

SAM 35 DICK ROBERTS MEMORIAL TROPHY FOR AIRCARS

Here are the rules for the Dick Roberts Memorial trophy event to be held annually for the award of a mounted, silver plated bust of Dick commissioned by SAM to remember our dear friend and long term Committee and Life Member of our Society, who passed away in December 2020.

This trophy is currently being made, but here is an image of the master bust sculpted by Dave Banks from which it is being professionally lost wax cast, alongside our existing and similar Mike Beach Trophy. It will be held for a year by the winner of each annual event to be held in his name at the BMFA Buckminster tethered car track. This event will be open to all comers, not just SAM 35 members, to encourage participation in this aspect of the tethered car modelling activity, subject to entrants having the necessary BMFA insurance and having paid the site entry fee for the day, and cars meeting all necessary safety guidelines (see separate guidelines document). To give broader appeal and encourage participation of all types of aircar models, this will not be just an out and out speed contest, but will give all types a chance by incorporating design and concours elements in the scoring, as set out in the rules later.



Dick was an avid tethered car enthusiast as well as vintage control line speed aeromodeller and model engineer, and the image here shows him with his innovative skeleton type tethered aircar, Oliver Tiger Mk 3 powered, which was the track record holder at the Retro Racing Club track in Lincolnshire in 2019 when the photo was taken. This car has been donated to SAM 35 for safekeeping by Dick's widow Babs, and will be awarded alongside the Trophy to the winner each year and be held in their safekeeping until the following year's event, and hopefully also given a commemorative timed run on the track by the winner when the results are declared, to make it a living memorial.

This year's event will be held at the SAM 35 Retrofest weekend at Buckminster on 26/26th June 2021, but should any unexpected change to the Government Covid recovery roadmap prevent this, it will be held at the Octoberfest event on 16/17th October. The event will be run in SAM 35's usual relaxed and participative manner over both days, and entrants should be prepared to support in timing, horsing etc. aspects as needed please. You should be able to make a timed run on either of the event days starting at 10am and up to say 5pm (4pm on the second day), subject to the availability of judge(s) and timers, and depending on the number of entrants each day. You should hopefully be able to make two official timed attempts, and a maximum three if possible depending on entry numbers in this and other car track events at the time, the best time to determine your placing. Please bear in mind that your SAM 35 organisers will have duties at other SAM activities and organising other events (and attending the AGM in October this year), but times can still be recorded when necessary by delegated entrants during their absence to keep the event rolling.

The outline rules are:

1. Engines. A single tractor or pusher diesel engine of 2.5cc maximum capacity must be used. No glow engines or tuned pipe or performance enhancing exhaust systems are permitted. No metal propellers shall be used.
2. The engine's thrust line must be along the centre line of the car. The wheels must be symmetrically arranged around the thrust line, and the track measured between the wheel centres must not exceed 10 inches or the car may run right up to the outer track edge and foul timing devices. The distance between the car centre line and the centre of the bridle attachment hole to the tether cable must be in the range 9 to 10 inches (usually a standard 9 inches), and the hole must be of 4.5mm diameter to accommodate the standard FEMA style connector which must be used.

Any car which does not, in the Judges' assessment, meet necessary safety standards for any reason will not be permitted to run on the track until satisfactory remedial alterations are made to make it safe. A maximum of 2 cars can be entered by each competitor.

3. Speed. Each car entered can make at least one and up to three officially timed runs over 8 laps/500m on the track as possible over the event weekend, the best time to count. Score is 1 point for less than 50mph, 2 for 50.1 to 60mph, 3 for 60.1 to 70mph mph, 4 for 70.1 to 80mph, and 5 points for 80.1mph and above. Use a small fuel tank to avoid excessive running time on the track. A standard Buckminster specification tether cable of 0.8mm diameter piano wire will be used for all cars. A special safety “flag”/smother blanket device will be available to stop the engine on any car deemed to be causing any danger during a run, and the attempt will receive a nil speed score for the run.
3. Concours. The Judge(s) will assess each entry on quality and the excellence of engineering execution of the mechanical build and Concours/quality of finish of each car to determine overall points for this category. Score is 5 or 4 points for points for best standards, 3 for good, and 2 or 1 for average.
4. Design and Technical Innovation. Again, the Judge(s) will assess each car for the degree to which a car represents an interesting, practical and original overall design with any desirable and appropriate features (such as sprung suspension, streamlining, etc.). Points score as for Concours above, 5 or 4 for best, 5 for good and 2 or 1 for average.
5. Add up the points for these 3 aspects for the overall score, maximum 15 out of 15.
6. In the result of a tie for 1st place for the overall score, the Judge(s) will allocate an additional 1 point at their discretion to the car which they consider the best on further and final consideration.

This scoring scheme has a reduced emphasis on outright speed, though this of course is still important, but it is perfectly possible for a slow to medium speed car to score well and win if innovative and beautifully made. It may well be that improvements can be made to this scoring system in the light of experience of early events, so this will be considered at the end of each season with any suggestions input by competitors.

Steve Betney April 2021.