decisions regarding penalties, as this is left to series Stewards.

What happens as a Race Director?

At Calabogie Motorsports Park, the race director works closely with the other volunteers to ensure a safe running of the event. They are the primary point of communication and respond to 'Race Control' calls. They are responsible for coordinating the timing with the Grid Marshals prior the start of a session – such as giving the 5, 3 and 1 minute countdowns.

Race directors also communicate with Pit Lane about vehicles that are in the pits, directing the pace / safety car on and off the track, and calling for the suspension of the race due to any incidents.

The race director will work along side Calabogie's Corner Communicator. They are responsible for communicating with all of the Corner Marshals that watch all of the track activity. Corner Marshals will relay any issues that they see; such as mechanical problems with vehicles and any incident that occurs, such as disabled car, car to car contact, car off track or car impacting the wall.

As a race director you will have to process this information and react accordingly to ensure the safety of all involved. Any incidents must be reported to the Event and Series stewards.

Key Points for a Race Director

- Focus and concentration: Maintaining focus throughout a race, especially during critical moments like the start, finish and reacting to any incidents that occur.
- Quick decision making: Ability to react swiftly to the information received
- Communication skills: Clear communication with other officials, race marshals.
- Knowledge of race rules: Understanding the specific rules and regulations governing the race

Event Steward

Stewards fill a variety of roles within Motorsports. They are responsible for ensuring that the event runs smoothly, and as much as possible are run in a safe and fair manner.

Stewards collaborate with other officials to ensure that the proper personnel are in the required areas, and also interact with drivers regarding any issues that may be arising during the course of the event.

A Steward also fills a role that is equivalent of a referee. They are involved in reviewing incidents that occur to verify if any breaches of rules have happened. They will utilize their experience and common sense to any decisions that are made, including any penalties.

Stewards typically work in teams to avoid any conflicts or bias within any situations.

Stewards at Calabogie

Event Stewards at Calabogie work along side the Series Steward in helping ensure the safe and smooth operation of the event.

One of the primary roles is to communicate with teams and drivers, by receiving complaints or questions and assisting them with the issues. This may also include requesting drivers for information, such as on-board video, or delivering information to the driver or team; for example: Issues with a timing transponder.

The stewards will also assist other officials with their duties if required, such as delivering the grid sheets from the timing team to the grid team, or assisting the grid team with resolving any issues with the grid, such as car being out of position.

Event stewards will also participate in any reviews of incidents, and work with the Race Director, Series Steward, Track Representative and other parties when deliberating any penalties.

A Steward needs to have excellent communication and strong interpersonal skills to interact effectively with competitors, officials, and event organizers.