



منظمة الإمارات للسيارات والدراجات النارية
EMIRATES MOTORSPORTS ORGANIZATION

PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG DRIVERS IN THE UAE

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
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REPORT AUTHOR

Professor David Hassan has published 15 books and 175 other scientific outputs, having worked collaboratively with academic researchers from around the globe. A prominent scientist with an international reputation, he was awarded a Distinguished Research Fellowship by his employers, Ulster University, UK, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to research. His leadership roles extend to being Editor of both an SSCI-ranked academic journal and a successful book series for the global publisher Routledge. One such book, published in collaboration with Dr Mohammed Ben Sulayem, examined 'Sport Management in the Middle East' and has received critical acclaim.

Professor Hassan has provided strategic direction and leadership as part of a significant portfolio of industrial and commercial experience and has been appointed to a number of international boards in his field of expertise. He has been honoured by the President of Ireland for the impact of his academic research, whilst his work examining the needs of young people with a range of complex disabilities in the Middle East has been recognised by the UAE Minister for Culture, Youth, and Social Development. In 2014 UEFA appointed Prof Hassan as an expert witness to its high-profile investigation into events at a Champions League game between Ajax and Glasgow Celtic FC that resulted in serious fan disorder.

However, by some distance, it is his expertise in the field of motorsport for which he is best known internationally. He has written some of the most definitive articles and reports on motorsport for the FIA, WRC and individual ASNs around the world. His work on the WRC Rally Ireland event has been cited widely, whilst he has spoken at a host of international conferences, including recently the FIA Regional Congress in Oman (February 2020).

Prof Hassan holds Professorial appointments at the three leading global institutions in his field – Loughborough University, UK, University of Technology, Sydney and Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In a global sports industry that is growing at 4.3% annually, all governing bodies are continually reviewing the best ways to socialise people into their sport, of providing sustainable pathways for them to pursue, from participation through to excellence, and, in this regard, EMSO and the FIA in general should be no different. The question that needs to be considered is how this is achieved, the leadership that must be offered by all ASN's as part of this process, including EMSO, and how 'success' will be measured as this change process takes hold.
- EMSO's mission should be to ensure that any young person in the UAE, irrespective of their background or ability to pay, has the opportunity to maximise their talents as a driver or a rider and, in the case of the most talented, to achieve success at the very pinnacle of their sport regardless of their background, where they live or their personal circumstances.
- This report captures the attitudes of current license holders in the UAE to the structures and pathways that currently exist to allow them to pursue a career in motorsport, if that is their wish. Similarly, it also offers an insight into the views of 'leisure (karting) drivers' in the UAE, which, in a global sense, remain an under-researched group of motorsport enthusiasts, about what barriers exist for them should they wish to move to the next level of motorsport in the UAE.
- From a positive perspective, the current motorsport license holders in the UAE are largely experienced (51% have held a license issued by EMSO for over 9 years) and have a pronounced international outlook on their sport (66% compete in at least 6 sanctioned events annually including some outside the UAE). Interestingly, when asked to rank the top 3 requests such license holders would make of EMSO, two of these were the introduction of a 'structured driver development pathway' and a 'driver mentorship programme'.

- Reflecting upon the views of 'leisure (karting) drivers' In keeping with most other sports, around 80% of regular participants in motorsport are not officially 'registered' (i.e. are not license holders) and yet this study is one of the very few to examine their views in detail. What is clear is that 45% of people in this category use commercial tracks/ circuits 2 or 3 times annually (the remainder typically use them much more) but only a third of respondents expressed a desire to become a member of EMSO. There is perhaps more work – typically through collaboration with the circuit owners – to be done by EMSO to engage with this 'hard to reach' sector. Otherwise, the most prevalent reason given by those surveyed as to why they did not wish to pursue a competitive involvement in motorsport was the 'perception of high costs' and therefore, again, there may be room for greater engagement with these users to examine ways in which these perceptions may be assuaged.
- The report concludes with three main recommendations. These are (a) the establishment of a UAE Talent Development Commission, which would be a pan-motorsport 'umbrella' body to identify, support and promote talented young competitors in the country; (b) That EMSO, in line with international best practice, undertakes an internal audit, reviewed twice annually, of its state of readiness to support talented drivers in line with the 9-point SPLISS model, which is addressed in this report and, (C) That EMSO, working with the FIA, provide leadership across the MENA region to offer an exemplar of best practice for other affiliated ASNs, to pool resources and work towards a common goal of achieving a global standing in driver development. As young people will form the focal point of this approach, devising a communications strategy, which is reviewed in line with the expectations of this target group, should also be at the forefront of EMSO's refreshed approach.



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXAMINATION OF DRIVER PATHWAYS IN THE UAE

The author's background is in the contemporary governance of international sport. Having worked with President Dr Mohammed Ben Sulayem for over a decade, it is clear that he recognises the importance of ensuring all young people, especially in the MENA region, understand the commitments required to reach the top of this sport.

In mid-2019 EMSO identified the need to establish an evidence base for the development of a bespoke sports development and talent identification model for motorsport in the UAE. Whilst other stakeholders in the UAE were presenting opportunities for young people to become engaged in karting, for example, Dr Ben Sulayem appreciated that this process needed to be a structured one, that a pathway that recognised the importance of increasing opportunities for young people to foster an interest in motorsport and partake in it regularly, and devising an effective pathway through which they could continue their involvement for as long as their talent permitted or their interest sustained, was fundamental. In simple terms, it is one of the key pillars of any international sporting body, and its national representatives, in this case EMSO, to offer leadership around getting young people involved in their sport and creating the conditions for them to sustain this interest without having to endure significant financial hardship in the process.

At the same time there was an awareness of the need to get to know the people who already were license holders in the UAE much better than had been the case heretofore, what their expectations were of an ASN and what more the ASN – EMSO – could offer them in order to support their participation in motorsport.

Of perhaps equal interest, however, were the experiences of, very often, young people who might be best described as 'Leisure (karting) drivers' who typically account for round 80% of all participants in a given sport, equally applicable to motorsport in the UAE. The research team collaborated with circuit owners, like ADMM and Dubai Autodrome, in accessing the latter group and the response rate – measured in the hundreds – is testimony to the extent to which they wish to be part of the solution to motorsport's agreed challenges in the UAE. Indeed, this level of response may indicate an appetite amongst these 'Leisure karting drivers' to be incorporated into a more formalised arrangement with EMSO, as their responses (addressed in detail later in this report) clearly suggest their motivation in this regard is strong.

1.2 AIMS OF RESEARCH STUDY

At this point, it is useful to detail the aims of this research study –

- (a) To gain a fuller understanding of what it is like – in this case in the UAE – to be a motor-sport license holder, how their needs are currently being addressed by EMSO, the respective ASN, and to gather their insights into the development of a sustainable pathway for young drivers/ riders in the country.
- (b) To achieve a greater understanding of the experiences of 'leisure (karting) drivers' in the UAE. These are typically young, although not exclusively so, talented enthusiasts, who are not license holders (for a variety of reasons) but who participate regularly in motorsport by attending track sessions at commercial sites such as Yas Marina Circuit. They too have a role in shaping the work of EMSO, to ensure it responds to their needs and, through this process, to retain the focus of the ASN around supporting and indeed broadening the base of participants and encourage more young people in the UAE to associate with motorsport.
- (c) To offer recommendations on the establishment of the 'building blocks' of a sustainable driver pathway in the UAE i.e. necessary first steps. This may be through promoting a schools' sports outreach programme, for example, so that schoolchildren understand what opportunities are available to them and generally safeguarding the future of the sport in the jurisdiction over which EMSO exercises governance. The latter point is important as this is a fundamental role of any national sports governing body anywhere in the world. This may well be unpacked as part of the introduction of an 'umbrella' body designed to offer effective governance of this process.

