

SATCAR Is Stock, Fun and Affordable

story by don emrich • photo by dianne klimek

Racing is an expensive hobby. The car is only the tip of the iceberg, as the costs for a tow vehicle, trailer, spare parts, tools, tires and travel expenses can quickly balloon a budget beyond reason. Alternatives do exist, and one of the most interesting options is the Sports and Touring Car Racing (SATCAR) Formula Street format. Here, drivers compete in their everyday street cars. All you need is a helmet and a car that will pass a safety inspection.

The SATCAR Formula Street series is the brainchild of Kern Fischer, an automotive engineer and longtime gearhead with deep roots in the sport. Formula Street is not jalopy racing, a demo derby, or some low speed putt-putt race in a parking lot. Instead, the series provides high-speed—but safe—racing on road courses that range from 2-mile club tracks to legendary circuits like Road America.

First, the races are controlled. Passing is allowed only on the long straights of the track, and drivers must complete each turn in single file. Bumping, blocking and brake checking are all forbidden, and the officiating is superb and strict.

To keep the fields level, the series uses Performance Parity Time, or PPT. Each car in the series runs with a traditional transponder, and drivers' PPTs are based on their fastest qualifying laps. If a driver sandbags in qualifying and goes too fast in the race, a breakout penalty is assessed, including a black flag stop in the pits. It's similar to bracket racing in the drag world. The PPT rewards consistent, smart, heads-up driving.

SATCAR Formula Street kicked off its seven-race fall championship tour on Labor Day at Blackhawk Farms Raceway in Illinois. The 30-lap, one-hour feature race saw everything from a 1970s muscle car to high-powered sports cars and family sedans. The winner was Andy Besic in his wife's diesel automatic VW Jetta. Learn more about this unusual racing series at satcarracing.com.



◀ SATCAR's new Formula Street allows cars as varied as a MINI Cooper S and a De Tomaso Pantera to compete on track simultaneously. Drivers race against their target Performance Parity Time, so consistency wins the race.