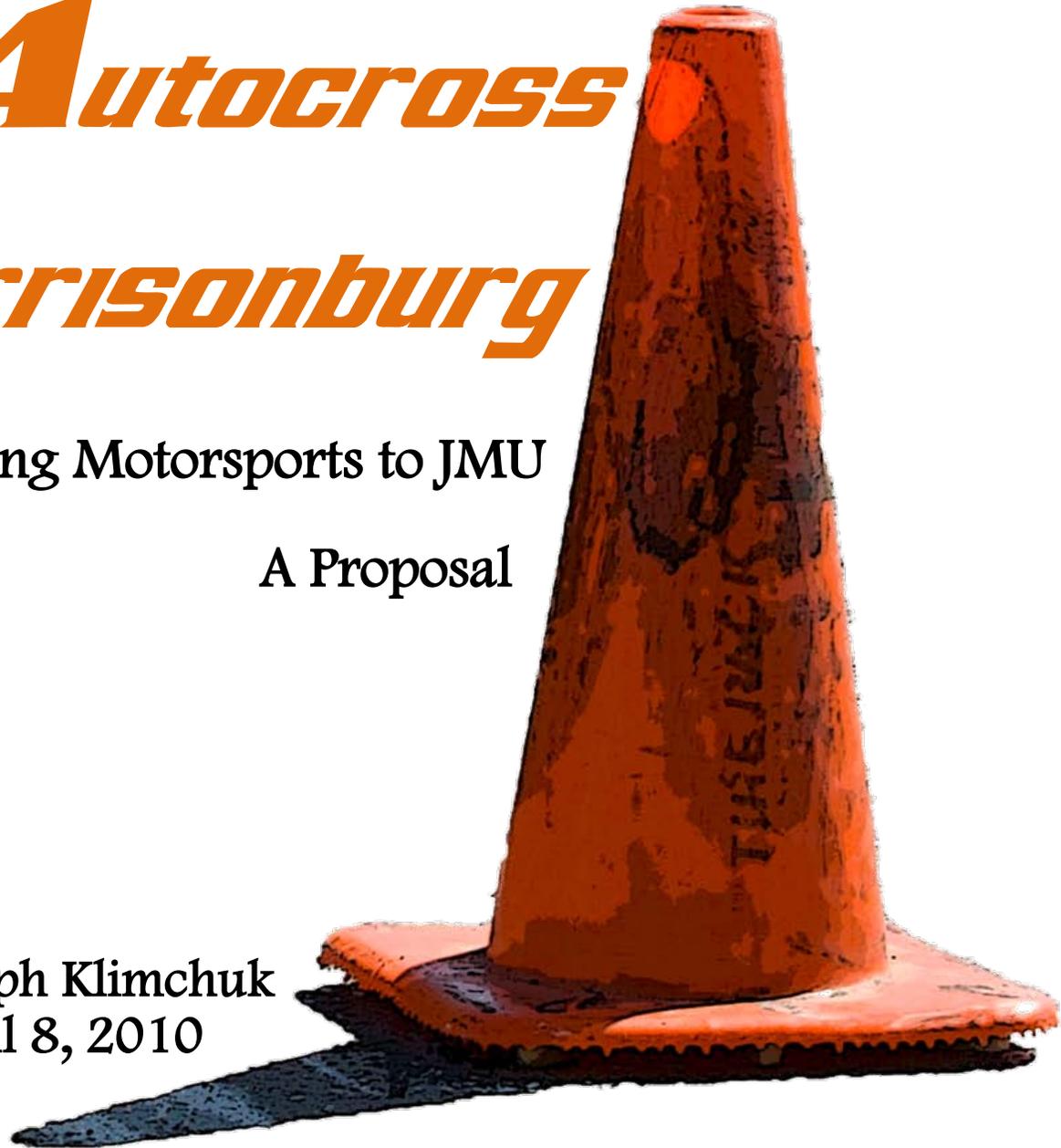


Autocross *Harrisonburg*

Bringing Motorsports to JMU

A Proposal

Joseph Klimchuk
April 8, 2010



Submitted to:
Matt Barone

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April 8, 2010

Matt Barone
Office of Student Activities and Involvement
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Dear Mr. Barone:

Thank you for taking the time to read my *Autocross Harrisonburg: Bringing Motorsports to JMU* proposal. The purpose of my proposal is to allow Madison Motorsports members to host James Madison University sponsored motorsport events in the Harrisonburg area to demonstrate what driven students are capable of achieving, and consequently project a positive image of JMU.