2 METHODOLOGY

The author has used a qualitative research design in the form of a case research approach to examine the research problems/aims outlined above. Motivation for using this method emerged from its effectiveness in examining the causal relationships of complex phenomena, including in sport (Nath, 2011). Case study offers an opportunity to seek an answer for research questions through real-life examples, drawing upon the multiple informants to talent development within motorsport. For the purpose of the current study, the author has used the case research approach followed in similar studies (Tayeb, 1994; McKenna et al., 2010; Narcisse and Harcourt, 2008; Huang and Kim, 2013). The author has also conducted content analysis of relevant data retrieved from secondary sources such as news articles, online videos, personal blogs and official websites to further validate and strengthen the study's findings.

The data necessary for an understanding of the experience of motorsport participants in the UAE were gathered using two processes. First, the author conducted a review of the literature examining talent development in international sport to develop a stronger understanding of the topic as reported above. This gave way to two separate on-line surveys – one targeted at current motorsport license holders in the UAE and the other aimed at 'leisure (karting) drivers' or, perhaps more appropriately, non-license holders in the UAE who participated in motorsport at a small number of commercial tracks across the country.

The survey issued to license holders was distributed to all such individuals held on a database compiled by the national ASN in the UAE, EMSO. This gave rise to a total number of 40 respondents, which was slightly lower than had been expected. The second questionnaire garnered a much greater response rate as some 218 'casual karting drivers' provided a really detailed insight into the expectations and experiences of this sector of the motorsport industry, which, as identified earlier, is rarely studied in any detail. This response rate was boosted by the collaboration experienced from colleagues at a number of commercial circuit settings in the UAE.

To complement the collation of a substantial data set reflecting the experiences of active motorsport participants in the UAE, license holders and 'casual' drivers, a series of purposive interviews were conducted with leading motorsport figures in the Emirates (and internationally) who spoke constructively about where challenges may lie in respect of further talent development for UAE motorsport and, similarly, how – properly managed – exciting opportunities do indeed exist for the rising number of young, internationally competitive Emirati drivers. Each of the 5 interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes, with the longest interview being almost two hours. Appreciation must be expressed to Mr Ronan Morgan, EMSO, Mr David Bright, Dubai Autodrome, Steven Umfreville, Yas Marina Circuit, Dr Sean O Connor, EMSO, and a further interviewee who expressed a wish to remain anonymous for their extremely valuable contributions in this regard. All the interviews were electronically recorded and transcribed. The author also prepared field notes during the interviews to ensure that everything discussed or observed during the interviews should be reflected in the findings of the study. Transcribed data were analysed using the technique suggested by King (2012).

The data collection for the current study lasted for about 5 months. The first round of data collection was undertaken in late 2019 and early 2020. This was followed by two rounds of interviews during February and March 2020. The author also presented preliminary findings from this research study at the FIA MENA Region Congress held in Oman in late February 2020 to popular acclaim and supportive commentary, including from FIA President Jean Todt.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, the sports industry is growing at a rate of 4.3% annually and was valued at \$488 billion US dollars in 2018 (Business Wire, May 2019). Leagues, such as the NFL and NBA in the USA, in turn have a net worth greater than the GDP of many independent nation-states (Forbes, 2018). It is therefore not surprising that the business of sports has become an important economic activity across the world, including in the MENA region. More and more research studies are being undertaken to examine the various theoretical and managerial implications of sports, with motorsport being no exception. Talent management is one such topic, which has drawn the attention of sports scholars in recent time. Talent is the backbone of any sports activity. William and Reilly (2000, p 657) explained that spectators marvel at performance of the athletes but equally recognise that their achievements are a result of sophisticated talent identification and development approaches. Similarly, coaches endeavour to nurture their athletes towards new heights of achievement and athletes aspire to reach greatness through their excellent performances. Therefore, a dedicated research approach to understand the identification, development and retention of sporting talent is essential in all modern international sports (Phillips et al., 2010).

Over the last few years, sports organizations have increasingly become globally competitive and profit centric (Weerakoon, 2016). The larger role of sports organizations in boosting the economy is now an accepted fact (Burgan & Mules, 1992). To illustrate this, a single rugby event in Australia in 2003 (the IRB RWC 2003) is credited for generating over 4000 permanent jobs and \$ 494 million Aus. dollars of revenue for the country (Weerakoon, 2016). Similarly, over two billion US dollars annually was generated for Canada through sports tourism alone at the beginning of the 2000's and this figure continues to grow (Bohlmann & van Heerden, 2005). Undoubtedly, sports is an emerging industry with untapped potentials and opportunities, including in the GCC countries.

Having said this, there also exists certain roadblocks to unlocking these latent opportunities. Firstly, the sports business has become highly capital intensive and even small innovations, as motorsport illustrates more than most sports, demands investment of millions of dollars (Ratten, 2011). Secondly, advancement in the field of science and technology have completely changed the way sports have been played or watched in recent years. Athletes and fans who are associated with a particular sport or game have now access to a wide range of advanced equipment and devices to provide them with even the minutest of performance details, delivered with absolute precision (Ratten, 2011; Hyysalo, 2009). This is a major challenge for all sports, including motorsport, and allied manufacturers, because it has given rise to demands for such products and services, which are subject to swift changes and upgradations. This also means a sharp increase in the expenditure on purchase, training and establishment costs,

including for casual participants, such as those whose views are reflected in the latter part of this report. Finally, these organizations are facing the challenge of accessing adequate training (for themselves and their stakeholders) and retaining human capital to manage their sports business in an ever changing environment (Mavi and Mavi, 2014). The above challenges are more profound in the context of emerging economies, which still lack even the basic sports infrastructure, favourable sports policies and legislations, adequate funds and support and more importantly, human capital to address these challenges (Swart & Bob, 2007; Cricket, 2018; Maros, 2018).

3.1 SPORTS SYSTEMS

As nations have committed increasing amounts of money to elite sport, in an attempt to win medals at major international competitions, their elite sport systems appear to have become increasingly homogeneous and more than ever are based around a single elite sports development model (Oakley and Green, 2001a, 2001b; Clumpner, 1994).

The strategic investment in elite sport systems to deliver international sporting success has been referred to as the 'global sporting arms race' by Oakley and Green (2001b). De Bosscher et al. began research in 2002 aimed at increasing the knowledge base around the optimum strategy for delivering international sporting success from six nations. This aimed to establish whether comparable data were available to develop a model to compare elite sport management systems on a like-for-like basis.

The history of the international comparative research of six nations began in 2006, presented under the banner of "SPLISS" (Sport Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success). The initial study was followed in 2010 with the second phase of SPLISS, which involved 16 nations. SPLISS has identified and refined nine key sport policy factors or 'pillars.' The model conceptualises an athlete centred approach in attempting to understand the following:

"How should elite sport policies function so that elite athletes can train and perform in optimal circumstances at each stage of their careers, with access to good facilities, surrounded by high quality coaches and medical support" (De Bosscher et al., 2008, p.23).

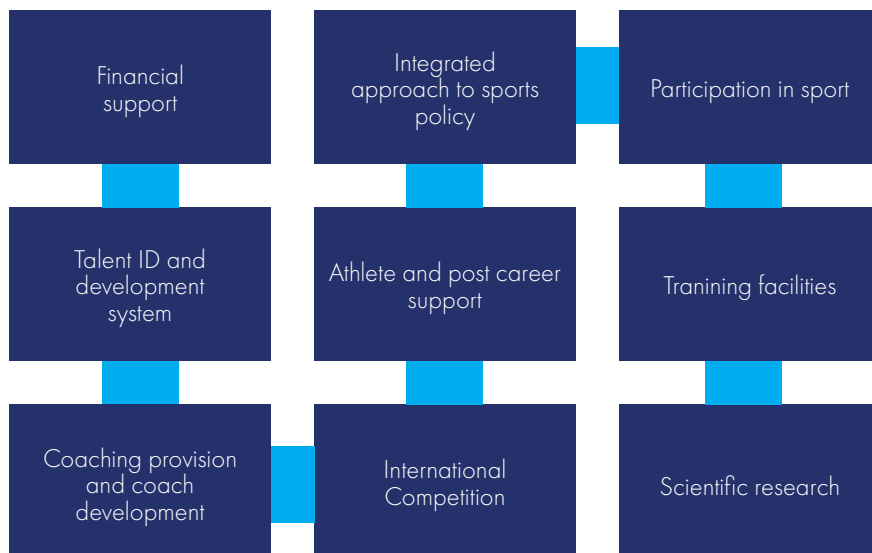
To assess the elite sports climate for the development of drivers in the UAE, consideration should be given to these nine components. Progress on these matters will determine, by some considerable distance, the state of readiness the sport is in to compete effectively on the international stage.

