



Brought to you by:

[HOME](#)

[NEW VEHICLES](#)

[USED VEHICLES](#)

[DEALERS](#)

[REVIEWS](#)

[NEWS & FEATURES](#)

[PHOTOS](#)

Motorcycle series faces rough road

New Calabogie date should be exciting, but trouble brewing at other race tracks

LARRY TATE
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Feb 23, 2008

They say that entrepreneurs see "problems" as "opportunities." If so, there's no shortage of opportunities coming up with Canadian motorcycle racing in the next season or two.



CORY KLINKENBERG FILE PHOTO FOR THE TORONTO STAR

The new Calabogie park race track will host the opening round in this year's national superbike season.

The national Parts Canada Superbike Championship series has six traditional locations: Shannonville, Calgary, Mosport, Shubenacadie (N.S.), Quebec (Ste-Jovite in recent years), and then back to Shannonville for a Labour Day weekend finale.

For 2008, as this is written last week, there's still not a complete schedule. That's a problem. The opportunity in this one lies in the fact that, as of today, the opening round will be held at the lovely new Calabogie Motorsports Park, just south of Calabogie, about midway between Bancroft and Ottawa. The date is set for the weekend of May 22-25.

Like Shannonville, Calabogie was designed and paved with several possible circuits in mind, and the 2.81 km, 13-turn "Stadium" track will be the venue for the first-ever motorcycle race held at the facility.

Wheels motorcycle correspondents Steve Bond and myself have ridden Calabogie in test sessions,

[L](#) [M](#) [S](#) Choose text size

[Email This Article](#)

[View Printer Friendly Page](#)

[Email the Author](#)

[Digg this Article](#)

[Tag and save on del.icio.us](#)

[submit](#)

and we both think it's a wonderful and challenging piece of asphalt. Our shared reservations for a race concern a couple of run-off areas and the marshalling challenges of the full circuit. Planning to use the Stadium circuit – basically, the west loop, including about half of the total track – cuts the number of corners in half, and eliminates most of the potential crash areas that are still a bit dodgy for motorcycles.

It will be an experiment, for sure. The spare-no-expense facility has been in operation for a season, with many track days for both cars and bikes under its belt, and one car race. The owners are keen, the track is superb – we're all looking forward to it.

Other venues, unfortunately, are more problematic. Calgary will proceed as scheduled June 26-29, and the track will likely be available again in 2009, but Race City will no longer exist after that point. The track leases its location from the city, and has poured in considerable money over the past three decades to build an excellent facility consisting of a paved oval, a drag strip and a road race course. It is the only professional-level facility in Canada west of Mosport.

The original agreement with the city extended as far as 2025, but Calgary's authorities have decided to cancel the lease either to expand the nearby city dump or build a storm water management system for same.

Needless to say, two years isn't a lot of time to find a piece of land and build a new track. At least one alderman, Ric McIver, is pushing the city administration to work with the track owners.

"I want the city to have a race facility available for tourists and Calgarians alike for years ongoing," he said, adding the business brings plenty of money into the city from racing enthusiasts.

"The time to start looking for new sites for them is now, and I would like the administration to look and see if there are any city sites where it could go."

Race City general manager Rome Awde said he is hoping for government help.

"We would look at all three levels of government to help us with funding and move that forward, as well as raising private funding. It's an expensive venture to build a motorsport facility, and we wouldn't want to leave anything out – drag racing, oval racing, and road course racing, as we have at Race City."

Awde says all they know at this point is they can operate as usual until October 2009.

Meanwhile, the traditional Quebec weekend – for years at Ste-Eustache near Montreal, more recently at Ste-Jovite in ski country – is also in limbo.

The current owners at Ste-Jovite can sometimes be difficult to negotiate with, and Ste-Eustache, although recently purchased by bike-friendly ex-racers, was fully booked with car events before the ownership change.

The rumour mill continues to be strong on the idea of Mirabel – yes, the "airport of the future" built north of Montreal and east of Ottawa during the Trudeau years. Since the world has given up on the place, a consortium has taken to running car track and practice days there – we'll have to see if anything comes of that.

It's a tough world when you're a racer trying to arrange sponsorship and can't even tell your prospects where and when you'll be racing.

In other Quebec news, the Ste-Croix facility near Quebec City was pushed into bankruptcy just last week, putting its use as a club racing track (notably for the Vintage Road Racing Association) up in the air.

And on the East Coast, while the traditional Shubenacadie date seems safe for the national series, the track operation has undergone something of a shakeup. Traditionally run by the Atlantic Motorcycle Competition Riders Association, the event this year is going to be run by a new group.

The track was built and has always been run by volunteers from all the regional car, kart and bike racing groups.

Any volunteer operation of that size is always a strain on the members, and it seems that after more than 30 years of operation, AMCRA is finally running a bit thin on volunteers.

A new professional group called the Atlantic Roadracing League Inc. will be taking on the operation of motorcycle events at the track, including the traditional August national event.

Terry Steeves, one of the principals of ARL, says he and partners Andrew Murray and Malcolm Mackay have all been involved with Shubie and AMCRA as racers, club directors, and track school instructors, and hope that they'll be able to "to contribute to the long-term sustainable future of safe road racing in Atlantic Canada."

Larry Tate can be reached at larryt@primus.ca

TORONTO STAR

ADVERTISEMENT

One difficult choice.



Wheels.ca

New Vehicles

Economy
Family
SUVs
More...

Search a vehicle

Find a dealer
Used car buyer guide
Advertise here

Dealers

Find A Dealer
Events & Sales
More...

Reviews

Recent Reviews
Recent Roadtests
Review Archives
More...

News & Features

Newsletter

Partners: TheStar.com | TheSpec.com | TheRecord.com | GuelphMercury.com | CarguideMagazine.com | Workopolis.com

Torstar Family of Websites: toronto.com | [Workopolis](http://Workopolis.com) | [Torstar Corporation](http://Torstar.com)

Advertising: [Contact Us](#) | [Online Classified Listings](#)