As an active member of Madison Motorsports, I have seen what JMU students are capable of achieving outside of the classroom. While just a student club, Madison Motorsports officers plan, organize and manage large events like karting trips, car shows and tours every semester.

I propose a plan that will allow Madison Motorsports to host autocross events in the Harrisonburg area as JMU sponsored events. The plan incurs no cost for the University, and actually generates revenue, providing funding for the organizations other events. The plan will project a positive image of Madison Motorsport members, and serve as an excellent resume builder for those involved. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at klimchjm@dukes.jmu.edu or (540) 354-4160.

Sincerely,

Joseph Klimchuk

enc.: proposal (10 pages)

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Executive Summary

Madison Motorsports was founded in 2001 by a group of James Madison University students passionate about motorsports. The organization provides current students and alumni with a forum of discussion, camaraderie, and a connection to motorsport events all across Virginia. This proposal introduces a detailed plan to improve the strength of the organization by improving its image, financial standing and member involvement, without incurring any external costs or risks.

The plan establishes autocross events hosted by Madison Motorsports and endorsed by James Madison University in the Harrisonburg. The plan uses a network between a regional grassroots motorsports organization and a local Harrisonburg business to secure all the necessary resources to host the event. The events will be managed by Madison Motorsport officers and run by members and participants. Because the events will be so close to the University, interested students will be able to spectate easily, as in any other sport. The events will be valuable editions to officers' resumes, and demonstrate what James Madison Students are capable of.



Autocross Harrisonburg: Bringing Motorsports to JMU

Often times, while listening to an explanation of Madison Motorsports, students and faculty will interrupt to exclaim, “we have a car club, who knew?” Most people are unaware Madison Motorsports exists on campus, and being less mainstream than club soccer or football, are often surprised to hear about it. Even though we are less known, Madison Motorsports is full of active, driven and passionate students interested in advancing ourselves, our school, and our organization during their time at James Madison University. We actively participate in the sport of autocross, which is a low-speed, car-control oriented event, and are interested in hosting our own events in the Harrisonburg area.

Madison Motorsports has been active in the motorsport and JMU community since its founding by a small group of passionate students in 2001. Madison Motorsports hosts a car show for students and automotive enthusiasts in the area every spring, and participates in various motorsport type events. Madison Motorsports members want to not only demonstrate their abilities behind the wheel, but their abilities to responsibly organize and manage motorsport events and demonstrate what James Madison University students are capable of doing.

What is Autocross Again?

Madison Motorsports participates most commonly in autocrosses with the Sports Car Club of America. The SCCA is a national motorsports organization with chapters all over the country. The Blue Ridge Region hosts autocross events across the entire western Virginia organization. Madison Motorsports members travel anywhere from 30 minutes to 3 hours to participate in events roughly every other Sunday during the autocross season (March 1 to Nov 1).

Autocross is attractive to Madison Motorsports members, as well as young and amateur motorsport enthusiasts alike, because of its extremely low cost and risk. The cost for each event is typically \$25 after a \$45 annual membership to the SCCA. Taking place in a parking lot, through a course marked by traffic pylons, autocross requires minimal preparation to a driver’s vehicle, and little of the expensive equipment required to participate in high speed events on a race track.¹

Unlike a track event or High Performance Driver Education (HDPE), the stresses an autocross place on the car are minimal. A weekend at the track can use most of a \$300 set of brakes, and 1/4 of a \$800 set of tires. But avid autocrossers have told me they experienced a 10% reduction in the life of their tires, and no noticeable effect on their brakes. Also, an autocross requires no additional safety equipment, or a designated track car. Participants can spend a few minutes preparing the car they drive to work, and come out for a day of autocross.

Linked closely to cost, autocross events attract Madison Motorsports members and amateur motorsport enthusiasts because it is associated with very little risk. Autocross courses are designed that participants cannot travel above the “mid to low 60’s” while competing.¹ The goal of autocross is to provide an opportunity for participants to explore the limits of their cars and practice high performance driving techniques in a low-risk, low cost setting.

1. *National Solo Rules*. 2009 ed. (Topeka: Sports Car Club of America, 2009)



Growing an Organization: Attracting New Members

I am an extremely active member of Madison Motorsports and have been participating in autocrosses since the spring of 2009. In my experience and discussions with Madison Motorsports officers and other members, there are a few things impeding the growth of the organization.

Firstly, the club has many new and casual members with no motorsports experience, who are interested in potentially getting involved in motorsports. These casual members, who may only be interested in observing an event, are considerably harder to convince to travel several hours on a Sunday morning, than the addicted, seasoned members. This travel barrier leads to lower member involvement.