- Financial support
- Integrated approach to policy development
- Participation in sport
- Talent identification and development system
- Athletic and post career support
- Training facilities
- Coaching provision and coach development
- (Inter) national competition
- Scientific research

Each pillar is considered in relation to the various 'Critical Success Factors' outlined within each area but these should be adopted and shaped according to the sport in question (in this case motorsport in the UAE, and the 'state of readiness' of the nation under review – i.e. what is the culture like currently for elite sport in the UAE?

A diagram illustrating the sequential approach to an internal audit of a given ASN, e.g. EMSO, is presented below and should be conducted on an annual basis (reviewed bi-annually) to consider the steps necessary to secure international sporting competitiveness for the following 12 months.

The nine pillars of the SPLISS Model have been designed to assess international elite sport systems across Europe over the last decade, and are now being implemented globally by a number of ambitious sporting nations. The pillars have been found to be critical to the success of elite sports systems and, there is reason to believe that the examples of good practice identified during previous SPLISS research will be integral to shaping the working practices of EMSO. This proposed audit across the nine pillars will help address challenges and barriers in developing EMSO's Talent programme from an Emirati perspective and any future FIA Strategy.



3.2 WHAT IS SPORTING TALENT?

When it comes, specifically, to talent ID and development systems, it's important to understand that there are a number of aspects to this – namely, talent detection, talent identification, talent development, driver selection and driver support.

The remaining components outlined above are all necessary for sustained international sporting success and, again, as a region of ASNs, FIA MENA should seek to achieve economies of scale by developing regional centres of excellence, by promoting cooperation on policy development and support and through a mentorship scheme that many current drivers have confirmed they would be very happy to play a part in supporting (in line with the findings detailed later in this report).

The mobility of specialized talents and its implications can be understood from what is happening in modern global sport. In this context, it has been observed, that the mobility of athletes has increased exponentially in recent years. One important reason for this development is the rise of a large number of sports leagues in the last two decades and a proliferation of competitions and events, including in motorsport, which previously did not exist. To illustrate this, a country like India has witnessed the instigation of no less than nine sports leagues in the three years between 2013 and 2016 (KPMG, 2016). Presence of multiple leagues means more employment opportunities and higher bargaining power with athletes and emerging

competitors. Another possible reason for high talent mobility in this business is the growing revenue and profitability. The sports sponsorship market in emerging countries, including in MENA, is growing at a reasonably high rate (compared to many other industries) at some 12.5 percent per annum. This invariably means more revenue for the relevant firms and higher compensation for talents (Sports Power, 2016).

In specific terms, therefore, in the context of motorsport one might ask the question 'what exactly is driving talent?' and, more to the point, how effective are those governing the sport in categorising, measuring and supporting it? Do we even know what it is we are looking for and how is it to be systematically measured?

There is, unquestionably, something around assessing future potential against current performance and, generally speaking, this requires an assessment of this current performance along 6 broad areas, illustrated in the diagram below.



But in recognising sporting talent we need to be aware to the fact that not all of these qualities, listed in this diagram, are necessarily good indicators of future success. Physiological factors, height, strength etc., may be important for the performance of many sports but talent selection with adolescents based on these factors is not reliable in any empirical sense. Similarly, whereas personality traits associated with elite performers, like being conscientious and being

a perfectionist, are well established, again these are not reliable for talent selection. It is why, in the diagram on the previous page, these attributes are coded 'red' so as to indicate their relative lack of importance when identifying new (motor) sporting talent.

Instead we should be looking at the 'green' octagons highlighted on the previous page – perceptual skills, resilience and motivation, which are all key attributes to reach the top; fine motor skills and, specifically, coaches speak of the importance of a 'coachable' athlete/ driver – someone who can listen, adapt, reflect and develop, as these are all necessary attributes of the elite performer.

So in developing a talent pathway for motorsport we need to understand:

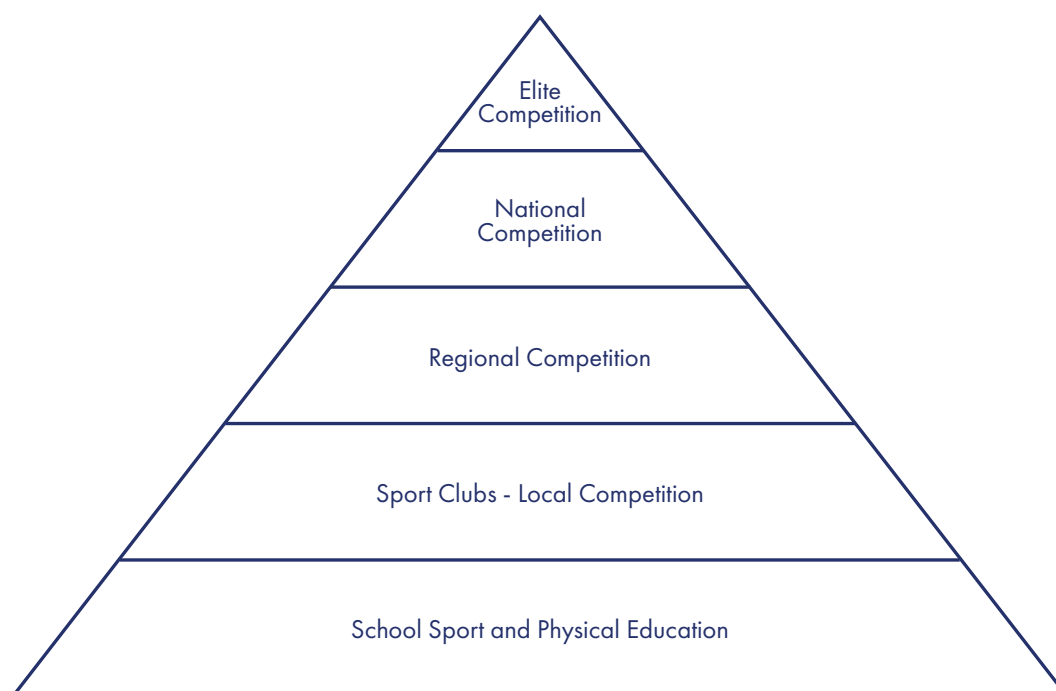
- a) What we're looking for,
- b) Seek to measure it so we can track performance over time and,
- c) Place our investment into those areas that make a difference.

Compared to other sports and international sporting bodies, e.g. FIFA, there is an understanding that motorsport, specifically EMSO and the FIA, has some distance to travel in encouraging a greater number of people to regularly participate in their activities. FIFA's 'big count' gives an indication of the popularity, especially amongst the young, of that sport in the MENA region. It's worth drawing attention to a few salient trends emerging from this data (a) the total number of soccer players worldwide stands at over 2.5 billion; (b) there are almost 400 million registered players worldwide; (C) in the MENA world region alone there are more than 2.3 million people under the age of 18 who are registered soccer players, whilst (d) the ratio of unregistered players to registered players, in total, is around 6:1.

There is no attempt to draw a direct comparison between soccer and motorsport – the former only requires a ball to play, there are few if any barriers to entry, there are clubs available to join on almost every street corner and it has a ubiquitous presence on-line, on television and across every media platform imaginable. Note the deliberate reference here to its on-line presence initially as to engage with young people one needs to understand how they access and interpret information and that's particularly relevant to a sport, like motorsport, seeking to build market share amongst the younger generation.

