

Folks,

My kids had another wonderful experience with the Electrathon vehicles and they learn more every year as I pull much of my time and instruction away. Thanks for the challenge.

I am wondering with the races still fresh in our minds is we want to shoot a few ideas down here for possible changes next season??

I would be interested in two changes; one that may help clarify just how good our vehicles really are and another that may help differentiate the vehicle classes.

First, I would propose one race being a non-pit stop race, now that we have seen both venues I would propose that WIR become that race.

Secondly, I would propose that a class 3 vehicle not be able to win the overall event and grand champion award. Upon reflecting on the trip back my students questioned the comparison of adult vehicles competing with student vehicles. I found this to be a good point because my class is limited to students enrolled in a public high school and class 3 vehicles are open to everyone. My kids would not have a prayer of competing against the likes of Steven Cloud or a group of Tech Teachers from anyone of our great schools or a group of practicing Engineers.

These are just some thoughts, what are yours??

Damon

I guess my opinion needs to hear from NWTC and what they have to say about this and their success this year. Would tech colleges look at our organization still as a viable opportunity if there were not awards available to them or would it still be a challenge for them to jump into either way?

Jesse Domer, Watertown High School

(Class 4-Experimental) I would like some thought put into a Class 4. Now I for one completely understand the cost and paperwork that goes along with a new class entry as I have dealt with it personally many times on both sides of the wall... However hear me out.

Supermileage started the Unlimited Class (at the time called "concept class") about 8 years ago. This was due to some cars (EC North) pushing the limits with 2 cycle fuels, Electric Motors, Generators, etc... We wanted a viable place for those teams to challenge their designs and be against their own, not a refined Stock or Modified engine team. At that time there were only 1-2 unlimited cars, but today we are looking at 11 Unlimited cars a year trying things from diesel to 2-cycle to what have you. It gives teams the opportunity and "place" to test the limits and try something new!

Currently Electrathon in my opinion does not have that place. It is called class 3 which truly is the place where the "TOP" teams should be competing! Most teams in other states are running cars over \$3,300.00 and very few cars in class 1. This is due to expensive carbon shells and high end motors and what not. I am not condoning costly cars, but I am against our saying Class 3 is not the place for the high end trials... How can a team truly consider themselves a high end team in class 3 with a truly endurance built vehicle when they are in the same class as Watertown's "xrv"... So in my opinion we need to open a class 4 which would be designed for the "experimental concepts" that class 3 has written in it such as battery types, or amounts... OR who knows in the future!!!!!!!!!!

OK, Now that I have slammed our "xrv" numerous times here, I feel I need to prove it's worth before I get advisors complaining again about it... Watertown took the opportunity this year and next year to design and build our #37

car-XRV. The purpose behind it is to give our students a better opportunity to engineer and build concepts such as a full rack and pinion steering, four wheel hydraulic disc brakes, all DOT rubber, front and rear suspension, a working differential in the rear, and so on. These are concepts many of us would not attempt in our competitive "endurance" vehicles as they are too heavy!!! This vehicle still stopped in under 7' at 24 mph!!! (the car is 12' long) By allowing Watertown to enter their #37 car, we were able to give SOO many more teachable moments to our members than we would have ever attempted in our team with competitive endurance vehicles! So that is my statement and request...

P.S., lets order some better weather next year while we are at it J

Jesse Domer, Watertown High School

No Pits- I think it's a good idea at dells and WIR because of the nature of tracks.

I'd prefer to stay away from another class, the reason I like Electrathon is because it's so simple. I do like the idea of an "Experimental" class but I thought that's what 3 was set up for in the beginning. If it's too limiting then maybe we could change the rules in 3 to allow for more.

We have to remember that we did not set up class 3... We adopted and modified from Iowa.

We currently have two overlying goals of our class 3. Take my request as you may, Watertown will participate either way the state chooses to run. My personal opinion and personal history has shown that a separate experimental/unlimited class allows for the state to grow and think outside of the box more in the long run.(Could a vehicle compete that used electricity to power a hydrogen fuel cell in Electrathon in the future?)

P.S., I am fine with or without pit-stops, Electrathon America does not require pit-stops, nor do they require roll cages...

Jesse Domer, Watertown High School

Hot laps... Would it be possible to allow our vehicles out on the track in the morning once we are set up before our first heat at either event to get the driver acquainted with the track and or car prior to them being thrown out on the track for the first time with all the other cars? We are truly there to test out what we have designed and built, but 2 times on the track is not giving us a ton of data necessarily. We also rarely have the opportunity to get our vehicles up to speed or full potential at our schools for safety reasons with parking lots or city streets or what have you, so having a chance to get the vehicles on the track even more to test things out with gearing or brakes or steering or handling at high speeds prior to our first heat would help...

