

FAST AMONG EQUALS

Making all the race cars the same puts everyone on a level field – and can help control costs, too. It's not just for modern hatches, either

Words: Paul Hardiman

WHETHER CONTROLLED by tyre selection, camshaft choice, power-to-weight ratio or simply banning all but the most superficial modifications, 'control' formulae for racing have never been so popular.

There's no point in anyone trying to 'buy' their way to the front of the grid with a demon engine if it's strangled with a mild cam or an air restrictor (as used by NASCAR for many years), and putting everyone on the same tyres equalises cornering speeds... theoretically. The benefits are twofold: one, costs are controlled to acceptable levels, and two, it makes for closer racing – and that's better for everyone. Here's how classic motor sport tackles it.

CATERHAMS

Caterham has been running an Academy series since 1995, in which the cars and tyres are identical. As it's a beginner's series, it guarantees drivers start out with similar experience – none! – so if you've raced before you'll need to look elsewhere.

It's open to 28 drivers per year, and Caterham boasts that in 16 years more than 750 drivers have started their competition careers with the Academy, including *Octane's* own David Lillywhite. Cost for 2104 is £21,495, which includes the car (you'll have to build it yourself) plus ARDS course, medical, test day, car-control handling day, two speed events and five races.

The current Academy cars runs 125bhp Ford Sigma power, and on the Avon CR322 control tyres they can lap Snetterton in 1min 26sec. However, the action is mighty close – so close, in fact, that the advice is to stock up on several spare wings, as they tend to get ripped off in close combat. Team support isn't allowed in this series, all technical support being provided

by Caterham. And what happens after your first year? Remember, this is for novices only; the next rung up the ladder is the Caterham Roadsport championship, with Tracksport, Supersport and Superlight after that.

// [www.http://uk.caterhamcars.com/motorsport/academy](http://uk.caterhamcars.com/motorsport/academy)

2CVs

The Classic 2CV Racing Club evens the playing field in the 2CVParts.com Championship by using a control camshaft. To be fair, there's not a huge amount of scope to make the tiny twin go a lot faster other than a big-bore kit, which isn't allowed. You can raise the compression ratio and carry out modest porting – but we're still talking only about 40bhp or so. Otherwise, suspensions can be dropped, adjustable dampers added and negative camber

is allowed at the front – with a strong recommendation to reinforce the leading arms 'Belgian style', as they easily bend.

This is partly due to the added grip of 145-section tyres – an increase over standard width of a whopping 8mm. Organisers reckon cars can be bought for £3000, and engines are worth about £1000 – you'll need at least one. A BARC scrutineer checks the models at all races.

Due to limited power, outside of Formula Ford this is probably the series where you'll learn the most about drafting; as with a roadgoing 'Deux', conservation of momentum and tidiness is all. Unusually, this series features a 24-hour race at the end of the season, during which time it's not uncommon for a team to go through a couple of engines; the practised can change one in just minutes.

// www.2cvracing.org.uk

