Race Director Briefing

2026 Mission Foods SCCA National Championship Runoffs

Jeffrey Niess, Oregon Region

As your Race Director, I'm looking forward to serving in this role. If you haven't done so already, please watch the Race Director Video as it's a more comprehensive discussion this briefing highlights. You can find the full slate of Event Officials for this year's event here.

ROLE OF THE RACE DIRECTOR:

The Race Director (RD) executes the event under the rules of the GCR/Supps and maintains the order of the event. I will be in a trailer located adjacent to Impound, found here on this map. As with last year, the Race Director will be involved in the "actions" loop early on. This should continue to:

- → Speed up the overall decision process
- → Provide quicker access to the RD
- → Increase RD availability to the Drivers/Entrants

TRAILER TOWN – UPDATED LOCATION

When looking at the map, you'll notice that the other stewards' trailer has been moved next to the RD trailer for 2026. This will:

- → Support the goal of increasing the timeliness of Protests and RD actions
- → Provide drivers and entrants with shorter commutes to the Stewards Of the Meeting (SOM) and Court Of Appeals for hearings
- → Provide the Stewards involved in actions easier access to each other.

STEWARD ACTION PROCESS (THREE POSSIBILITIES IF AN ACTION IS LIKELY):

- → Tower does a CSA (Chief Steward's Action) if they can make a quick call.
- → If not, Tower sends drivers to Race Director for a mini-hearing (typically less than 10 minutes)
    - If RD decides to rule, a CSA concludes the matter. If the RD decides not to rule, there's no action taken.
- → A driver does have the option to protest the CSA (if they do not accept the outcome) or the other party (if there is no action from the RD)
- → If the RD can't decide in a reasonable time, the RD can issue a RFA (Request for Action) which sends the matter to the Stewards of the Meeting (SOM) for a full hearing where it starts from scratch (can result in a few hours to resolve)

PROTEST PROCESS (SAME AS LAST YEAR):

- → Starts by seeing RD (notice of intent to protest)
- → The RD will introduce you to the Driver Advisors (share the same trailer as the RD)
- → Once you have everything in order, we'll send you to Competitor Services (next to the RD trailer) to officially file the paper and pay the $150 fee

REGISTRATION REMINDERS:

Registration has the same team as 2024 & 2025, and based on feedback, they will be offering Express Check-In for those drivers who:

- → Gear Inspected in 2026
- → Helmet Sticker for 2026
- → 2026 Annual Tech for Car
- → All Notations in Logbook are Resolved
- → Entry requires NO changes

Don't have that squared away? No problem! You'll get your wristband(s) at registration and then head to the Hagerty Garage for Express Tech, just like last year.

CREDENTIALS:

Wristbands will need to be worn on the wrist to assist with easy identification and help support a smoother event experience for participants, volunteers, and track staff. Drivers will have their own unique wristband this year too!

MUST HAVE ITEMS TO GO ON TRACK:

- → Test Day Sticker on your car – for appropriate day, if applicable
- → 2026 Runoffs Sticker
- → Past Runoffs Stickers Covered or Taped Over
- → Operational Transponder (not optional)
- → Functioning and Updated Flagtronics (not optional)
- → Credentials worn on your wrist
- → Mission Foods decals on both sides of your car

Please DON'T take it out on a grid worker if you are not 'Track Ready.'

TEST DAY & QUALIFYING REMINDERS:

- → Checker Location is T13 (your session is over – do not proceed to S/F)
  - Courtesy Black Flag at T14 (Reminder that your session is over – pit immediately)
  - Penalty for running checker during qualifying is loss of the day's times
- → Timing Line is between T 13 and T14
  - Don't slow down until entering T14!
- → Multiple Safety Cars are Possible for FCY
  - We won't drop the yellows until the last safety car is in
  - Don't resume speed just because your safety car left the track – Look for Flag Condition before resuming green flag speed.
- → See Supps 5.17 for further details on Qualifying:
  - Gridding for each session
  - Out-lap Procedures (note, there will be yellow flags, so pay attention)
  - Qualifying Etiquette (impeding will be penalized)

RACE START & RE-START PROCEDURES:

- → Based on the survey we will use the Acceleration Zone
- → Applies to Race Starts and Restarts
- → Defined by start banners on the front straight
- → Leader must *maintain safety car speed* at least until reaching the first start banner.
  - The leader may then accelerate at a point of their choosing once their car has entered the Start Zone.
  - If they haven't accelerated by the second start banner, the starter will wave the green at that point.

