

## The Rise And Rise Of Historic Saloon Cars

Words by Steve Holmes

When Dale Mathers, Tony Roberts, and myself created Historic Muscle Cars (HMC) back in 2010/2011, we were pioneering into completely unknown territory, in that we were attempting to create a New Zealand historic racing group for competition saloon cars. As such, we were essentially starting from scratch, with only a handful of eligible cars, and barely enough cars to break into double digits. What we needed was a supporting group that complimented what we were doing. To that end, we added a Pre-1978 Under 3,000cc group for Schedule T&C saloon cars to our grid.

Initially, the Under 3 Litre group was only intended as a temporary measure, and only at specific high-profile events, such as the New Zealand Festival of Motor Racing, where there was an expectation we'd produce a healthy field of cars. But we quickly learned the addition of the smaller capacity cars produced a better spectacle, which both the fans and racers enjoyed. And it stuck.

However, it wasn't until we coaxed Bruce Dyer in to manage the U3 group that it really found its feet. Bruce's enthusiasm and vision has seen it soar, and indeed, this has become the fastest growing area in our overall group.

One of the first things that took place when Bruce took over U3 was to give it a name change. It was renamed Historic Saloon Cars (HSC). Since Bruce has taken over the helm, HSC has evolved enormously. But likewise, its also become extremely focused, and with a very clear direction. HSC is now our pure historic class, with an even greater emphasis on total period correctness than that of Historic Muscle Cars.

One of the biggest changes to HSC is that it is no longer a class for Under 3 Litre cars. HSC now caters to cars of all engine capacities, including big American V8s. In addition, it has adopted the historic racing regulations used elsewhere in the world, including FIA Appendix K, and Confederation for Australian Motor Sports (CAMS) Historic Group Nb (for cars built up to 31 December 1964) and Group Nc (for cars built between 1 January 1965 – 31 December 1972). Therefore, HSC encompasses MSNZ Schedule T&C, Schedule K, FIA Appendix K, and CAMS Group Nb and Nc. It all sounds a little complex, but is actually pretty simple, and is dependent totally on the car you wish to build and race.

One of the advantages in using both the FIA Appendix K and CAMS Historic Group N rules is that they are specific to each make and model of vehicle, rather than a more

loosely forming umbrella system in which one set of rules covers all cars involved. Therefore, if you own a car of a make and model that has period racing history, chances are, there will be a set of regulations already drawn up specifically for that vehicle. The FIA rules use what is known as a Homologation Sheet. Its this sheet that was created when the car was new, and its manufacturer wanted to homologate it for competition use. Its very well detailed. The CAMS system uses much the same sheet for Group Nb, while Group Nc was drawn up when Nc itself was created around twenty years ago.

Importantly, HSC has become our class for Schedule K cars. Schedule K is for cars that have actual period race history in either Group 2 or Group 5 specification, and which are now presented as they raced in period. This has been an enormously important achievement, and already includes some of the most legendary cars with New Zealand racing history, including the Jim Richards Willment Racing Escort, Halliday brothers Escort, Stone brothers/Roy Harrington Escort, Jack Nazer Cossack Escort, Frank Radisich Escort, Bob Hyslop Mazda RX2, Ivan Segedin Fleetwood Motors Mustang, and Frank Bryan/Red Dawson Shelby Mustang.



To have attracted such a high calibre of hugely significant and highly valuable historic machinery means any newly built HSC car joining them on the grid needs to

be truly historically correct. And this is why the FIA Appendix K and CAMS Group Nb and Nc regulations have been adopted, to guarantee genuine period correctness for cars newly constructed for historic competition. Internationally, and particularly in Europe and the UK, most historic saloon car racing combines original cars with period history alongside newly built cars constructed to FIA Appendix K regulations. As the FIA rules are the very same rules used in period throughout the world, it provides an equal playing field, because both the original and newly built cars have been constructed from the same set of regulations.

HSC already has a handful of Appendix K cars competing, including the BMW 2002 of Howard Wood. But this is now the fastest growing area of the group, and several new Appendix K cars will be appearing in the near future, including Escorts for Paul McCarthy, Poul Christie, and Grant Sprague. But its not just the smaller capacity cars that are being built to Appendix K. Paul Berkahn is nearing completion of a stunning 1964 Ford Falcon Rallye Sprint.

The Schedule T&C rules are still a popular choice for those wanting to build a 4 or 6 cylinder car for HSC, and we have several examples that will be entering the group this season. What HSC doesn't cater for, however, is Schedule T&C V8 cars. Although the T&C rules limit the level of modification to small cars, and ensure they retain the majority of their factory driveline components, for the larger cars, T&C offers too many freedoms to be considered a good fit for HSC.

However, HSC allows for V8 cars built to either FIA Appendix K or CAMS Historic Group N. While the two are different, they both share many similarities. Appendix K uses Group 2 regulations, as does Group Nb (for cars built prior to 31 December 1964), whereas Nc rules are based loosely on Group 2, but with various allowances that relate to Australia's own touring car history up to 1972. But remember also, only cars offered on the HSC Eligibility List will be accepted, as these are makes and models for which a very specific set of regulations have already been written.

