

SPEEDGROUP steps into Sportsman racing - acquires NDRS Drag Racing Series



Swedish Dragracing's chairman Kjell Pettersson hands over NDRS to Speedgroup's CEO Michael Gullqvist
photo: Stefan Boman

After two years as administrator of the FIA European Drag Racing Championship, Speedgroup has extended its operations to encompass Sportsman racing. Speedgroup has taken over responsibility for Europe's biggest Sportsman programme, the NDRS Drag Racing Series. The Swedish series, SDL (Swedish Dragracing League), which is partly integrated with NDRS, will also fall under Speedgroup's control.

Around 450 teams in seven car and two motorcycle classes competed in 2010's NDRS Drag Racing Series. Kjell Pettersson, a founding member of the Swedish Dragracing Association and NDRS, initiated discussions about the takeover as the next logical step in developing the series. Pettersson foresaw synergy benefits in merging with Speedgroup, which is already involved in developing drag racing at European championship level. By February 2011 most elements of the merger had been completed and Speedgroup assumes responsibility for NDRS with immediate effect.

"Sportsman racing forms the foundation to all drag racing," states Speedgroup's CEO, Michael Gullqvist. "The NDRS Drag Racing Series is a powerful platform for the further growth of drag racing in Europe." Speedgroup's chairman, Gunnar Janson, who led the negotiations, confirms that the board of directors stands united behind the decision.

The NDRS Drag Racing Series 2011

"NDRS will be run as normal during 2011 while we integrate the NDRS systems with the way we manage the FIA and UEM championship classes," explains Gullqvist. "There'll be some new features introduced, however. For instance, the Speedgroup Drivers & Riders Club for teams active in the NDRS Drag Racing Series will be launched next month. We're also intensifying our efforts in the areas of communication and visibility. We'll be communicating with teams, organisers, class associations and federations to obtain feedback and knowledge from the various different parties involved in the series. We're preparing for further developments to take place in 2012."

The founders of Svensk Dragracing and the NDRS Drag Racing Series wish to thank organisers, sponsors and teams for their co-operation over many years. They are also keen to express their gratitude to the various individuals who have been involved in building and running the series throughout this time.

There is a special word of appreciation for BILSPORT magazine and its leading figures, publisher Stig Sjöberg and marketing director Janet Svensson. They recognised the NDRS concept's potential early on. Since then BILSPORT has been an important media and business partner to the series and remains so today.

NDRS Drag Racing Series facts:

At present, the series includes 10 races in four countries. Some of the events are combined with the European Drag Racing Championship. Information about classes and the race calendar for the NDRS Drag Racing Series and SDL (Swedish Dragracing League) can be found at www.speedgroup.eu

Speedgroup facts:

Speedgroup Aktiebolag, a company registered in Sweden, has some 75 European shareholders, the majority of whom are involved in the FIA/UEM European Drag Racing Championship. Speedgroup has administered the FIA European Drag Racing Championship (for cars) since 2009 and has served as assistant administrator to promoter Keith Bartlett for the UEM European Drag Racing Championship (for motorcycles) since 2010. Speedgroup's responsibilities include TV production and marketing of the European Championship. Speedgroup's long-term goal is the continuing development of drag racing in Europe. www.speedgroup.eu

NDRS Drag Racing Series/Svensk Dragracing background:

Svensk Dragracing (the Swedish Drag Racing Association) was founded in 1993 by Kjell Pettersson, Lars Pettersson and Sussy Hofbauer to celebrate the 25th anniversary of drag racing's introduction in Sweden. The founders' intention was to raise drag racing's profile in Sweden and to develop the sport throughout the Nordic countries. That same year, Svensk Dragracing inaugurated the Super Cups series, to support the newly introduced "Super classes", Super Gas, Super Street and Super Comp. In 1994 the series was renamed the Nordic Drag Racing Series, the Competition Eliminator and Stock/Super Stock classes were added and two new officers took on key tasks: Mats "Macka" Eriksson took charge of the association's finances, a position he still holds today, and Olle Elfqvist built and managed a sponsorship programme that enjoyed long-term success. In 1999, the series became the NDRS Drag Racing Series and the Pro Modified class was introduced. Today Pro Mod is the European Drag Racing Championship's largest class and remains part of the NDRS Drag Racing Series. From its inception the series included numerous events which tracks such as Mantorp Park continue to host. Svensk Dragracing's founders were quick to forge good relations with the USA's chief sanctioning body, the National Hot Rod Association, and, over the years, American support, knowledge and advice has proved highly valuable.



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