



Talking RallyCross 2016

The 2015 season is barely completed, but now is the time to plan on making RallyCross a success next year throughout Midwest Division SCCA. Timely subjects:

- Scheduling for 2016
- Potential divisional RallyCross championship series
- Leadership roles
- Maximize your offseason



Are we there yet? Having fun during RallyCross season 2016 starts today.

Scheduling

Secret Car Club of America

We can't hook participants if they can't plan their lives around events. People willing to stand in a dust cloud all day are not typically shut-ins. They're likely racing in other programs, involved in family, working, and generally not sitting on their hands waiting for you to post your next event announcement.

A common problem this year was last-minute organization and promotion of events. Quite a few sanction requests went to the National office less than two weeks to spare. We got away with it without late fee probably more than we deserve. Not only does last-minute organization frustrate the over-scheduled, but it limits the spread of awareness. Give your audience dates as far in advance as you can.

The Calendar Game

Your RallyCross events compete with countless other races for a limited number of weekends and sites in a year. After ClubRacing and especially

Solo grab their dates, regional RallyCrosses start to stack up on top of the same days. This happened more than once this year, likely to the detriment of both regions involved. The way to fix this is to be way ahead of the game.

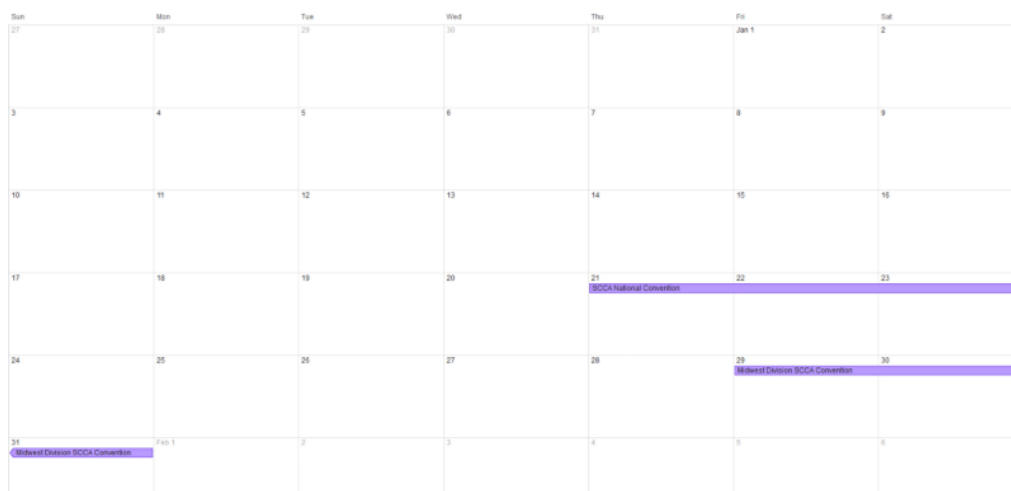


2016 RallyCross Nationals dates were published in mid-November.

The one must-avoid conflict continues to be RallyCross Nationals. The RallyCross Board of Directors has kept a ban on sanction requests for events the week before Nationals. 2015 was a crunch due to negotiations with the Balloon Classic complex in Indianola, Iowa. By the time they granted a date to the RXB, most regions had already settled their schedules for the year.

RallyCross Nationals 2016 will be in Indianola again, and the RXB had more time this year to hammer out a date. The 2016 event will be Friday, September 30, through Sunday, October 2. For regional chairpersons, **that means a RallyCross blackout September 24–25, 2016 along with the RX Nationals weekend.** Also, the ClubRacing Majors schedule has been out for a few weeks, and National Solo and MiDiv ClubRacing should start to coalesce before the end of the year. The nearest RallyCross National Challenge will be in Colorado on August 5–7. I always fill in a **Google Calendar** with known dates, so feel free to use that to get a snap shot of things to come.

Start thinking about how many regional events is suitable for your region, which site(s) are available (surface wear considerations and all), and how they might be distributed throughout the year. Weather contingencies and alternate dates are also something else to think about. As the calendar starts to fill this winter, be ready to move.



