



2017 Survey of Previous ChumpCar Racers

Survey conducted September 2017 by Key Marketing Group



SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The Western Region of ChumpCar has experienced a decline in attendance over the years, while thriving in other regions. The goal of this survey is to listen to previous ChumpCar racers to better understand what happened and why – whether due to internal issues within ChumpCar, increased competition, regional factors, or a combination thereof.

This report includes a summary of responses to an email survey of 100 previous ChumpCar racers. The email surveys and interviews were designed to elicit responses that tell us:

- Where they prefer to race.
- If they currently race with ChumpCar, and if not, would they consider returning?
- What ChumpCar can do better.
- What ChumpCar does well.
- If they are aware of the recent changes in management.

The objectives and questions in this survey were developed with direction from Michael Chisek, CEO of ChumpCar, and [REDACTED], an active ChumpCar member.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

1. Historical race data was collected for ChumpCar, Lemons, and Lucky Dog going back to 2010 (or league inception). Graphs were created with race and car count data for each league to help identify macro and league-specific trends.
2. Key Marketing Group worked with Michael Chisek and [REDACTED] to develop nine survey questions.
3. In order to fine-tune the questions for the online survey, Key Marketing Group conducted fourteen 15-30 minute phone interviews with previous (and some current) ChumpCar racers. This is a critical step that some companies skip when developing surveys. The phone interviews clarify which questions elicit useful responses, which don't, and prompt other questions that should be added. A thank you letter with a \$20 Amazon or Starbucks gift card was sent to those who participated in the phone survey.
4. The survey questions were updated and then emailed to 2,604 contacts on September 15, 2017 and again on September 21, 2017. The email survey was completed by exactly 100 people. That 3.8% survey completion rate is much higher than the 1% response rate that is common.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Summary of Findings includes my observations from the survey results. It is not a list of recommendations, but an organized list of trends and requests so the ChumpCar leadership can make informed decisions as to what would make the most sense for ChumpCar and its racers.

Notes: (a) The average respondent in this survey has 15 years racing experience. (b) Italicized text are quotes from respondents.

The majority of previous ChumpCar racers are willing to come back

Excellent! Of those who said they do not currently race with ChumpCar, **62%** said they *would* race with ChumpCar again, **18%** said maybe, and **20%** said no. This is great news and highlights the opportunity for ChumpCar to get its car counts back up in the West. It is much easier to get previous racers to return – due to the established relationship and having their contact info – then it is to find new racers.

Many of those who said ‘yes’ added that it depends on the schedule and if ChumpCar returns to the Northwest. Those who said they would not return often stated that the rules are too onerous.

Lemons helps ChumpCar; Lucky Dog is hurting it

Out of 100 email surveys and 14 phone interviews, not one person said they left ChumpCar for Lemons. In fact, many of them said they got their start in Lemons and then ‘graduated’ to ChumpCar. Lucky Dog, on the other hand, is very clearly taking attendance away from ChumpCar. There is a strong correlation between the creation of Lucky Dog and the decline of ChumpCar car counts in the West.

Demand for ChumpCar to return to the Northwest

A lot of the respondents aren’t ex-ChumpCar racers by choice, they are just located in the Northwest where ChumpCar no longer races. The race history makes it clear why ChumpCar left. Despite having an average car count of 44 in the Northwest from 2011-2015, the car count plummeted to only 17 in 2016.

ChumpCar’s lower car counts in the Northwest in 2017 could possibly be attributed to scheduling. The ChumpCar race at The Ridge in July 2016 was on the same weekend as a Lucky Dog race. The ChumpCar races in March, May, and October were all within rainy season (Oct. – May), which are months that some passionately said ChumpCar should avoid.

Note: The Ridge is by far the preferred race track in the Northwest.

Simplify rules by switching to a classing system

There was a surge of requests to simplify the rules and divide the field into two or three classes. They felt that by doing that you create an opportunity to attract lots of new cars to ChumpCar.

Enforce the rules and do so evenly

Some felt that ChumpCar plays favorites and does not enforce the rules evenly. Perhaps this is attributed to the previous regime, however many of these previous racers may not realize that. They also requested ChumpCar crack down on overly aggressive driving and contact. During the phone interviews, however, a number of them said how Lemons is much too punitive for even non-incidental contact. They pleaded for ChumpCar not to take it that far.

Communication

“ChumpCar needs to better communicate how they operate today under current management and why they have a compelling reason for people to come back.”

In light of the previous feud within ChumpCar and the alleged smear campaign that followed, it's especially important to communicate to previous racers how ChumpCar is run now and what makes it great (see “ChumpCar’s strengths” below). Only 51% of respondents were even **aware** of the changes in management, while 34% were not aware, and 15% said ‘somewhat.’ There is a big opportunity in the West for a PR campaign on the ‘new’ ChumpCar.

Promotion and connecting racers

A number of people said that the races should be promoted more. Based on the high percentage of people who said they would race with ChumpCar again, promoting the heck out of races in the West seems like a cost effective way to increase the car count.

A few people said they would like to race but don't have a team. One person commented that the forums may have that info, but he hates forums and would rather just click a link on the website. Perhaps a large ‘find a team’ link should be on the ChumpCar homepage to facilitate the process.

ChumpCar’s Strengths

“An affordable way to competitively race.”

Everyone knows that ChumpCar is more about racing than themes or games, but you can still have a lot of fun. The endurance races in particular are viewed as why people love ChumpCar.

“We still talk about ‘the 36’ in Spokane... that was crazy fun.”

It was widely agreed that ChumpCar’s organization of the races is superb. Some feel the rules are fair and predictable while others despise them – you’ve heard this before.

Other common requests

- “Return to Chump’s roots” of true \$500 cars. (Others say to loosen the rules and allow for more endurance parts without penalties.)
- Do not charge a fee for spectators.
- Keep/increase the number of endurance races (12/18/24 hours).