Speaking of the seasoned members and officers, many of us are seeking careers in the automotive industry after we graduate from school. Members like us are seeking a way to demonstrate to potential employers that we can plan and manage professional, successful, and entertaining motorsport events. We want to improve the image of Madison Motorsports as well as James Madison University by demonstrating what members and students are capable of achieving.

Lastly, the organization relies on members' \$20 annual membership dues and occasional fund raisers like the "stadium clean-up" offered by James Madison University. Another source of revenue, the organization will be able to host its annual cook out, "karting" trip, and other traditional club activities with ease, and have funding for new ideas and events.

Autocross JMU: Madison Motorsports Events by Students for Students

This three phase plan over 13 months consists of planning and hosting an autocross event. First Madison Motorsports will form a partnership with the National Autosport Association, then events can be hosted near campus. Safety will be of paramount concern, and managed by educated and appointed officers of Madison Motorsports. Events will be advertised to draw enough participants to cover the insurance costs of the event, and the rest of the money will go to benefit both organizations.

Phase One: Event Planning and Preparation

The first phase of the project will focus on planning and organization of the event. The first phase, beginning immediately after receiving approval from the Board of Student Activities and Involvement, includes establishing partnerships with other organizations, establishing a season schedule, appointing and training officers for their duties, and advertising the events to the motorsports community in the region.

Step One: Form Partnership with the SCCA

The Blue Ridge Region Sports Car Club of America maintains a strong relationship with Madison Motorsports. They are the most prominent autocrossing organization in the western Virginia area, and Madison Motorsports members travel to their events frequently throughout the season. Attending these events myself, active members of the BRR-SCCA have expressed the limited options of locations in the area, and their desire for more locations in the region. Madison Motorsports has access to a venue in Harrisonburg, but needs the equipment of the BRR-SCCA to host an event.



Step Two: Form Partnership with Bob Wade Autoworld

Bob Wade Autoworld is a prominent, local Harrisonburg business. Recently an employer of a Madison Motorsport alumnus, Wade has maintained a positive relationship with Madison Motorsports. In the Fall of 2009, Wade hosted a car show and cookout with Madison Motorsports. The relationship is mutually beneficially because Madison Motorsports gets a venue for events and Wade gets free advertising for its automotive inventory. Forming this relationship between the organizations would provide the Blue Ridge Region Sports Car Club of America with another venue to participate in autocross events throughout the season, Madison Motorsports with the equipment it needs to host events, and Bob Wade Autoworld with free advertising.

Step Three: Align Season Schedules

After establishing the above relationships and agreements, the three organizations would meet in October of 2010 to establish the event schedule. Of the BRR-SCCA's approximate 12 events every season, two of them will take place in the new Harrisonburg venue.

Step Four: Train Officers and Assign Responsibilities

After establishing the venue, equipment and schedule, Madison Motorsport officers will meet to assign responsibilities of hosting the event. Two officers will be technical inspectors and manage the vehicle inspection process before the event. These officers will be responsible for familiarizing themselves with proper inspection procedures. Another officer will be assigned the position of safety steward. This officer will be responsible for monitoring all safety situations and participant behavior during the event. This officer will have the authority to penalize or remove participants for unsafe behavior. Lastly, the President of Madison Motorsports will manage the event as a whole.

Step Five: Advertise for the Event

The event will be advertised through the traditional BRR-SCCA mailing list and website, but will also be advertised on regional internet automotive discussion forums, and around the JMU campus. Madison Motorsports will create an account on each of these forums specifically for advertisement and discussion of these events.

Step Six: Design the Course

Prior to the events, Madison Motorsport officers will meet to discuss and design a course for the event that fits the location. They will follow the guidelines set for the in the SCCA's Solo Rulebook, which provides standard guidelines for organizing, designing and managing autocross events.

Phase Two: Event Day Procedures

The second phase of the project concerns the procedures for managing the autocross events during the day. Madison Motorsport officers will arrive and prepare the location, collect event fees and waivers, organize the technical inspection line, give the driver speech and new driver walkthrough, then host the actual event.

Step One: Prepare the Location

Madison Motorsport officers and BRR-SCCA officers will arrive on location by 8 am. They will set out cones to mark the pre-designed course, and then clean the course of any debris and gravel. Then will set up timing equipment, designate a location to perform technical inspections, and a location to register participants.