Jesse Domer, Watertown High School

www.GoslingElectric.com

Great to see discussions happening on this subject - This is what keeps a program like Electrathon going.

1. Hot laps would be great - don't know how we are going to do it with SM cars out there
2. Classes - what has been said by Jesse is correct. I also see the need for a truly and experimental class. Lets continue to look at a class 4 and make class 3 similar to Iowa with no spending limits
3. Maybe we should do away with the overall grand champion (combined classes) and just have a GC for each

class?

4. Lets look at batteries again - especially the NAPA orbital. We all have NAPA's in our towns. If they sponsored competitions or sold batteries at 1/2 price that would be great. Anyone researched how it would compare to Optima's

If we make one race without a pit stop would it be the first or second heat?

I agree with your thoughts on Class 3 being eligible for the overall awards. Another concept to look at is the fact that this year a Class 3 vehicle was rewarded more braking points than a Class one vehicle, even though the Class one outperformed the Class 3 vehicle. (we could end up with an erroneous overall winner) Since braking is more of a safety thing, not performance under power, I question this. Perhaps there are other examples like this. I haven't spent that much time reviewing results.

Allan

How about having instructor/advisor hot laps. I got to thinking, after all the years I've been involved with Electrathon I have never taken a ride around one of the real tracks. I was going to Sat., but I didn't fit in the car

I understand and agree with your concerns regarding a class 3 vehicle winning the overall event. The technology that is available to a tech school team is an unfair advantage.

Send us some of your students and there will be a real unfair advantage.

Russ

NWTC

Folks,

Thanks all for the input, your input on this listserve is what make our group great. At this point in this string I want to restate what I am hearing and clarify a few points that have been made:

Seems like there is interest in Hot Laps. This to me seems reasonable and meaningful for the kids. They certainly could garner a lot of information on gears, amperage draw, performance, and etc. It also seems reasonable that RA and WIR seem nearly large enough to accommodate both SMV and electric vehicles at once.

Seems like there is an understanding that adult teams may have more technology and resources available to them, therefore, should not necessarily be included in any overall awards. They may, however, qualify for individual class awards.

Seems like there is interest in having one complete race be without pits to accurately assess vehicle efficiency be it FVTC (WIR) or Dells. These locations were suggested because of the possible spectator appeal.

Seems like there are concerns with braking and maneuverability and the points awarded. If my memory serves me correct, originally there was only one overall award for breaking and maneuverability, not one for each class. I am sure this was due to the fact that there were only a few vehicles involved. I like having lots of trophies available to a lot of different teams; maybe we should combine the old with the new and give trophies per class but points based on the overall number of vehicles and distance or speed?

Finally, it seems there is interest in another class. While I love the idea of concept vehicles and stretching student thinking; we need to keep in mind the intent of this competition and that is endurance of 67lbs of battery in a single student electric vehicle. Perhaps to accommodate all vehicles we might want to expand the event away from a competition and more into an exhibition of electric vehicles and alternative sources of energy?

This is just a recap of what has been written; I hope I have captured all of the points that were brought forth, if I have missed any please help me out. Please remember that no decisions on these or other rules have been made and changes will only be made by the Electrathon board under the direction of Sara.

What are more of your thoughts????

Damon

I too also believe "Hot Laps" would be a great idea. It would give the students a place to go out and test their car at the level they may not be able to achieve around their school.

I also feel that the point system for the event champion needs to be looked at. We may want to bunch all the classes together much like what is already being done in the design portion of the competition. Currently a car in class 1 with a braking distance of 10 feet may get 50 point toward the event champion where a class 2 car with a braking distance with 22 feet may also receive 50 points.

As a new team this year I want to say a big thank you for all the help that was given from the different school especially Green Bay Preble. The students really enjoyed working and talking with all the other schools. It's nice to be involved with an organization that works well together.

The reason we did that was so class 1 and 2 cars would not have to compete (braking) against a class 3 with four large tires and plenty of braking resistance.

