



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How to Start Rallying

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Q1. How do I learn about rallying and rally cars?

Odds are, if you have got this far you probably already know a bit about rallying or more specifically special stage rallying, as seen on the ARC / WRC rallying coverage you might see on Channel 10 early on Sunday afternoons.

To learn more (and there is a bit to learn) the best option is to get involved as soon and as much as possible. Initially this might be as a service crew member for an existing competitor, as an official in a local event or as a co-driver. Alternatively jump straight in, buy a rally car, jump straight in and go out there and compete!

The relevant governing body of Motorsport in Australia is the Confederation of Australian Motorsport (CAMS). The CAMS website www.cams.com.au has some useful information. The vast majority of the rules of the sport are detailed in the CAMS Manual of Motorsport, and anybody looking to be part of the sport should buy one and become familiar with its contents. The CAMS manual is available from CAMS for \$44 (or just \$28 if you sign up for a free CAMS Officials licence). Initially it is not necessary to be overly concerned with rules and regulations, just get out there and have a go!



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The best way to get involved is to join a CAMS affiliated car club (see Q5). Car clubs run most of the events and facilitate the meeting of officials, competitors and newcomers alike. By talking with these people you can find out anything and everything about the sport.

Q2. How much does it cost to compete?

You can spend as much or as little as you like depending on your budget and aspirations.

An entry level event such as a Walky Park Rallysprint Trophy Day has an entry fee of \$60, and a Khanacross event typically has an entry fee of \$40. Car preparation for these types of events is typically minimal consisting simply of a roadworthy car with a dry powder fire extinguisher and first aid kit. To compete in these events one would typically purchase a CAMS Level 2S licence for \$85.

After gaining some experience and obtaining a CAMS National Rally Licence after completing the OLT process (see Q3) it is then possible to move up to a State Championship level event such as the Robertstown Rally or even the Toyota Rally of South Australia, a joint SARC / ARC round. Entry fees for SARC events are typically around \$400 (one day event).

Q3. What licences do I need?

There are two licencing requirements to consider, civil driver's licence and CAMS competition licence.

Civil Licence

Introductory level events are typically run on private property and hence no civil licence is required.

Special Stage rallies typically incorporate open public road sections, meaning that a civil driver's licence is required for the driver (minimum age depends on the relevant state laws). Co-drivers do not necessarily have to possess a civil driver's licence if they elect to be a navigator only (and thus cannot drive the vehicle).

CAMS Licence

Various different CAMS licences are available depending on the level and type of competition being undertaken. Following is a brief summary of the licences typically used for rallies and rally-like events.

- Level 1 Licence allows the holder one-off participation in a promotional "come-n-try" event – cost \$20.
- Level 2S licence allows the holder to compete in events such as rallysprint, khanacross and motorkhana – cost \$85 (\$11 for Junior).
- Clubman Rally Licence allows the holder to compete in Special Stage Rallies up to and including State Championship level – cost \$125.



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- National Rally Licence allows the holder to compete in Special Stage Rallies up to and including National Championship level – cost \$149 (\$40 for Junior).

There are additional Junior and Navigator-only variations of the above. Refer to the CAMS Manual of Motorsport or www.cams.com.au for detailed competitor licencing information.

Note that CAMS licences can generally be upgraded to a higher level by simply paying the difference and fulfilling with any upgrade requirements.

Q4. How do I get a CAMS National Rally Licence?

A National Rally License is required to compete in a rally type event. To obtain this, you will first need to apply for the National Rally License pre-licence authority from CAMS. You will then need to (a) undergo two Observed License Tests (OLT) at a suitable entry level event and (b) attend the CAMS Rally Lecture before having your NRL endorsed.

Q5. Do I need to join a car club?

The short answer: If you want to compete, yes.

The long answer: It is possible to compete once only at selected introductory events on a Level 1 Licence (aka. “Come-n-try”) without being a member of a CAMS affiliated club. To continue competing in the sport you will need to join a CAMS affiliated club, which allows you to progress to a competition licence and enter more events.

Car clubs are the organisational heart of the sport, a great way to meet people, get advice, recruit drivers, co-drivers and service crew, and locate cars and car parts. Most clubs conduct regular general meetings and welcome newcomers.