In accepting the need to build a broader base of participants, it is important to draw attention to two basic principles that all ASNs, including EMSO, need to consider – a) the creation of a basic sports development pyramid, beginning in schools etc., before making it easy and natural for those with interest and/or talent to regularly attend a club, followed by the creation of regional competitions etc. In this process there will be drop off along the way – all sports experience this – but it is creating this bespoke talent pathway that is the critical point as, by definition, the elite tier is composed of only a very small percentage of the overall numbers in the sport. This progression is illustrated below (in the pyramid) and it is timely for colleagues at EMSO to reflect on how effective its policies are at each level of this pyramid.

The other point to make is that, to a greater or lesser extent, this process remains something of a 'numbers' game. By all means we can look at modern concepts of 'transferred talent' (the idea that talented individuals in one sport can transfer across to another) and honing our selection policies and refining down our talent ID approaches to maximise efficiencies, but ultimately the maxim 'the broader the base, the higher the peak' applies or, in simple language, the more people an ASN can get into the sport the greater the chances are that it will uncover and produce a world champion. So challenge number one is – what do we need to do to get more people into our sport?



3.3 DEVELOPING SPORTING TALENT – KEY QUESTIONS

The review to date therefore inevitably brings to the fore three key questions -

How does EMSO ensure it offers a pathway for a young driver from the UAE to reach the top of their chosen discipline? The starting point has to be a recognition that this should be a key strategic aim of the organisation.

If karting is regarded as the popular point of departure for many, can EMSO expand the opportunities for all young people to have such access and ensure success is as a result of talent, commitment and determination and not, simply, an ability to pay? If this is accepted as the starting point in this process, who does EMSO need to collaborate with, how can those already providing commercial access to tracks be incentivised to work with the governing body for the sport in the UAE?

Through this collaborative endeavour, what does a grassroots model for motorsport look like, how is it sustained and what does its oversight and, in particular, governance look like?

These questions, in turn, shape some key considerations – what does EMSO need to do to support the next generation of young motorsport enthusiasts to fulfil their ambitions in representing the nation? Could it collaborate, for example, on achieving some of these ambitions and what forum is necessary to initiate that approach – can it offer leadership in this regard?

There are a number of karting-related initiatives currently in evidence across the UAE but the challenge for EMSO is how this activity is 'scaled up' in a way that is cost effective, is strategic in nature and returns a multiplier effect, which transforms the image of motorsport from being one that is extremely difficult to sustain involvement in into one that, in common with very many other sports, has a broad base of participants. The unique aspect of this latter point, however, is that the commercial track owners in the UAE appear to have developed a reasonably attractive proposition for young karting enthusiasts and it is offering some of these participants a platform to develop their talents in a coherent manner. As such, EMSO will need to consider how best to collaborate with these providers so that all stakeholders derive benefit.

Ultimately, it is entirely probable that a viable grassroots model for motorsport will share many of the common features of other sports. However, addressing the image of it as an exclusive sport, as one that applies only to people with money or who were born in the 'right places or under the right circumstances,' will differentiate it and, specifically, this image issue will need to be addressed in a sustained way so as to wholly democratise access to the sport for the next generation of UAE citizens.



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4 UAE LICENSE HOLDERS — THEIR EXPERIENCES

Currently there is little existing research and therefore understanding of the experiences or needs of motorsport competitors, license holders or even participants. The governing body of the sport, FIA, or its constituent ASNs rarely appear to ask these individuals how it can meaningfully assist their activities, what their expectations of the sport's governing body are, or even what can be done to increase the number of those participating in motorsport. This is a stark, yet wholly accurate summary of the current situation, which instead reflects an image of those governing the sport as being more preoccupied with holding major events than they are developing the very people who participate in them.

The only, comparatively recent, piece of research published in this realm concerns the views of FIA competitors in Georgia and Azerbaijan, and although somewhat rudimentary in places, nevertheless it allows for the creation of some baseline understanding of what it is like to be a motorsport license holder in these two countries and how those governing the sport can better respond to their needs.

In the absence of even a cursory appreciation of what it's like to be a motorsport license holder, how can those governing the sport be sure that they are addressing their needs, how can they be satisfied they are doing the right things or there is sufficient evidence that there is the basis for the future growth in participant numbers?

A detailed survey compiled by the author and electronically distributed to all motorsport license holders in the UAE gave rise to a considerable, valid and reliable response rate. A comprehensive breakdown of the views of these license holders is offered below with a number of key points highlighted in the commentary that follows.

SECTION A — Who are our license holders in the UAE?

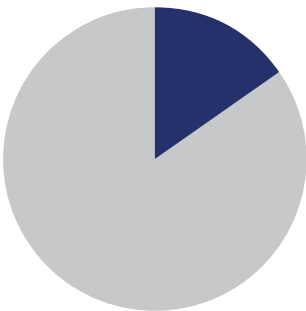
Age (N.b. all respondents were Male)

Lowest age: 10 years

Highest age: 59 years

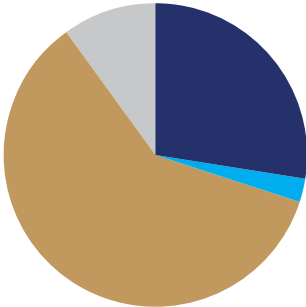
Nationality

UAE National	15%
Other	85%



Education

High School	27,5%
Vocational	2,5%
Higher Education/University	60%
Other	10%



The first point to note is that all respondents to this survey were male, that there was a significant age range amongst such respondents and that, in proportion to the overall national population of the UAE, the majority of license holders in the Emirates are non-nationals i.e. ex Pats. The latter point is significant. If the ultimate aspiration is to grow the number of young Emiratis in motorsport then a focussed intervention, specifically targeting these young people may be necessary. It is difficult to accurately correlate the education levels of respondents with either their age or nationality, even though this may be interesting as a means of better

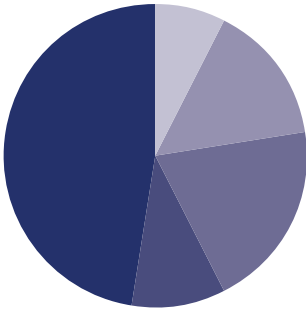
profiling those involved, but it's fair to conclude that as two thirds are University educated, that they are older, in professional employment and with a reasonable level of disposable income. As such, a profile of an older, male, ex Pat, degree-holding motorsport license holder begins to emerge and, as welcome as that may be in some quarters, that is not the basis upon which a viable motorsport development pathway can be founded.

Challenge number 1, therefore, is to increase the number of young Emiratis, males and females, into motorsport and encourage them to become license holders so as to effectively track their participation and development from a young age.

SECTION B — What is the competition profile of motorsport license holders in the UAE?

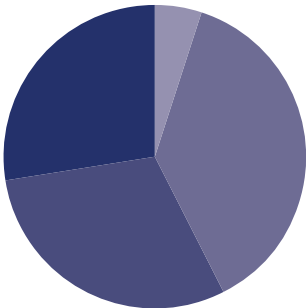
Motorsport Career (Length of time involved in the sport)

0 – 1 year	7,5%
1 – 3 years	15%
3 – 6 years	20%
6 – 9 years	10%
9+ years	47,5%



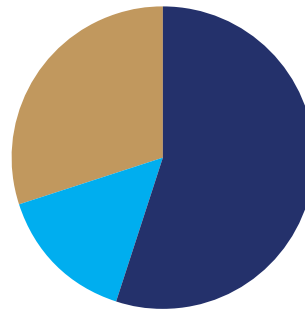
Number of Competitions you compete in annually

1	5%
2 – 5	37,5%
6 – 12	30%
12+	27,5%



Do you compete outside the UAE?