Step Two: Register Participants

As participants start to arrive they will have to go register for the event. One officer will sit at the registration station and get every participant set up to run. If participants pre-paid for the event they will be checked against a list and marked off. They will then be given a liability waiver to sign, and given a wristband to signify they have signed it. All participants and spectators must have signed an event waiver to attend the event. After registering participants will be required to have their vehicle inspected, they will take their car to the tech line and the two technical inspectors will examine the car and give them a sticker to put in the top left of the windshield signifying they are ready to participate.

Step Three: Hold Meeting and Walkthrough

At 10:45 a.m. a driver's meeting will be held. A standard speech will be given offering drivers a brief review of cone meaning, scoring, timing, safety, and emergency actions. After the meeting an experienced driver will offer a new driver walkthrough to offer pointers on driving techniques and the fastest line through the course.

Step Four: Hold Event

From 11:00 a.m. until all the run groups have finished the event will be a standard autocross handled like any other event. After every run group has gone the timing equipment will be removed, and time allowing, "fun runs" will be sold for \$1 each, allowing drivers to participate in a few more runs to get more experience and experiment with the limits of their automobile without worrying about timing.

Phase Three: After-Event Procedures

The final phase of the project details the wrap up procedures of an autocross event. The location will be cleaned up and returned to its original state, times will be organized and published to participants, proceeds will be broken down from the event and evaluations will be performed.

Step One: Clean Up Location

In keeping with Madison Motorsports' drive to project a professional, responsible image of itself and James Madison University, no officers will leave the location until all pylons and tables have been removed, and all debris, litter, and liquid spills have been cleaned up or properly addressed, so that Bob Wade has to do nothing to resume normal use of their property for the start of the business week.

Step Two: Analyze Revenue

After the event times will be organized and published in the traditional location on BRR-SCCA website, but also on the Madison Motorsports website. The proceeds from the event will be broken down to cover insurance and other expenses, some of the remaining proceeds will go to the BRR-SCCA for the use of their equipment, and any remaining proceeds will go to Madison Motorsports.

Phase Three: Perform Evaluation

The project will be evaluated in the form of a survey directed towards Madison Motorsport members and other autocross participants asking questions that reflect mission of Madison Motorsports and James Madison University. For example participants will be asked "How well do you think Madison Motorsports managed today's autocross?" to help officers evaluate others opinions of their organizational skills and professionalism, as well as the image they project. The surveys will be collected and reviewed during an officers' meeting, and decisions about where to take the project in the future can be made. Fig. 1 Below is a sample of the survey that will be distributed to the participants of the event using the form tool on Google Documents that will automatically enter responses in a spreadsheet as they are returned.



Help Us Get Better

Tell us what you thought about our first Madison Motorsports Autocross so we can make sure we offer the best event possible next time!

* Required

How well do you think Madison Motorsports managed today's event? *

- Very Well
- Well
- Mediocre
- Poorly
- Very Poorly

How professional do you feel the Madison Motorsports Officers were? *

- Very Professional
- Somewhat Professional
- Unsure
- Some Unprofessional
- Very Unprofessional

Will you attend another Madison Motorsport event?

- Definatly
- Probably
- Maybe
- Probably Not
- Absolutely Not

Did you see behavior or incident that made you feel nervous or unsafe? *

- Yes
- No

If so, what happened?

If there was a safety incident at today's event, how do you feel Madison Motorsport officers handled it?

Submit

Figure 1. Title – Help Us Get Better

Time is Money: The Timeline

Each phase of this project requires time to be completed, the timeline below allows each phase a certain allotment for completion and provides the plan with structure to assure no step is forgotten.

Table 1. Title – Timeline

Timeline	
Submit Proposal	April 10, 2010
Review for Approval	April 10-October 1, 2010
Phase One: Event Planning	September 1, 2010-March 1, 2011
Phase Two: First JMU Autocross Season	March 1-May 1, 2011
Phase Three: Evaluation Period	May 1-May 30, 2011

The timeline allows for overlap between the review stage and the first phase of the plan. Madison Motorsport officers will begin planning early in the fall semester, and when the proposal is approved, will then begin planning more actively. The evaluation period occurs at the end of the first semester, so Madison Motorsports officers have the summer to discuss the effectiveness of the plan, and make plans for the fall 2012 semester.