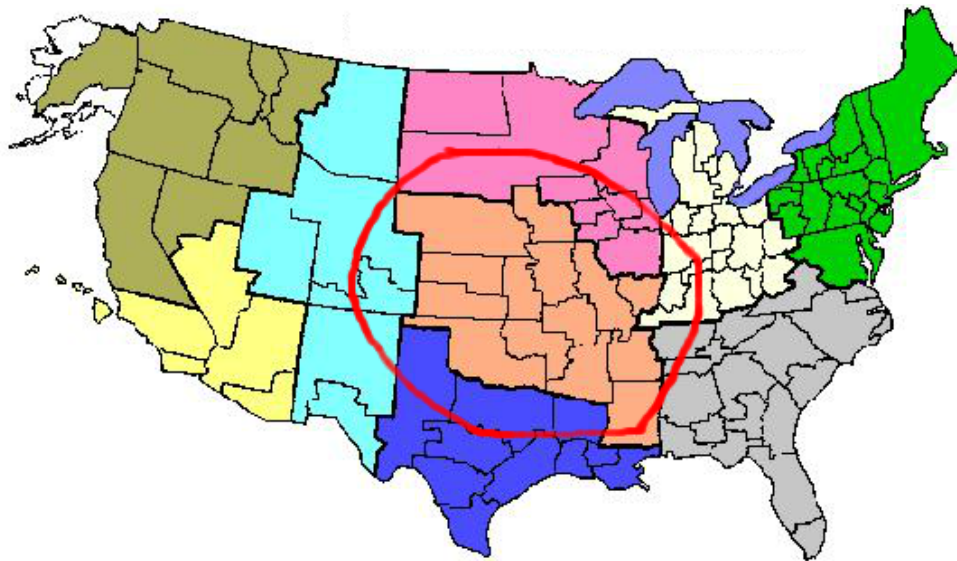
Google Calendars is a great method to input events and see how conflicts may arise.

Midwest Division RallyCross Championship

Changes for 2016

Up until now, every division expected to host a RallyCross National Challenge event, and in most places it was combined with the divisional-level championship event. However, history has shown that many of these National Challenges amounted to glorified regional events that lasted two days. Sponsors and the RXB both felt that the status quo was not an effective use of contingency sponsorship or worthy of deeming a national-level activity.

The discussion began at the town hall meeting during RallyCross Nationals in August 2015. The idea was to elevate only a few key events to National Challenge status, offer more support from the SCCA national office, and generally elevate the competitor experience. Challenges in the east, west, and middle of the country were selected based on healthy turnouts (read more here). MiDiv has many factors in its favor (location, location, location), but unfortunately large head counts have not been one of them.



We're in the middle of it all, but what should MiDiv RallyCross look like next year?

What for Midwest Division?

As a group, we are free to come up with any divisional-level championship event or series that we like. It all comes down to the motivation of host regions and their ability to provide a better-than-regional-grade experience. What would that entail? Now is the time to discuss it.

Kansas City Region has voiced potential interest in some kind of involvement in 2016. MiDiv also has two recent RallyCross Nationals host sites if the venues are available and the local volunteers have the interest. Northeast Oklahoma, Ozark Mountain, and St. Louis Regions all experimented with an inter-regional event in 2015, as well. Those are just a few ingredients for a MiDiv-wide championship if we want to go there.

However, before we jump at the mere idea of a divisional championship, we would need to ask ourselves what exactly we want from an event. MiDiv Solo has seen a decline in attendance over the years, despite an arguably strong quality of events. We want to give ourselves the flexibility to follow the formula that works the best, not just follow what we know.

Some drivers want a multi-day competition to maximize their seat time for their travel dollar. Other competitors like the increased competition and social aspect of getting everyone together, but are less enthusiastic about the time and lodging commitment of an entire weekend. I've heard it both ways. Is a "1.5-day" event with only a single competition day "special" enough?

Conversely, would more full-weekend RallyCrosses in an already packed schedule be appealing?

Vision from the MiDiv Steward

Ideally, we want everyone to go home happy, regardless of weather or turnout. I believe that entails a strong social component for entrants when competition is not under way. Host regions would want to play to their strengths and site amenities. If you are close to a bigger population center, have a karting night or similar. If you're closer to a recreational or scenic area, have a cookout or bonfire. Racing of any kind attracts the like-minded. Even the hardest-working organizers should have time to unwind with their racing friends.

Speaking in the ideal again, I would also like to see regions throughout the division involved. The Midwest is physically large and spread out, and not everyone has the means to get to every corner of the division, every time. At least one reasonably near event might embolden a competitor to travel farther, where a geographically narrow championship might be discouraging.

I want your ideas. Send me an email and talk to me.

Leaders Wanted

Divisional Steward and Deputy

I previously outlined what the **MiDiv RallyCross Steward does**, along with the deputy steward role. Midwest Division currently has no deputy steward, and I would like to get more people involved. I can either sit in the divisional steward's seat until I can't do it anymore, or I can reach out to you and start expanding our base of knowledge and perspective. We need to take turns getting RallyCross-smart. Bench strength.

Ultimately, what we want is a rotation of new people and ideas. Holding the reins for a year or two is solid experience, and leaving the role doesn't mean you lose your ability to influence the sport for the better. In fact, having a body of former divisional stewards would give us wide, long term support. Those officially holding the title could lean on experienced predecessors all over the map.