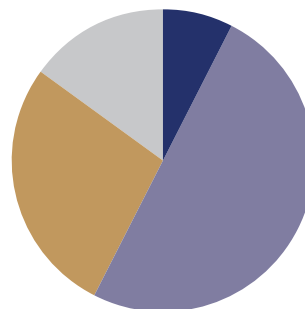
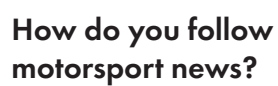
● Yes	55%
● No	15%
● Not yet, but plan to	30%



These set of responses allow the reader to better appreciate the challenge facing the development of young motorsport talent in the UAE. Almost exactly half of all respondents have been involved in motorsport for at least 9 years as competitors whereas, in contrast, only 20% of current license holders actually became one within the last three years. It is clear that this image of an aging license holder profile, with only a minority of new entrants, again remains inconsistent with a sport that recognizes the importance of developing and growing participation numbers. This is very much where the efforts of EMSO must be found. There also appears to be a reasonable appetite amongst license holders to compete regularly in organized events and, later in this survey, there is further evidence that such competitors would wish to see more such events in the future. One encouraging finding is the willingness of license holders to compete outside of the UAE, almost certainly in neighboring countries, as this factor is considered important when benchmarking the performance of UAE representatives with others either from the MENA region or internationally.

The point has already been made, however, that the support for international competition should ideally come from EMSO, be strategically deployed and targeted at those competitors who would benefit most from competing outside of the Emirates.

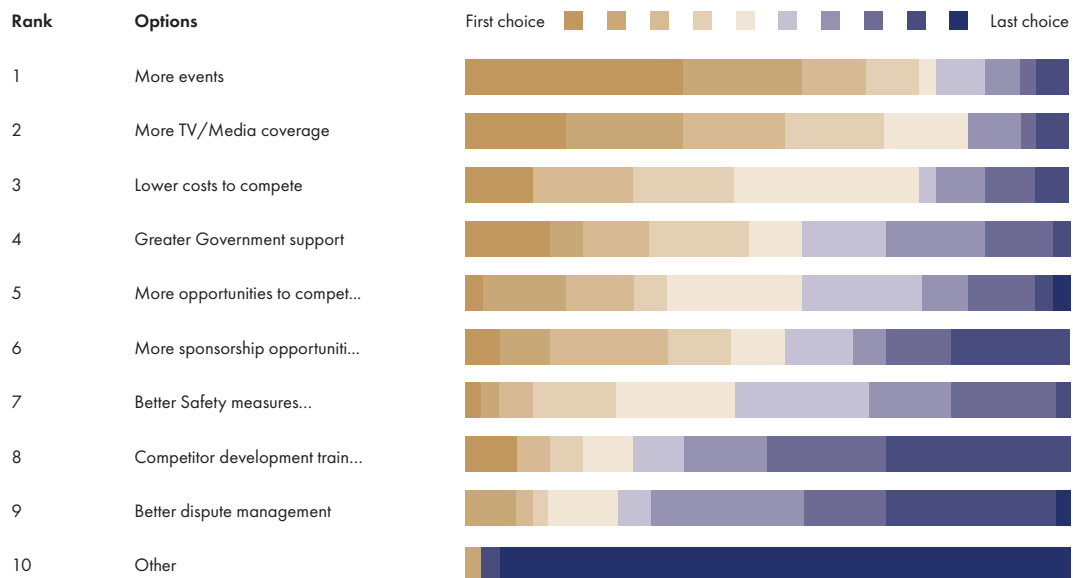
What do you understand the main purpose of EMSO to be?



What would you like to see improving in your national sporting authority?

1	anonymous	A genuine interest in developing the sport of motocross.
2	anonymous	More two ways communication with the competitos, and active listening.
3	anonymous	Bringing more sponsor and financial support so that the UAE drivers can compete at highest level. Better coordination among different championships so that driver can benefit maximum.
4	anonymous	ASN being there for the competitors and also support the competitors. Promote local series (not only the international races F1, Rally Cross).
5	anonymous	Marshals are volunteer, give them certificates, Official License.
6	anonymous	Promoting and supporting more Motocross events and venues.
7	anonymous	More support to riders wanting to ride international, more details in how does a rally race would work for rally beginners (have access to navigation roadbook examples, tutorials, support to make dubai international baja more easier to start as begginners with potential).

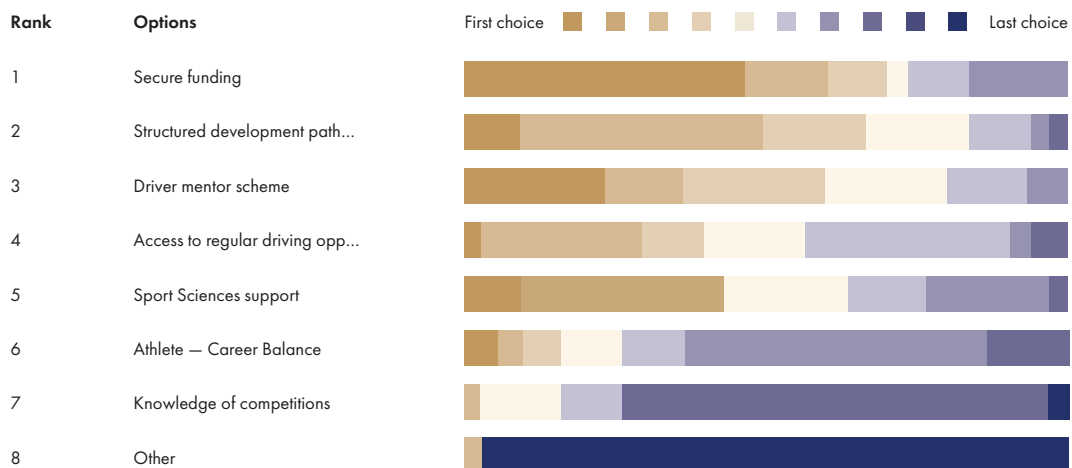
Type of services would you like to receive more of in the future to support your career



Please elaborate on other

1	anonymous	All of the above. Everything is done on the expense of the competitor, and the only return is a trophy, while on drag, rally, dunes even the donoughts competitions in skid pads there is always a reward.
2	anonymous	More events with less prices, to promote motorsports
3	anonymous	Online race registration, online license renewal etc. filling in excel forms and paying cash at the office not ideal
4	anonymous	It is the complete package, everything has to come together to promote motorsports in the region in a better way, so it is accessible by the less fortunate also, there are talents out there who don't have the money or funding to get recognized, and maybe simracing / Esports is a way to show quality of drivers through these online competitions or simulator competitions. But professionally setup, not just some entry level arcade setup.
5	anonymous	I have done nearly more than 20 FIM international competitions. I'm aware of most FIM rules. I'm sure there are many of Emirates as well gone through this and give up this experience... Why you don't establish or give a chance for us to be a member of your organization since we have hold this license for years.

If you were starting out again and seeking support from the EMSO to develop as a talented competitor, which of these services would you most benefit from having?



There is a wealth of insight in this series of responses from license holders concerning how they relate to the sport's governing body in the UAE, EMSO. In the first instance it is interesting that most competitors perceive the primary role of EMSO as being the regulation of motorsport, which is entirely appropriate. Thereafter, the next most popular answer concerned support for competitors, which is heartening, and perhaps indicative of some very good work that has taken place in this regard over recent years. However the weight of responses do cohere around the organising of events, safety etc. and whilst, again, all of these roles are entirely justified, **there is a sense that from a strategic point of view that reorienting EMSO to be more competitor focussed, to actively support young people's participation in the sport and to promote the sport itself would be justified.** There is a perception, fairly or otherwise, that a considerable amount of work is undertaken by EMSO in staging events, ensuring their safe running, regulating the sport and ensuring proper compliance, and thus considerably less time is spent actively encouraging greater numbers of young people to become involved in the sport, making it easy and relatively inexpensive to do so, and meaningfully supporting those with ambition and talent to reach the top of their sport. It's worth noting that some of these views were expressed in the commentaries, anonymously, above, with some respondents also pointing to the apparent lack of support for motocross.

If its assumed that EMSO wishes to promote what one respondent referred to as a 'two-way discussion' and, in addition, build the numbers of those actively participating in the sport as participants, then doing so through electronic content and social media should be the basis of its strategy. Respondents overwhelmingly reflected a global shift towards on-line coverage for motorsport and as a means of gaining information and insight. It would be worthwhile EMSO actively investing in its social media channels and building a state of the art web presence as the basis of its communication strategy as young people, specifically, now regard this as the only means of active communication with others.

