



2010 Ventkhana Wrap

To those of us engaged in regular motorsport, a Motorkhana or Khanacross is a regular club event we look forward to. In many cases we like the competition as much as we like the relative freedoms to compete in a more relaxed and less serious environment than a full State Championship Rally.

Some of us bring our kids along as well to either watch, or if they're old enough compete. For kids when competing, it's an exciting time and usually they have the experience and guidance of parents who have been around motorsport for a long time.

Think back to your first motorsport experience. If your family or friends had been involved with a car club, chances are you had all the help and advice you needed. It may not have changed the heart pumping adrenalin you felt on the start line of that first test; however it certainly helped you get to the event in the first place.

Now think how daunting your first motorsport event would have been without someone to give you guidance or advice, particularly if you were in your early teens when you started out. Well this is where this story really begins.

Scouts aged between 14 and 17 years old are known as Venturers. Teenagers that become Venturers do all of the normal scouting things like camping, hiking, tying knots and are also able to compete in motorsport.

A special motorsport event is organised for Venturers called Ventkhana. Ventkhana is an opportunity for teenage Venturer Scouts to experience motorsport that they otherwise wouldn't be able to do unless they directly sought out a car club.

Venturers belong to groups called units and some of the units have a car (or two) that is communal for all Venturers in that unit to drive. Most of the time, the car is a bumpy that needs some work to either get it going or keep it running. The cars are restricted to 2WD and must comply with all the normal CAMS requirements. A list of technical specs is also provided to the Venturers, to assist in getting the cars up to the right CAMS standard before scrutineering. The Venturers usually prepare the car(s) themselves with the assistance of leaders and enthusiastic parents.

After a couple of false starts in 2009 and earlier this year, Ventkhana looked like being shelved for 2010 before it had even run.

Through a friend, Rally Action Driver Training (RADT) came to host Ventkhana in late August.

For this year's event, seven Venturer Units lined up with a total of 28 drivers, 6 leaders, 7 cars (and a swag of parent helpers).

Instead of the usual individual racing that we're accustomed to at club events, the Venturers were formed into teams of 4. Each driver in the team competed on a separate test, adding to the overall results for their team. Using the team approach, drivers were continually rotated and skill levels were averaged across each team.



2010 Rally Action Driver Training Ventkhana

As the Venturers were all juniors, the Scout Association required that each junior driver had a suitably CAMS licensed adult (Venturer leader) as a passenger on every test.

Over the 2 days of competition, the Venturers competed in 16 tests with their leaders, completing an additional 2 tests adding to their overall scores.

As most of the Venturers and Leaders had never seen a Motorkhana or Khanacross before, a detailed briefing was held on the morning of both days so that everyone understood what was required.

The format for Ventkhana was a combined Motorkhana & Khanacross. The first day was mostly filled with Motorkhana tests before Khanacross tests followed for the rest of the weekend.

The first drivers in the 7 teams nervously lined up for their first taste of competitive motorsport on Saturday morning. The first test was one of our Motorkhana regulars, the T Slalom. Everyone got through the test fine and there were grins from ear to ear as each driver stepped out of the car. The same results would be repeated for the entire weekend. Being able to drive a car and compete was an exciting experience. Ventkhana was shaping up to be an absolute blast!

Having a navigator in the car probably helped a lot with the junior drivers and whilst a couple of cones may have been knocked down here and there, no one got a wrong way on any of the tests.

Toward the end of the Motorkhana, it was the leader's turn to drive a test and show what they could do. To the leaders' credit, no one disgraced themselves and all set respectable times with no penalties.

Next up, the Venturers had their first taste of Khanacross. For each test, a slow drive through was conducted so that drivers and leaders could see the course before racing the clock.

Now with longer courses and a few more sweeping corners, the Venturers were finding their feet and the competition hotted up. After each group of 4 tests, results were posted on the board. Venturers and leaders quickly crowded around to have a look and see who had won each test and which team was leading the event.

By late Saturday afternoon, 8 tests had been run and the familiar discussions about who was leading and different driving styles were heard throughout the group. Here was a group of young competitors, talking to each other just as the "old hands" of Khanacross do at any given club event. It was easy to forget that some of these teenagers had barely driven a car before, let alone competed in Motorsport.

Sunday morning saw the weather change slightly. Overnight and for some of the morning, light rain had fallen. It made the clay based surface just damp enough to keep the dust down and provided some slip for the first couple of cars through each test. Unlike most regular club competitors, the Venturers had yet to learn about Rally tires and therefore all of the teams were using normal road tires.



Some of the teams knew roughly where they were on the leader board and had set off to improve their position as Sunday progressed. Some of the teams did manage to move up a place, however others got a little untidy in the heat of battle and dropped some time. Whilst getting a handle on the competition, the young drivers were also learning that speed wasn't everything and tidy driving meant more on the stop watch at the finish garage.

The last few tests of the weekend were set through forest tracks which provided a good challenge for the Venturers (and the leaders). Some found the tighter, twisty tracks more to their liking than others. Nonetheless everyone completed the tests with good times and no penalties.

By mid Sunday afternoon 18 tests had been run and won and everyone was eager to see the results.

7th place went to Bilgoman behind Warwick team 1 in 6th. Australind with members from Kalamunda made 5th and Kelmscott dropped to 4th after losing time mid Sunday morning with a DNF on one test. Warwick's team 2 drove well to 3rd place behind a determined Roleystone in 2nd. Kalamunda with a lead of just over 1.5 minutes won the weekend and the Khanacross section of the event. Roleystone, not to be completely eclipsed, did win the Motorkhana from the earlier part of the weekend.

By all accounts Ventkhana 2010 was a great success. The objectives of the weekend had been achieved. For those that had little driving time before the event, it was easy to see a marked improvement in basic car control skills and without realising it, many learned a lot about driving in general. As for RADT and the Venturer Leaders that helped organise and run the event, plans are already being made for the next Ventkhana. With very positive comments on social networking such as Face book, the word will quickly spread within the Scout Association.

This is seen on both sides as a very positive way to educate young drivers and introduce grass roots motorsport to a wider audience.