RallyCross runs on volunteer leadership and new ideas.

In the ideal again, I want to see a geographic spread in our divisional steward and deputy steward positions. Having an advocate and mentor in both halves of our large division helps give regions more opportunities to have on-the-ground support. Maybe it won't work out that way every time, but it's a better way to do things.

Serving your club should not be a chore or a life sentence. I can continue being your MiDiv RX Steward because no one wants to do it, but I would rather turn it over because someone wants to help and knows that a controlled transition makes it an easy job. RallyCross is still a relatively small program, so it's not a difficult role, nor does it have a large time commitment.

Come be the MiDiv deputy steward, and I'll tell you everything I know. Alternatively, if you want to try the top spot, I'll be your deputy steward. Or better yet, let's get two new people here, and I can assist you both. Email me and tell me what you think.

RallyCross Board of Directors

The RXB is concerned with all RallyCross happenings nationwide. Given how often our division hosts RallyCross Nationals, having a presence on the

RXB is never a bad idea. Mark Macoubrie from MiDiv stepped into an empty position, which is great. If you would like to know more and eventually serve on the RXB, just ask and I will help find out more.

MiDiv Convention Topics

The 2016 Midwest Division SCCA Convention will be held in Topeka, Kansas, Friday evening, January 29, through Sunday morning, January 31. Registration is open on MotorsportReg. If you have never been to the MiDiv convention, Friday evening is a casual reception, followed by Saturday morning educational seminars and collaborative sessions. Saturday afternoon covers MiDiv voting and business, ending on Saturday evening with a MiDiv awards banquet. Last year we held a combined RallyCross and Solo Safety Steward training seminar on Sunday morning. You can attend the seminars, safety steward training only, or the preferably the whole thing. It's one good chance for all regional stakeholders to get together in person and gear up for the coming season.

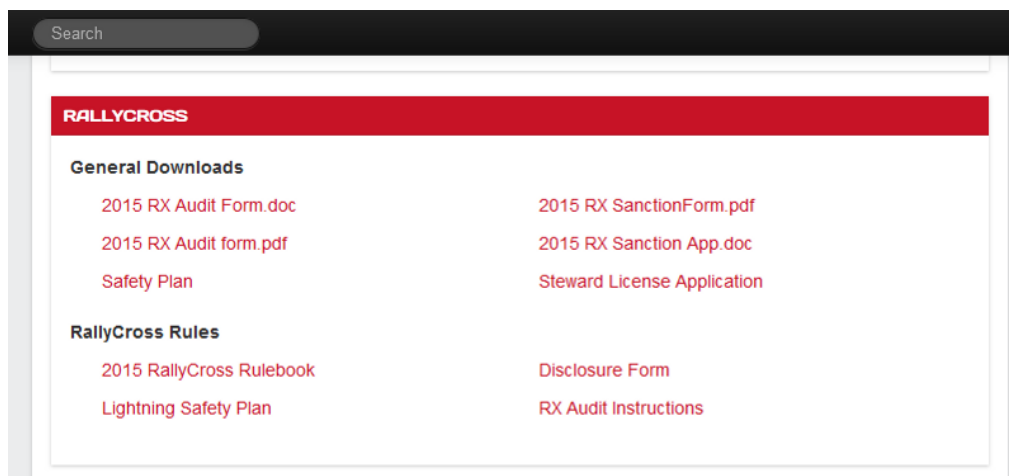
There will be a RallyCross session at the MiDiv convention, and I am charged with coordinating the content. I would like this to be a two-way dialogue. If you have any ideas or requests, please share.