In this regard, it's interesting how competitors, when asked, stated they would like to see a greater profile for motorsport in the UAE. **Whilst it may be ambitious to think events would be regularly shown on terrestrial television, there is an opportunity for EMSO to actively curate its own content, to distribute through enhanced social media channels and, in that way, generate the level of interest and excitement around motorsport that will encourage new and young people to become engaged.** In this regard, the response of one license holder to the question of how to encourage more people to become involved in motorsport is insightful. He refers to the role of E-sports – a global on-line phenomenon – and its popularity amongst young people, as an ideal platform for encouraging greater participation in the sport in the future. A partnership with E-sports, perhaps by facilitating a major E-sports event in Dubai, may be a logical step forward in this regard.

Perhaps the most insightful aspect of the findings from this survey of current license holders, typically older males, concerns their views around how young, aspiring competitors could be better supported by EMSO in the future. **Leaving aside the request for increased funding, which is a global issue, the development of a structured competitor development plan and the introduction of a driver mentorship scheme were ranked in the top three responses.** This is hugely significant as these two points relate directly to the need for a fresh approach to socialising young people, in particular, into the sport and then offering them the level of meaningful expert support that will make a real difference in building their careers, especially during the formative years.



5 UAE LEISURE KARTING DRIVERS — THEIR EXPERIENCES

The use of the term 'Leisure (Karting) Drivers' in this instance should not be confused with people who simply like to drive their cars/ ride bikes at the weekend in an unstructured, inconsistent way. Instead 'Leisure Drivers' refers, in effect, to all those regular motorsport participants who are not current license holders through the auspices of EMSO. As such, they could include young talented karting enthusiasts as well as older drivers who do not have the capacity to compete regularly, or chose not to, but who may use track facilities in the UAE, e.g. Dubai Autodrome, periodically to hone their skills or simply for enjoyment with friends/ work colleagues or family members.

Leisure competitors in a range of sports (versus registered players/ license holders) typically account for 80% of all participants, yet are rarely engaged with in any meaningful way by the relevant governing body. The response to our survey from Leisure drivers is comprehensive and some of the key points they focus upon are expanded in detail below. However they can be captured along four important lines:

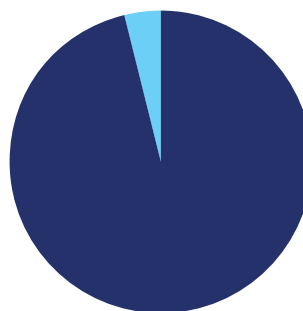
- Cost – making participation more affordable to allow sustained involvement and thereby encourage those who currently fall into this category to transition so as to become full license holders.
- Knowledge – many respondents spoke about how a link between a circuit provider, an ASN (i.e. EMSO) and a career in motorsport could be forged in a more coherent manner. In effect they were asking for some clarity around a structured development pathway for those with an interest in developing a career in motorsport.
- Instead, in the view of many, success is seen as an 'accident of birth' and one that relies upon access to resources, contacts and, to a greater or lesser extent, privilege.
- Many would like to avail of a structured development plan, as mentioned above, but lack the knowledge to progress this and appear to have little understanding of the workings of EMSO or how to access / engage with it.

It might be said that a continued reluctance to engage with Leisure drivers does little to address the view that motorsport and those that govern it are concerned only with elite performers and major car and engine manufacturers, alongside staging events. In simple terms, if 8 out of 10 people involved in a sport enjoy it and want to continue participation in it, then why wouldn't the relevant governing body want to know more about them? In practical terms it might convince some of these people to become license holders, others to support an ASN in different ways, but in general it would serve to 'build the base' of participation, which has been a consistent theme of this report throughout.

Again it is reasonable to ask what relationship 'we', as an ASN, have with people who are partaking in the sport over which we have responsibility for in this jurisdiction. If we don't even know who these people are then we shouldn't be surprised that they, in turn, appear to know little about 'us'. It's worth reminding ourselves that 'we', as an ASN, are the lead authority for motorsport in our country and we should take that role seriously across all its component parts.

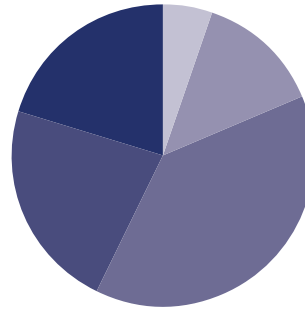
SECTION 1 — Who are our leisure drivers?

Gender



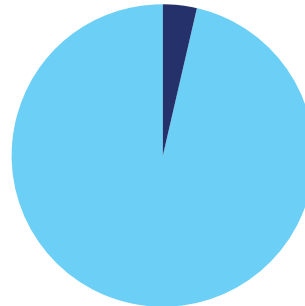
Age

14 to 19	5,5%
20 to 30	13,3%
31 to 39	38,5%
40 to 49	22,5%
49 and above	20,2%



Nationality

An Emirati national	3,6%
Non-Emirati national	96,4%



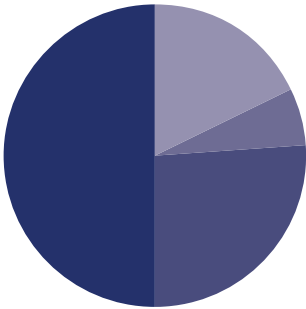
Of the total number of respondents to this survey – some 218 in all – the overwhelming majority are male non-nationals i.e. they are not Emiratis. Whilst there is a reasonable spread of ages, in so far as there is evidence of younger people actively participating in motorsport activities, the fact remains that the numbers in the 30+ bracket are significantly greater than those aged under 30. **Again it suggests significant work is required to widen access to tracks, to consider effective means of raising awareness of the opportunities for young people to participate in motorsport and offer an attractive alternative to other mainstream sports, including football. In stark terms it is clear that when one combines the numbers of young people, either by being license holders or simply Leisure drivers, actively participating in motorsport there simply is not enough people competing in the sport to offer a viable, sustainable proposition going forward, in the absence of significant strategic change.**

At some level, where this focus on socialising young people into the sport has not been there, this void has been filled by commercial providers and people who own tracks, where they exist of course, and whilst some do a tremendous job it is worth reminding the reader that they are not the governing body of the sport in that country and this is where the responsibility lies.

SECTION 2 — Behavioural Patterns of Leisure Drivers

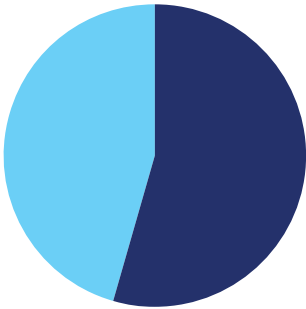
Leisure Drivers Usage of Track Facility

For the first time	17,9%
Once or more a week	5,9%
Two or more times a month	26,2%
Two or three times a year	49,9%



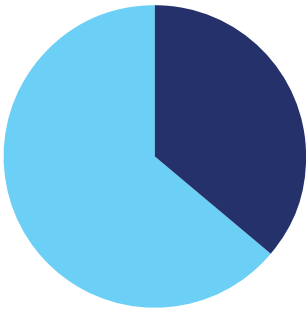
How well do Leisure Drivers know the sport in the UAE? I.e. to what extent are they aware that EMSO / ATCUAE is the official FIA representative in the UAE