I do agree that something must be changed for an adult teams and tech schools. However I would like to request that class awards still be available. Evan though we may have an advantage it's really nice to be rewarded for hard work. My hope is that more colleges compete next year, and the trick to that will be to get the word out to as many as possible. Maybe then we can separate high school and college. We all must remember that this competition is growing and the appropriate changes may not be correct till things begin to level out. I know that I threw a wrench in the system with the involvement of NWTC, but I think in the long run college involvement will be very beneficial not only for the competition but for industry. I really appreciate all the work that so many people put into this, and I know that these people need to be recognized for it. I call for more communication to all types of schools and industry. Now is the time to get people involved with our looming energy crisis. I personally will try to stay involved, however saying that I am graduating college next week and starting a very involved career the following week. Just as Russ said, send your students to NWTC and you'll really be in trouble LOL.

Thanks

Ryan Wenzlick

Maybe we should just make an award for non high school (adult) participants? There are some high schools in class 3 and it would not be fair to cut them out either. Just a thought.

Jay

To start with I'm not trying to get Wisconsin to change anything to suit me, I'm from Nebraska. I would like to run an adult owned car in your state. Will adult teams be allowed in 2009? Here we have always used pit stops. I like that because it promotes teamwork. Also, everyone likes to drive don't they? Occasionally a team can't get 2 drivers on some days. Presently a 1 driver team stops in their pit, stays in the car 45 seconds then goes. That seems to satisfy most teams the best. In the past a 30 second stop, a 1 min. stop, & getting out & circling the car were tried. I don't want trophies & awards. I want a place to test my car on which I tried my ideas & theories. Things our student teams don't necessarily agree with. Stan

I agree! We have talked about opening up these events more and more to tech colleges and that would not be much different then opening to adult at the same time. The entire scope is promoting education through this challenge focusing on Energy Conservation, Engineering and Manufacturing! Be it HS, Tech College or Adults testing the waters.

I do understand there needs to be criteria set for where there are awards, where there are prizes and where there is just exhibition. With that, teams also need to qualify for a "minimum" standard of rules, and I believe we do a good job of following most of the mid-west as standardized regulations.

Keep sending us your input and the board will have to make a decision in the near future. You have my vote (If I could vote)...

Jesse Domer, Watertown High School

Hello teams,

I want to try to explain a scoring change that I would like to implement this season. Thank you for Travis Schindel at Bonduel for pointing this out last year. If you have any comments or questions, please post them here.

I would like to have a "combined class" score for each event (braking, maneuverability, design, and endurance) to be used to determine the overall event winner and overall season winner (Grand Champion). This scoring would be for the purpose of determine the overall event and overall season winners only.

I would also still like to separate vehicles by classes so we can award the same amount of trophies as last year (1-3rd place per class for endurance; 1st place per class for braking; 1st place per class for maneuverability; and 1st and runner-up for design).

Reason: If a Class 2 vehicle stops in 15' in the braking competition, but did the best for that class, they would receive 50 points. If a Class 1 vehicle stops in 11' and did the third best in that class, they would receive only 47 points. However, when calculating the overall event award, why should they vehicle that stopped in a longer distance get more points than the car that stopped in a shorter distance? The overall event winner and Grand Champion should look at the overall best braking, maneuverability, design and endurance points...not separated by class.

I hope this makes sense. Thanks!

I like the concept, just see it adding more administrative calculations for Sara and your volunteers.

The one thing I do not see in the calculation listed is the Monthly reports. Is that only calculated into the "Grand Champion" award and not the "Overall Event" awards?

Jesse Domer, Watertown High School

Yes, the monthly reports and final reports are only calculated into the Grand Champion award. Thanks for asking.

As some of you may know, I may or may not be at the spring competitions because I am expecting (due May 8). Because of this reason, I have asked Damon Smith (Eau Claire North) to be present at the events in my place. He will be coordinating the Electrathon events at both Road America and Fox Valley Tech./WIR. I will still be coordinating everything up until the point I'm no longer able, so please continue to call and email me with questions, etc.

If you have questions during the events, please look for Damon.

When preparing for the maneuverability competition, please remember that you will be asked to make two runs: the first run you'll start from the left side of the first cone and the second run you'll start from the right side. This will confirm that the vehicle has adequate steering both ways. The average time of the two runs will be used to determine your score.

If you can only make one run for whatever reason (you break down, etc.), we will average your one run with the highest run time made that day.

Damon,

I am sorry but I have to disagree with you. My kids are building (rebuilding a chassis) a class 3 vehicle, and though I would be surprised that they would, I don't believe that they should be disqualified because of the class. If we want to keep the awards for the High School teams, to which this competition is targeted, then that would be fair. But to disqualify a team because they chose to build a certain class I don't believe would be right.

Jay Olenski

I think you are making sense. Kind of surprised you didn't do this earlier. You have my support.

Jay