Consider this; a 1967/68 Chevrolet Camaro is eligible to race under HSC as built to either Appendix K or Group Nc regulations. There are pros and cons for each. Appendix K requires the use of an original GM engine block, while the Nc Camaro has a choice of either an original GM block or aftermarket Chevrolet Performance (part # 10066034) block. Nc also offers the choice of either original GM "camel hump" style cylinder heads, or Dart Iron Eagle (part # 10120010) or Pro Action (part # 12317 and 12318) 23 degree aftermarket heads. The FIA Camaro cannot be fitted with aftermarket heads. It can only use the original camel hump style heads as used in period. Likewise, the FIA Camaro must have an engine size no larger than 305 cu.in (5,000cc), whereas the Group Nc Camaro can use either the 350 cu.in small block or 396 cu.in big block, with some boring of the block allowed to bring the small block up to 360 cu.in, and the big block to 407 cu.in. Both the Appendix K and Group Nc allow maximum 2.02 inch inlet and 1.60 inch exhaust valves on the small block engine, which is the maximum size made available on the GM camel hump heads when new.

Both Appendix K and Group Nc Camaros must use the GM Muncie gearbox, either M20, M21, or M22. Both must have either a 10-bolt or 12-bolt differential, and wear the correct Delco-Moraine brake calipers with vented rotors (non-slotted and non-cross-drilled). In addition, both must be fitted with wheels no larger than 15 x 8 inches. So far, the Nc Camaro looks like the better option, but its Achilles-heel are its

brakes. The Nc Camaro must use drum brakes on the rear, whereas the FIA Camaro can use discs on all four corners. Furthermore, the Appendix K Camaro has slightly larger brake rotors, at 11.75 x 1.25 inches, compared to the Nc Camaro front rotors at 11.02 x 1 inch.



**CAMS Group Nc Camaro**

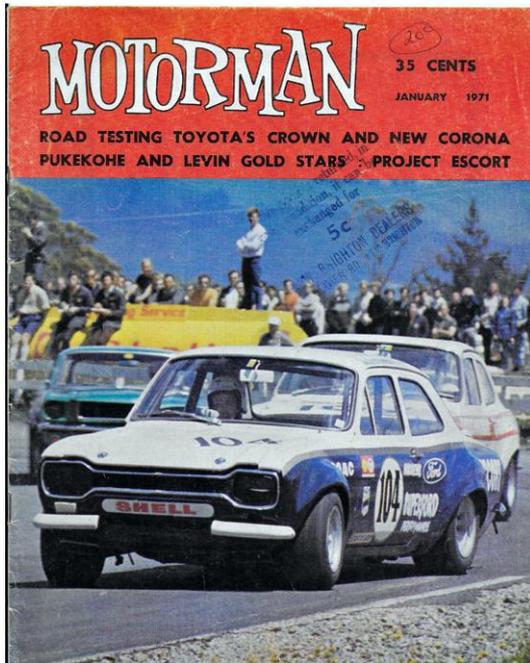


**FIA Appendix K Camaro**

In truth, whether it's an FIA Appendix K or CAMS Group Nc Camaro or Mustang, it won't be as fast as a similar car built to Historic Muscle Car regulations, which allow the use of aftermarket block, heads, gearbox, and brakes, as well as greater engine capacity and wider wheels. Nor will it be as easy to build and source parts. So why bother building a V8 car for HSC in the first place? The answer is two-fold: Firstly, HSC is its own entity, separate to HMC. The two groups work together and race together. However, there will be events in the future, starting with the Taupo Grand Prix, in January 2019, where HSC will have its own races separate to those of HMC. This means, the Escorts, BMW 2002s, Alfa Romeos, MkI and MkII Jaguars etc will be contesting for outright honours. It also means any V8 cars that comply with HSC regulations as being either the original Schedule K cars (the Segedin and Dawson Mustangs), or those built to FIA Appendix K or CAMS Group N, will also be racing as part of the HSC grid, and separate to HMC.

But in addition, by building a V8 to either FIA Appendix K or CAMS Group Nb or Nc opens up a whole new world of historic racing to the car owner. Literally! An Nb or Nc car can race in Australia, at any number of exciting events including the Phillip Island Classic and Muscle Car Masters. So too, an Appendix K car opens even more doors, allowing its owner to race in the UK, Europe, or the US. In addition, when the owner decides they want to sell their car, they have a much larger audience of potential buyers, and the values of such cars reflect this. Likewise, a legal FIA Appendix K car (built to FIA Date Classification F, G1, or G2) or CAMS Group Nc purchased from overseas will also be legal to race in HSC.