Yes	54,1%
No	45,8%

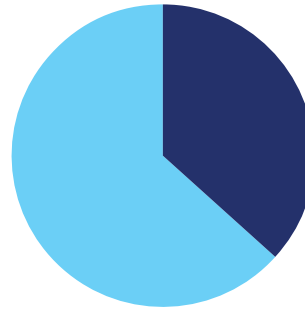


Ambition of accessing a higher level of motorsport in the UAE

Yes	36,2%
No	63,7%



Considered becoming a member of EMSO



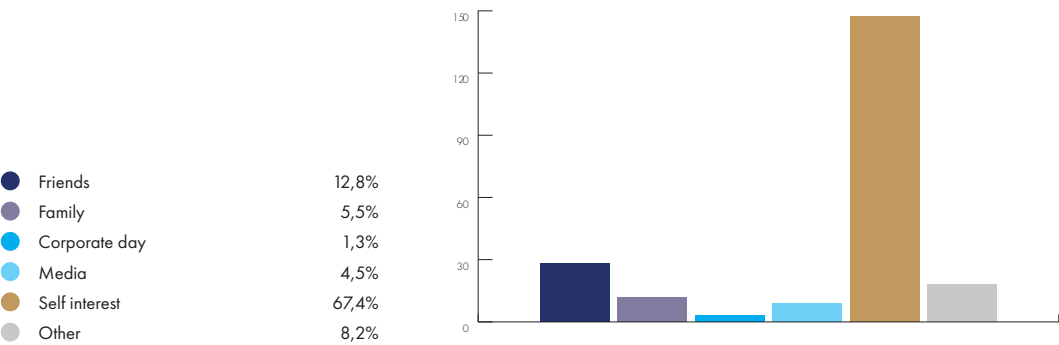
Although the primary providers of driving opportunities in the UAE are private track owners, who are principally concerned with the associated commercial return this provides, it is worth paying tribute to some providers e.g. Dubai Autodrome, who clearly do see benefit in offering a structured experience for young driving enthusiasts, including those with demonstrable signs of talent. This is reflected in the numbers of respondents who chose to use these facilities regularly, albeit those who responded to this survey confirmed they used the facility only once or twice each year in the main.

Perhaps some of the most interesting aspects of this survey were the views of Leisure drivers concerning the governing body of the sport in the UAE, EMSO. **Surprisingly, around 40% of respondents didn't appear to know that EMSO was the ASN for motorsport in the Emirates. Two thirds of those who replied to the survey also said they had no interest in becoming a member of EMSO, which presumably includes a large number of people who didn't know its role in the first place.**

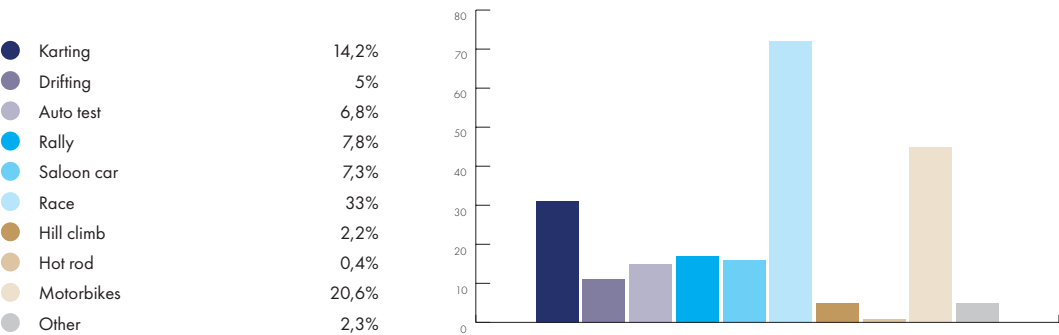
This is an unusual and perhaps insightful set of responses. Even in those countries where interest in the governing body of a chosen sport is minimal, most participants are, at the very least, aware of the name of the entity that actually governs the sport and perhaps have some level of knowledge about its mission. For large numbers of people who partake in motorsport in the Emirates this does not appear to be the case. **As such, there may be an argument to state that EMSO could do more to raise awareness of its function, to reaffirm that it is the ruling authority for motorsport in the UAE and to confirm its vision and mission.**

SECTION 3 — Understanding the motivation of Leisure Drivers better

What motivates leisure drivers in the UAE to go to track circuits?



Seeking to develop further interest in motorsport, which of these disciplines is most appealing

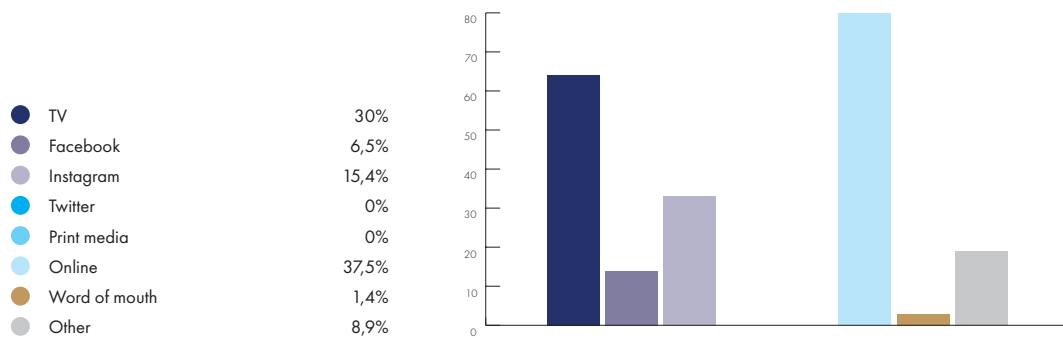


The importance of having a structured pathway for aspiring drivers who want to compete in motorsport events either nationally or internationally (on a scale of 1 – 10)

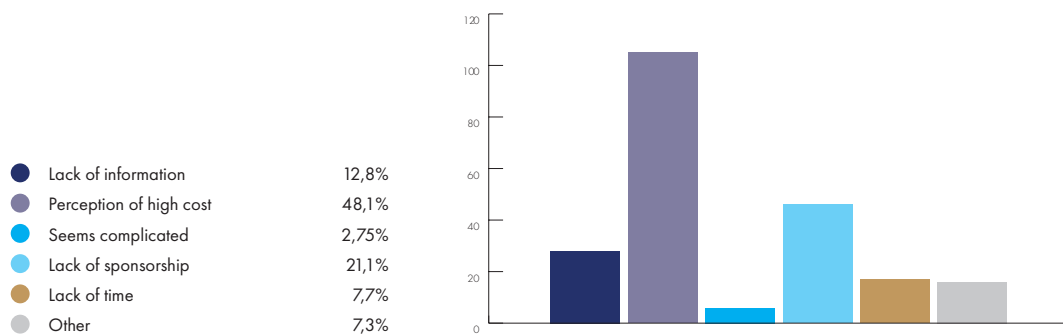
218
Responses

8.7
Average
Number

How do you follow motorsports?



Barriers to entry you have identified?



A series of issues are addressed above and offer a good insight into the views of Leisure drivers in the UAE. Identifying some particularly salient points – there is overwhelming support for the idea of a structured pathway for young drivers in the UAE. Moreover, in common with this, it's clear that many such drivers in the UAE are self-motivated and pursue their interest in motorsport for intrinsic purposes. **Almost half of those who replied to the survey said that the perception that it would cost a lot of money to compete in a structured manner within motorsport was the main reason they did not pursue this option.** As such there may be a role for EMSO in deconstructing this view and highlighting what opportunities exist to support, particularly talented, drivers with grants etc. In communicating with them it's clear, in common with a point made earlier, that the platform of choice is now on-line as, alongside television, it is clearly through this means that Leisure drivers receive their information.

5.1 NEXT GENERATION OF DRIVERS IN THE UAE

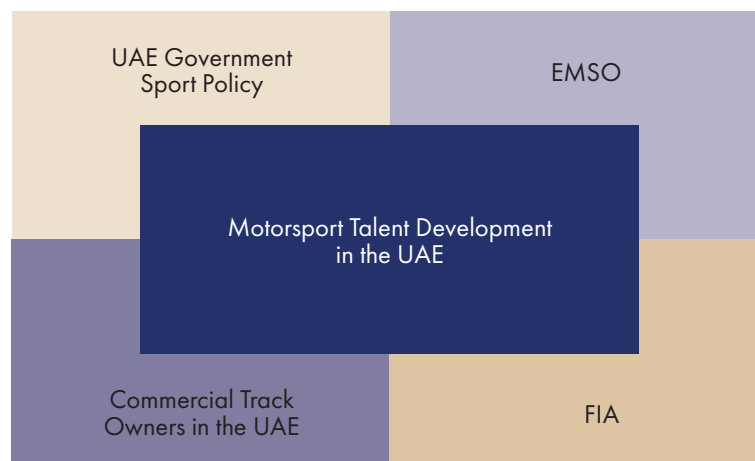
Fortunately for the UAE the emergence of Rashid al Dhaheri as arguably one of the world's best young drivers ensures that motorsport will receive a massive boost when Rashid makes it to Formula 1. He will undoubtedly become an idol/role model for younger Emiratis who will aspire to replicate his success.