Maximizing the Offseason

Sharpen the Tools

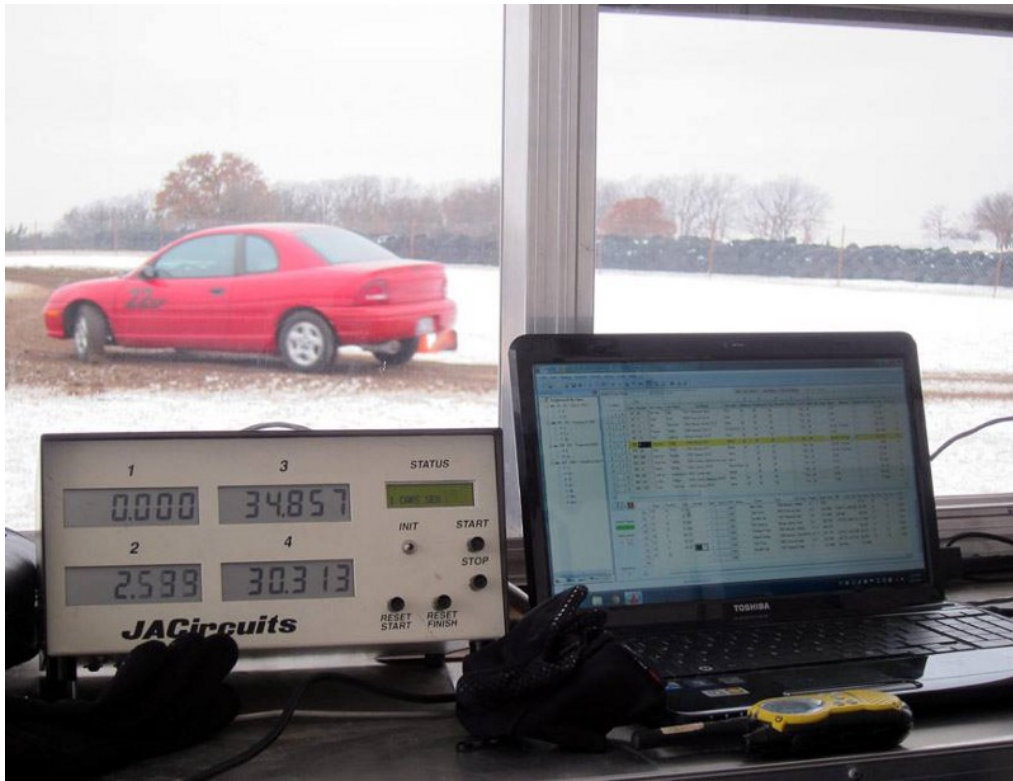
Your first event of the year is not the time to find out the timing equipment is broken and you're all out of minor waivers. Get your equipment in order during this downtime and make it easy on yourself next year.

- Make sure your RallyCross paperwork is fully stocked. There is a link to the region supplies order form at SCCA.com/Downloads. Boxes of waivers and minor waivers are \$5 each plus shipping, and incident forms are free plus shipping. Also ask for some RallyCross site acquisition packets and free SCCA promotional materials. You can print some items yourself with a color printer.



SCCA.com/Downloads has many forms available for your RallyCross program.

- How many armbands and tech stickers do you have? Ask your region to buy them while you're thinking about it.
- Clean and test the timing equipment. Did anything go wrong during the year? Fix it now. Source or fabricate spares if you need them. If you use pneumatic hoses with an air switch, it might be worth checking that the switch diaphragm is still in adjustment.
- Trailer hard parts: current Snell helmets, charged fire extinguishers, flags for marking cones, a shovel for rocks that emerge, dust masks, rope/caution tape/flag rolls for crowd control, PA and speakers, etc. Get some regional volunteers together for trailer cleanup and maintenance, and see what you are lacking or need to replace.
- Cones: cull the totally junker cones, and see if you need to buy more. If your program operates independently of Solo, see if they have some blemished cones that they want to donate in favor of shiny new ones. New cones are \$105 per 20 if you get them from the SCCA, and instructions for ordering are in the regional supply order form mentioned above.
- Set a reminder for early 2016 to download or buy the 2016 RallyCross rulebook and any other forms that might be revised.



Avoid delays and make a good impression on entrants by having your equipment ready to go.

Build Bench Strength

PLAN TO ATTEND
MiDiv

2016 MiDiv Convention
January 29th and 31st
Capitol Plaza Hotel
in Topeka, KS

- Get some people from your region interested in attending the MiDiv Convention at the end of January. Not only does it get people thinking

creatively and enthusiastic, but it's an easy time to knock out RXSS and SSS training.

- Talk to me about your RXSS training needs. We always need more, and let's the ball rolling way ahead of racing season.
- Ask for volunteers. Make a call via your usual outlets (Facebook, newsletters, forums, etc.) for people to step up and help with some part of your program, however small. It could be learning the timing system, course design, or simple calls to coordinate porta johns and the like. When members are engaged, they feel like stakeholders and want to see RallyCross thrive. Winter is a great time to have a meeting at someone's house or pub space, and get them excited for the coming year.
- Have a physical presence at your region's monthly meetings. If you need board members to warm up to your RallyCross needs (equipment, sites, etc.), bring a few people and start talking RallyCross formally and informally. Also, your local club leaders may connections to new RallyCross sites.
- Always be researching those new RallyCross sites. Having multiple sites is ideal, and it brings in fresh faces every time you go somewhere new. It also rotates surface wear among several locations. Racetracks, farms, fairgrounds, and other sites tend to be idle and making zero money during the coldest months, which is a perfect time to approach them about hosting additional activity.



Just asking for help can yield new volunteers and more enthusiastic RallyCross supporters. Go get them!

Make next year easier by making the most of your off-season, and I'll see you on the dirt in 2016.

