

TO "B" OR NOT TO "B"? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Ah, the enigmatic Plan B. Some understand it, others do not. In today's parlance plan B is simply an initiative that is put into place when the original plan, for whatever reason, will not work well—if at all. We see plan B implemented by people everywhere all the time. Sometimes it works better than the initial scheme; often, because it is used to fix a situation that is unforeseen, it does not.

In the context of rules implementation at an MCA National Show, Plan B is seldom put into place, only when judging cannot be accomplished under the approved judging rules ... usually due to inclement weather such as rain, high wind, etc.

During this year's show season, a modified Plan B was called for twice. At the Long Island, NY, show it rained steadily on Friday. Everyone hoped for nice weather on Saturday and Mother Nature smiled on the show with a warm and sunny atmosphere, lifting spirits and foretelling a great show day. However, most cars were parked on grass and still wet from the preceding day's rain. It was difficult if not impossible to fairly judge undercarriages. So, a modified Plan B was implemented by the two National Head Judges which cancelled judging undercarriages for those classes that included that element to be evaluated. The unfortunate fallout of this decision was that dedicated Mustang owners who constantly strive to improve their vehicle were denied the opportunity of having undercarriage deficiencies brought to their attention for improvement at future shows.

At this year's Grand National Show in Waldorf, MD, it became apparent at the assembly of judging teams on Saturday morning that some classes had so many entrees that it was impossible to complete a fair and impartial judging of those classes in the time allotted. As an example, Class URB (Unrestored 1974 to 1994 Mustangs) had 17 entrees. Unrestored Mustangs are not easy to judge as anyone who has judged these cars will attest. Normally the process of locating the car, following introduction protocol with the owner, evaluating the car, then adding the bonus points during the exit protocol with the owner, requires 30 minutes or more. Just doing

the elemental math, at a minimum of 30 minutes per car, it would take more than eight hours for a team to complete the process required for this class. Several other classes fell into this scenario. Once again the Head Judges, in consultation with all Assistant Head Judges and MCA's President Steve Prewitt, sadly instituted a modified Plan B, wherein the Assistant Head Judges could make the call to evaluate those classes with many entrants with a careful visual look around, in, and under each car in those classes. They were to announce their means of evaluation to each participant that could be found (sometimes the car owner is judging himself or herself, or otherwise is not at the car). Again, the penalty is that Mustang owners don't have judging sheets, which point out deficiencies that could be remedied to enhance the condition of their car.

The National Head Judges absolutely hate to invoke a Plan B of any sort. I have been to several National Shows where rules had to be modified to fit the unforeseen condition. Twice, in my memory, Plan B was instituted after the judging had commenced. At the show in August of 2008 in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, on what began as a glorious day weather wise, clouds began gathering in mid-afternoon and then the skies opened up with a torrential rain. It lasted only a short period of time, but cars were soaked, and the show field remained wet. Plan B was initiated after perhaps half of the cars were judged. In that case, to be as fair as possible, all cars were then judged with a "walk-around" procedure. On another occasion, I recall a Grand National Show in Augusta, GA, where it rained heavily on the show field while a good number of cars were indoors where they were unaffected by the deluge. In this case, some were judged one way, others another way. This was a head judge's worst nightmare.

Regarding the recent Grand National, someone said "If I had known that Plan B was to be used, I wouldn't have brought my car. Why couldn't the host club have told us in advance that Plan B would be used?" Another asked, "What are the published rules for Plan B?" As I said earlier, some understand Plan B, others do not. Hopefully, this article will help clarify the procedure.

The judging community is dedicated to improving the process of conducting National Shows, and we will be looking for ways to obviate the need for initiating Plan B except for weather or natural disaster over which we have no control.

I look forward to seeing you and your Mustang on the show field of what promises to be a great 2012 season.



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