Elsewhere, in the recent (2019) Abu Dhabi F1 GP Formula 4 race, 7 of the 13 starting grid all began their careers at Dubai Autodrome through 'taster' karting sessions. Moreover, 4 of the 13 drivers were in fact women! Amna and Hamda al Qubaisi were two Emirati sisters on the grid, alongside Logan Hanna. The 4th female was Reem Juffali from neighbouring GCC country Saudi Arabia.

So the 'green shoots' of young driving talent in the UAE are there – but we need to put a plan in place to ensure many more follow on behind so that these young people become the norm, as opposed to the exception.

So it is reasonable to propose that the future development of motorsport, as a sport, and young people's involvement in it, requires a collaborative approach that takes account of these four factors – detailed in the diagram below.



The ASN must lead as that is its responsibility in its national jurisdiction but it must encourage national governments to include motorsport alongside other major sports in its State policy on sport. It must, more effectively than has been the case heretofore, engage with commercial track providers for, in many cases, they have been doing some of the key aspects of sport development for quite a number of years. But the provision of these services – karting schools, modern circuits etc. – are not uniform in the UAE and there is already enough inequality when it comes to accessing sporting facilities without exacerbating this still further.



Rashid Al Dhaheri promising young Emirati driver

6 CONCLUSION

The dilemma for EMSO, as with all national governing bodies of sport, therefore remains ever-present - How do we get more people involved in our sport, how do we make it more appealing and easier for younger people to pursue an interest in our sport, and - thereafter - what mechanisms do we have in place to bring the most talented of these young people through the ranks, so to speak, and achieve their dreams. It is clear from the findings and analysis contained within this report that there is a considerable amount of work to be done.

Most ASNs, including in the MENA region, appear to be without a clear strategy concerning talent ID and development. This void is filled by commercial providers and track owners - where they exist. Whilst there is a link between hosting major events, like an F1 GP, and increased participation, it doesn't happen without a plan. Young motorsport enthusiasts require a 'role model' - the 'Mohammed Ben Sulayem' effect.

Indeed a number of people the author interviewed for this research spoke to talked of the importance of a role model - someone to show others the way. Of course it's a vicious cycle - but there does need to be a realisation that holding major events like an F1 GP should, in many way, be seen as a catalyst for the further development of a sport in a country where, instead, there is a danger that it becomes a distraction from the real business of building the sport, getting more people involved in it and safeguarding its sustainability over the medium to long term. Clearly some realignment of priorities is necessary in the very near future.

So whilst the MENA region, specifically the UAE, rightly, has enjoyed a global reputation for the standard of its motorsport events, equally we need to consider the opportunity these should create to build participation numbers, to develop our sport, to bring through the best regardless of from where they emerge and create those role models that many believe are necessary in a world where successful competitors promote a sport every bit as much as the governing bodies who oversee it.

CATEGORY	FINLAND
Population	5.5 million
Competition Licenses	9000
Official Licenses	3000
World Champions (F1, WRC)	3 F1 World Champions; 8 separate race winners; 7 WRC World Championships

Of course, in the minds of most of those interviewed for this report, the model is already there, including for small nations. Some think the Finland example is unfair but for a small nation it demonstrates that having a sports development plan in place, pursuing the strategy of growing the base over this period – nearly 30 years in the Finnish case - does produce results. Its timely to consider how in terms of population, competition licenses, official licenses and, of course, world champions comparable nations should be viewed, but same, compelling message remains– get a coherent and costed plan in place, get into schools, make it easy for people to get involved and stay involved, support those with talent and stick with it over the long term.

Rather than thinking that competitors or events is an either – or choice, ASN's should use the profile afforded the sport by these global events as the catalyst to get into schools and building the base in a structured, coherent manner. This will, almost certainly, require change. Again, as someone observing from a distance, the FIA and its constituent entities are very effective at initiatives like road safety, and rightly so, but the fundamental requirement of any sport is to develop participation in it and if this requires a recalibration of current activities then it is perhaps timely to consider this for future posterity.

Finally it's important to say that if ASN's are really serious about engaging young people they must accept that this requires effective communication with them and to understand how they want that to happen. FIFA, for example, has 9.6 million Twitter followers, the FIA has less than half a million. That's 5% of the number of followers FIFA has. Similarly, the IOC has a huge following on Facebook whereas the FIA is considerably less prominent, almost to the point of being marginal.



F4

UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES
CHAMPIONSHIP

CERTIFIED BY FIA

POWERED BY ART

EMSO

منظمة الإمارات للسيارات والدراجات النارية
EMIRATES MOTORSPORTS ORGANIZATION

ABU
29 N



7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The primary recommendation arising from this report is the establishment of a designated UAE Talent Development Commission. The formation of such a Commission is considered vital to the realization of the ambitions of EMSO and other key stakeholders in the UAE to see future motorsport stars realize their full potential.
- 7.2 This official ASN Commission would have a remit to support the growth of the UAE Competitor population. It would encourage the creation of more ASN affiliated clubs to satisfy the needs of the driver/rider population, in particular the creation of more grassroots type events, such as those alluded to in this report.
- 7.3 As suggested in this document, it would have representation from all key stakeholders in the UAE, including EMSO, the UAE General Authority and other relevant state Departments, ADMM, Al Ain Raceway, Dubai Autodrome, RAK Trak, Dubai Moto Cross (DMX), Emirates Motorsport Club and others.
- 7.4 It would offer coordinated leadership on a number of key projects, including (but not limited to): MENA Karting - future team nomination; FIA Rally Star 2021; UAE Annual Motorsports awards inc. Future Talent Prize(s); E – EMSO License for Leisure Karting; Structured Sport Science support ; Funding; Two-way communication with license holders; Clubs to host events that are in demand; Promotion / Recruitment.
- 7.5 Obviously the funding of this new Commission would be an important consideration and so it is proposed that each stakeholder to the Commission should commit to funding a driver/rider in the UAE Rotax, IAME or DMX junior events. Similarly, in a combined sense, the Commission should collectively commit to fund a UAE team in the MENA Karting competition. Again, the Commission should seek to maximize other sources of external funding, including the availability of commercial sponsorship, securing FIA/FIM grant aid for future projects, and access UAE Government funding (as appropriate).

- 7.6 In operational terms, the commission should commit to meeting four times per year with EMSO, as the official ASN, assuming a leadership role in the instigation of the Commission. In this regard, EMSO should commit to appointing a talent development manager; the ASN's social media output should be redirected to focus on the successes of young drivers/riders; its (EMSO's) IT department should actively explore a suitable support package to enable the creation of an E- License operation and, through the use of modern analysis techniques, this department can support EMSO to monitor pertinent trends and relevant data sets before making these amendable to the Commission. These data and the considered views and recommendations of the Commission should be contained within an Annual report for the UAE General Authority and all other relevant stakeholders.
- 7.7 It is recommended that EMSO, as the national governing body of motorsport in the UAE and therefore the lead agency for driver development in the country, undertakes an audit of its state of readiness by conducting a 'topline' assessment of its activities in line with the SPLISS 9-step approach detailed in this report. It is proposed that this is reviewed twice annually and updated/ amended as required. Ideally EMSO would source external input for this exercise to ensure the robustness and impartiality of any such review.
- 7.8 It is also recommended that EMSO review its social media output and other forms of communication to prove more cognoscente of the expectations of young motorsport enthusiasts, including potential license holders, deploying Instagram, in particular, as the communication channel of choice to reach this target audience.
- 7.9 That EMSO, in conjunction with FIA, forges a regional collaboration within MENA to share best practice and resources towards a common vision of making the region a world leader in young driver development, utilizing the tremendous circuits and other physical and natural settings across the region to support this endeavor.



منظمة الإمارات للسيارات والدراجات النارية
EMIRATES MOTORSPORTS ORGANIZATION