A Self-Sufficient Club: How Autocross Will Allow Madison Motorsports Support Itself

Autocross is, in its nature, a volunteer organization. The entry fees are extremely low because entrants alternate driving and working, and thus, the organization hosting the event doesn't have to hire professional workers, driving up the cost of the event. Locations are provided on the good will of, and at the discretion of, charitable land owners, so the organization treats the location and land owners respectfully, behaving safely and leaving the location cleaner than when it was found. In fact, the only true expense involved in hosting an event is the timing equipment, which requires a complicated and expensive array of electronics, requires a computer, and costs upwards of \$2500. The table on the next page breaks down the expected costs of one autocross event, and illustrates how expenses will be managed and revenues will be appropriated. (Table 2, Page 6)



Table 2. Title – Expenses of One Autocross Events

Expenses of One Autocross Event			
Equipment	Cost Per Item	Items Needed	Total Cost
Downspouts	\$11.49	1	\$11.49
Flour	6.95	2	13.90
Tape	3.00	3	9.00
Paper	4.42	1	4.42
Ink	25.00	1	25.00
Clipboards	1.08	8	8.64
Chalk	5.76	1	5.76
Wristbands	8.00	2	16.00
Equipment Subtotal			\$85.57
Equipment Rental	Cost Per Hour	Hours Needed	Total Cost
Timing Equipment	25% of Revenue	8	35% of Total Revenue
Pylon Rental	10% of Revenue	8	20% of Total Revenue
Misc. Equip. Rental	5% of Revenue	8	5% of Total Revenue
Equip. Rental Subtotal			60% of Total Revenue
Location	Cost Per Hour	Hours Needed	Total Cost
Location Rental	\$0.00	8	\$0.00
Electricity	0.00	8	0.00
Labor	Cost Per Hour	Hours Needed	Total Cost
Technical Inspectors	\$0.00	8	\$0.00
Safety Steward	0.00	8	0.00
Course Designers	0.00	8	0.00
Event Manager	0.00	8	0.00
Worker Steward	0.00	8	0.00
Volunteers	0.00	5	0.00
Labor Subtotal			\$0.00
Advertisement	Cost Per Item	Items Needed	Total Cost
Online Advertisement	N/A	N/A	\$0.00
Flyer Advertisements	0.59	200	118.00
Advertising Subtotal			\$118.00

Expected Revenue	# of Participants	Entry Fee	Total Revenue
Member Participants	25	\$25	\$625.00
Non-Member Participants	45	35	1575.00
Exp. Revenue Subtotal			\$2200.00

Total Static Cost			\$212.21
Total Flexible Cost			\$1320.00

Total Expected Profit			\$667.79
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Expense Analysis

As you can see, several sections of the table have no cost associated with them, each for a specific reason, the other sections take up the entirety of the budget, which can be understood easily after assessing each section of the budget.

Equipment Rental

The more expensive equipment, the timing equipment, timing computer, and pylons will be provided by the Sports Car Club of America. The SCCA will also provide miscellaneous equipment for the event, but specifically the non perishable items. Things such as radios, fire extinguishers, flags, loaner helmets, and time slip printer that are out of Madison Motorsports immediate budget, but can be borrowed and not consumed. In return for the use of their equipment the SCCA will receive 60% of the overall revenue of the event (after paying other expenses) to go into their equipment fund, which maintains their collection of expensive equipment.

Location, Labor and Advertisement

Traditionally autocross organizations are allowed to use locations free of cost, and maintain positive relationships with the land owners. After all, autocrosses are volunteer organizations, if they had to rent a racetrack or lot, the cost of an event would skyrocket, which is one of the fundamental attractions of an autocross. In this case the lot is provided by an organization that supports motorsports, and in return the event provides an advertising opportunity. The event puts car enthusiasts on the lot, and in their free time will inevitably peruse the cars for sale. In exchange for this opportunity Bob Wade will allow Madison Motorsports to use their lot, and of course, the participants will leave the lot spotless, and behave appropriately, giving no one at Bob Wade a reason to worry. As previously discussed, autocrosses are inherently volunteer based events. The entry fee goes to cover equipment, and participants alternate working and driving. The advertising section of the budget is the only other associated with a concrete cost. The events will be advertised in two basic ways, online and with flyers posted around James Madison University and in the Harrisonburg area.

A New Organization: Madison Motorsports in the Future

In summary, we believe allowing Madison Motorsports to host autocross events in the Harrisonburg area as James Madison University sponsored events will strengthen our organization and provide a positive image of Madison Motorsports member and James Madison University. The total expected cost of one event is \$1512.21, with an expected profit for the organization of \$667.79. Hosting these events will allow the club to raise money for other events and organization projects, further strengthening the club. Thank you for reviewing this proposal, if you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me at klimchjm@dukes.jmu.edu, or (540) 354-4160. I would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to review the proposal in person and discuss the next step.