SAFE ON-TRACK BEHAVIOR

- → More to it than just avoiding contact
- → And more than just *your* safety
- → Local Yellow Flag Response
  - Yellow Flags (waving or standing) mean more than "no passing"
  - The rules for standing and waving yellows both say, "SLOW SIGNIFICANTLY"

LOCAL YELLOW SCENARIOS – OVERVIEW

- → SLOW SIGNIFICANTLY is subjective
- → Slow enough that a corner worker can tell that you slowed; *waiving at them as you go by goes a long way*
- → Flaggers have been and will again be briefed to watch for bad responses
- → Different scenarios require different responses
  - Right next to the track vs 50' off
  - Are there boots on the ground?
  - Is there a rescue vehicle on or adjacent to the track?
- → If you feel a need to disagree with a Yellow Flag penalty - video or data will need to show a significant difference

FLAGTRONICS

- → Watch Eric Prill's latest video to understand how the use of Flagtronics has evolved
- → Make sure your Flagtronics system is up to date to avoid hassles with officials.
  - Flagtronics Firmware Update Guide
  - Flagtronics Download Page
- → See Tech for help if you need updating or questions about your transponder
- → Non-functioning units will trigger penalties

RACING IN THE RAIN

- → The GCR gives us two options:
  - If we are less than halfway, we can stop the race and give the drivers 15 minutes to change tires
  - If we are halfway or more that flexibility goes away, but we can throw an early checker
- → Pit stops are not a normal part of SCCA Road Racing
- → Rain racing can produce surprising winners
- → Race control absolutely does NOT want to be part of the story

THE RACE CLOCK

- → 40-minute window to finish a 13-lap race
- → If we are under Red Flag conditions, we will likely leave the clock running
- → If there is a delay and the clock runs out, we can add laps or time to extend the race
- → One shot at a Green, White, Checker (2 GF laps)
- → No one-lap shootouts

FROM THE FAIR WARNING DEPARTMENT

- → Losing position on the pace lap – do not regain your position
  - May only rejoin at the back (Penalties are HUGE, just go to the back)
  - Different on restarts, just fall into place wherever you are
- → Pit Lane Speed Limit – 45mph (Flagtronics is watching)
- → Remember: Not visibly slowing for a yellow flag zone is bad and when there are *boots on the ground* – it is much worse.
- → READ the Supps. Review the Supps before the event.
- → Hardship Laps are allowed at end of each qualifying and race session. Permission is given out by the Stewards of the Course located in the SOC tent in impound.
  - Hardship lap exit is in Turn 5
- → Your travel plans don't excuse your obligation to be in impound. And penalties for not allowing your car to complete post-race scrutineering are huge. Please plan accordingly.

FROM THE FAIR WARNING DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED)

- → No passing under a Full Course Black Flag
- → RED Flag: Come to a safe, controlled stop off to the side of the track, preferably in sight of a flag station – wait for a release from an official and come into the pits.
- → The 115% rule may allow you to race, but it doesn't guarantee you will be allowed to stay in the race.
- → A defense against being penalized should not include; "*I wasn't the only one doing it*". You can protest others that we don't know about.
- → Pro Tip: After qualifying and races ensure your crew ALWAYS have your Fuel Testing equipment with them in impound…you just never know…
- → Voluntary Tech concludes with the start of Qualifying
- → If you are considering a *voluntary scale* post qualify, remember the car weight is official and those are *tech officials* looking at you as you sit on the scale.
- → Tech opens at 7:30 AM September 28 and closes at 8:00 PM CDT every night except Tuesday and Friday when it closes at 6:00 PM.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- → RE-Reread the Supps
- → Let's settle this with lots of Green Flag racing
- → Respect Yellows (Make this NOT an issue)
- → Be smart, be kind and be safe.
- → Thank a volunteer.
- → We're all here to celebrate this great sport and to crown National Champions

---

Thank you again for being part of the largest, most respected amateur road racing championship in the world. You represent an elite group of SCCA racers, and we are excited to spend the week at the National Park of Speed. Whether it is your first or your 31st Runoffs, we celebrate your journey to make it here. Please honor the rich history of the SCCA Runoffs with safe, exciting and entertaining racing.

Thanks, and I look forward to seeing you at Road America!



Jeffrey Niess, SCCA Runoffs Race Director