

DRESSING FOR THE TRACK



HOPEFULLY THE ARTICLE in last month's *Lowflying* announcing the *Introduction to Sprinting Day* has whetted the appetite for seeing what Sprinting and Hillclimbing is all about and maybe entering our own Speed Events Championship. Whilst we will cover the additional equipment needed on the day, with Christmas coming up we thought it would be good to provide a few ideas for you to give to Santa.

Safety is very important and having the correct protective clothing is a requirement of the Motor Sports Association (MSA) who govern the sport in the UK. So, here we look at what is mandatory and what are considered sensible additions.

Filling the wardrobe

Let's start at the top, literally, with the helmet. Your head is a valuable part of your anatomy. To quote Woody Allen 'My brain: it's my second favourite organ.'

Needless to say there are standards set and the helmet must meet one of these:

FIA 8860-2004; SNELL SA2010; SNELL SAH2010; SNELL SA2005; or, SFI Foundation 31.1A, 31.2A.

Two other standards may be withdrawn from 2015 and 2016, so it would be best to find a helmet conforming to one of the above.

At its first outing the msa scrutineer will ensure that it's of the approved type and affix a blue sticker to it. When buying one, make sure it fits snugly and if you are going to purchase a flame resistant balaclava as well, buy them together so that you can be sure they work comfortably in combination. The helmet should have no side-to-side movement and cannot be pulled off your head with the strap fastened. Any visor must comply with BS4110Z.

Moving on down – the race suit

Again, there is a regulation to meet and it changes on 1st January 2012.

From that date onwards they have to comply with FIA 8856-2000 or FIA 1986 Standard.

They are available in a whole range of colours to contrast nicely with your Seven.

The extremities: hands first

You will need flame-resistant gloves tested to ISO 6940 and labelled as such. Ensure they are MSA certified.

And for the feet

Driving boots complying with ISO 6940 and MSA certified are not compulsory, but highly recommended. Apart from anything else they help when driving the car as they're designed for the job. Socks are also well worth considering to protect the ankles.

Finally, to protect more organs...

and possibly your favourite one, flame-resistant underclothing should be seriously considered.

So the mandatory pieces are helmet, racesuit and gloves. The recommended pieces in addition are boots, socks, balaclava and underwear.

Emptying the wallet

There is a broad range of manufacturers and retailers and browsing the internet is the best way of working out what you want within your budget.

As an example and a guide, some advertisers in *Lowflying* supply this equipment, one providing a sprinting package for £500 (including VAT and postage and packing) which includes racesuit, helmet, balaclava, boots and gloves.

Mike Guest



Trackday driving? The advice given above might also apply generally to those planning to regularly take part in trackdays—although normally only the crash helmet will be compulsory. Most trackday operators will insist that arms and legs are covered, but if you chose to wear flame-retardant racewear you will probably be more comfortable and won't look out of place.

Wearing a balaclava is a good way of helping to keep the lining of your expensive crash helmet clean and fresh. Race or karting boots, are good for the narrow confines of the Seven's footwell and for the taller driver the thin sole and rolled-heel gives an extra inch or so of legroom. **Ed.**