The limitations hobbling the V8 cars built to Appendix K or Group Nb or Nc rules ensures they're brought back within the performance region of the small capacity cars, much like they were in period. Consider that the small-bore Escorts of Paul Fahey, Jim Richards, Jack Nazer, Don Halliday, plus the Viva of Alan Boyle and the BMW 2002 of Rodger Anderson regularly competed for outright honours against the V8s in period, even though these were class cars for the most-part. Often-times the little cars beat the V8s. Paul Fahey won the 1971 New Zealand Saloon Car Championship in his 1,800cc FVC powered Allan Mann Racing Escort, by beating the V8s on the track. Of the 16 individual races that made up the 10 Rounds of the 1971 Championship, Fahey won 9 of them. Next best was Camaro driver Rod Coppins,



who took 3 wins. So even with the addition of Appendix K and Group N American and Australian V8 muscle cars into HSC, the rules still favour the small capacity cars.

And as we're on the subject of recreating our saloon car grids from the late 1960s and early 1970s, what we'd like to see more of are the makes and models that made up the baby car classes in New Zealand during the Group 2 and Group 5 years, most notably the Minis and Imps. It used to be that the majority of cars on a combined New Zealand Championship grid were Minis. Often times, Mini numbers were more than the rest of the grid combined. But these popular little flying bricks are now few and far between in

historic racing and we'd love to see a lot more of them in HSC. How can we achieve this?

The New Zealand Saloon Car Championship, from the time it switched from the Allcomer rules to Group 5 for the 1968 season, used a Class system, based on engine size. Each class had its own championship, even though for the most-part all the classes shared the same grid. Class results were based on where a competitor finished in relation to their Class rivals. Indeed, the Overall Champion was usually based on the accumulation of points a competitor amassed over a season based on the points they achieved in their Class. This often meant the Overall Championship was awarded to a driver in a small Class car because they'd gained more points against their Class rivals than those from other classes.

In 1968, the classes were as follows:

- 0 – 1,000cc
- 1,001 – 1,300cc
- 1,301 – 2,000cc
- Over 2,000cc

By 1971, the classes were as follows:

- 0 – 1,000cc
- 1,001 – 4,200cc
- 4,201 – 5,500cc

Rodger Anderson, driving a 999cc Mini Cooper, won the Overall Championship in 1968, while Paul Fahey, driving his FVC Escort, won the Overall Championship in 1971. While Fahey was outright the fastest driver in 1971, Anderson won the Championship through scoring the most points in his 0 – 1,000cc Class. Indeed, he scored 60 points from a possible 64. Note also that in 1971, cars with four valves per cylinder in the 1,001 – 4,201cc Class were limited to a maximum 1,600cc, otherwise they were forced into the 4,201 – 5,500cc Class. Thus, Fahey and Nazer, whose

Escorts were over 1,800cc, raced in the outright class against the V8s. But as Fahey proved, this was not a problem.



Although HMC and HSC have never and will never have a championship, or any sort of points-based system that rewards and encourages competition above enjoyment and respect for the cars, we're wondering if there is potential for putting in place an old-school Class system, as used in period. This wouldn't be to encourage combative competition, but rather offer drivers a chance to gauge their position on track with those in their Class, as opposed to their outright position. And, we hope, it might encourage some of the smaller capacity cars, such as the Minis and Imps, to join the ranks.

Here is an example of what we're proposing:

0 – 1,300cc  
1,301 – 1,600cc  
1,601 – 4,200cc  
Over 4,200cc

What we're attempting to do with HSC is to find a happy medium between providing an enjoyable and safe place for you to race your historic car, and offering event organisers a healthy grid of cars that represents the New Zealand Saloon Car Championship during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the cars that raced in it. And, importantly, that includes the popular Baby Class cars of the era, such as the Minis and Imps.

So, if you own a Mini or Imp with period racing history, we'd love to hear from you. We're also allowing original cars that competed in the Mini Seven series during the 1970s and 1980s, provided they're presented exactly as they raced in period, including the engine size, whether it was during the 850cc era, or 1,000cc era. The Mini Seven series also included the popular Riley Elfs. Furthermore, if you own a Mini, Imp, or Elf built to either Schedule T&C, Appendix K, or Group N regulations, and would like to exercise your car amongst like-minded enthusiasts, we'd love to hear from you. These popular little pocket-rockets were the corner-stone of New Zealand saloon car racing during the late 1960s and early 1970s, but are noticeably thin on the ground in modern day historic racing. And we want to put that right.



When we first started Historic Muscle Cars back in 2010/2011, we were venturing into unknown territory in attempting to field a grid of period correct muscle cars. Then we took period correctness a step further with Historic Saloon Cars, and particularly when we introduced FIA Appendix K regulations. But it appears to be working.

HMC is probably still a better option than HSC if you're planning to build and race an American or Australian V8 muscle car. But that all depends on what it is you hope to achieve with your historic racing. As an alternative, HSC has its advantages too. The area we expect to see the biggest growth for HSC is with its small and medium capacity cars; Escorts, Minis, Vivas, BMW 2002s, MkI and MkII Jaguars, Datsun 1200s and 1600s, Alfa Romeos, Cortinas, Anglias, Austin A40s, Mazda RX2s and RX3s and the like were the cornerstone of New Zealand saloon car racing during the late 1960s and early 1970s. And we're expecting history to repeat itself.

End.