Q6. Which car club should I join?

You should join a club actively involved in the Motorsport discipline you are interested in. The Walkerville All Cars Club (WACC) is a rally oriented club based centrally in Adelaide. The WACC also has its own purpose built track “Walky Park” located between Truro and Blanchetown perfect for novices to gain experience, driving tips and complete OLT (Observed License Tests).

Other rally oriented clubs in SA are Southern Districts (SDCC), Rallysport (RSCSA) and South East Auto Club (SEAC) located in Mt Gambier.

Q7. What type of car should I buy?

The 64 million dollar question... This depends on your budget, your aspirations and perhaps your mechanical / technical aptitude. It would be easy to write an entire book on this subject so it is probably best to get opinions from several members of your car club before making a decision.



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Generally speaking when starting out it is best to buy a reliable car such that you can get some experience under your belt with a low likelihood of mechanical breakdown. Depending on a driver's aptitude it typically takes a couple of years of competition experience to become a competitive driver. Once you have some experience under your belt, consider progressing to a more powerful and sophisticated vehicle.

Q8. Where do I buy a rally car?

- Ask around at car clubs in your area, watch the newsletters
- Watch the classifieds in the Australian Rallysport magazine and the Trading Post
- Check the 'For Sale' section on www.rally.com.au
- Keep an eye on the "SARally" e-group <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/sarally/>

Q9. Can I insure my rally car?

Well not really! Not for accidental damage anyway. There are insurers around (such as Shannons) who will do "laid-up" policies covering your vehicle when it is not in competition, but one would struggle to find one that will provide cover during competition. And if it was available, the premium would be uneconomical.

Q10. I don't know anything about cars, is that a problem?

Drivers come from all walks of life... IT professionals, lawyers, business men / women, psychotherapists, engineers, farmers, students to name a few. If you don't know a lot about cars you can either learn or have somebody else do the work. There are plenty of people around in the sport with the necessary skills.

Q11. I want to be a co-driver but I get motion (car) sickness. Is this a problem?

Generally speaking motion sickness can be solved by the use of medication available from your doctor / pharmacist. There are numerous co-drivers in the sport who use anti motion sickness medication successfully.

Q12. What is the minimum age for competition?

There is no simple answer to this. Depending on the type of event, the CAMS licence being used and whether you want to drive or co-drive, the answer is 12 years, 14 years, or 16 years. More detail can be located in the CAMS Manual of Motorsport, General Regulations of CAMS – Licences section 8-13.

Q13. Is it safe?

There is no black and white answer to this question – everybody has a different perception of safety and what they consider to be an acceptable level of risk.



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Many competitors will tell you that they feel safer in a properly prepared rally car wearing a helmet and other safety equipment in the comparatively controlled environment of a closed road special stage travelling at 200kph than driving on the relatively uncontrolled highways of Australia. Event organisers are increasingly conducting risk assessments as part of the event planning process, and in general the sport is very safety conscious, as it must be in this era of “duty of care”, liability and increased litigation.

Many readers will no doubt have seen many spectacular crashes on WRC and ARC coverage where more often than not the crews walk away. Naturally driver attitude and car preparation have a bearing on the level of risk. Motorsport is inherently dangerous, but with the right attitude and safety equipment risks can be managed to a significant degree.

Q14. Gravel or Tarmac?

The Special Stage Rally scene in South Australia is largely oriented towards gravel (loose) surfaces, particularly at entry level (without wishing to ignore the many touring road events and specialist events such as Targa Tasmania, Classic Adelaide, Rally of Tasmania).

Q15. What is pace noting / reconnaissance?

Pace noting is a skill almost unique to special stage rallying whereby the driver and co-driver drive 2 or 3 passes over the course at low speed prior to the event making notes describing each corner, crest, dip, hole, surface change and obstacle to allow for the fastest and safest passage over the course during competition. It is a skill best developed through participation in pace-noted events, and South Australia is lucky to have a high proportion of these in the State Championship compared with other states.

Q16. How much FUN is it?

As the saying goes, it's the most fun you can have with your clothes on ☺

Try it and you will see!

Scott Hochwald
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