

THR SURVIVAL GUIDE TO PACK RACING



THR

**HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR FIRST
RESTRICTOR PLATE RACE**

Welcome to the THR Survival Guide to Pack Racing! Things are done a little differently when racing in the pack, even the most experienced and skilled racers have trouble adapting to this unique form of racing. Hopefully this document keeps the “Big Ones” to a minimum this weekend.

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The Basics

In the Stock Car on Daytona and Talladega, there is no need to lift or brake as the banking is super steep and the track is super big. Therefore, your biggest obstacle to going fast is the air hitting the car. Using the slipstream off the car in front of you (Referred to in oval racing as “Drafting” or “Using the Draft”) is the main way you gain speed over your competitors on an oval.



This process also is an advantage for the car in front, as air, and therefore drag, is being taken off their rear spoiler. The two cars as a group are now going faster than if they were separated. Add a third car into the equation, and the group of cars goes even faster. This is what creates the packs you see at the “plate tracks” (Daytona and Talladega).



These packs usually consist of a top line and a bottom line. Three or even four lines are possible, but more lines mean each one has less track space to work with, increasing the risk of an accident.

The Pack Mentality

Adjusting your racing mentality from regular road racing to pack racing is the toughest part of the process. In regular road racing, the goal is to get past your opponents as quick as possible. This is done by making overtaking moves on track, and then using your pace to get a gap on them. However, since your pace is tied to the cars around you on the superspeedways, the idea of an overtake as a defined event where one car gets past the other car changes. The goal shifts from getting your car to the front to helping your line get to the front, and in the process you as well. Working together will get you the win.



Take this picture for example. The car in the middle might have been gaining fast on the car in front, so he went for an overtake. While he may have got past a car or two, he now has no help and will fall back in the middle lane. The draft in front of him is gone, and nobody is taking the air off his rear end and pushing him along.



The better organized bottom line will outpace the top lane on this lap. Teamwork is key.

Beginner Tactics

Getting yourself into the fastest line will keep you up front. Recognizing that your line is losing pace early then switching to a faster line can keep you from falling back.

Example: The car in front is losing ground to the bottom line. The top line car is moving towards the car in front of him. The correct move is to move up and follow the fast moving 47 to the charging top lane.



You can also take advantage of someone else's misjudgement. In this example, you can see the 3 car jump to the bottom of the track, believing that the car behind him will follow him and push him to the front. However, the car behind uses this opportunity to take his track position, so he leaves him out to dry. The bottom car will now fall back until he either rejoins the top line or finds someone to help him... one less to worry about.



Throttle and brake control is another overlooked quirk of pack racing. If you are doing a full race where fuel saving works into the strategy, lifting off will keep you behind the car in front easily. About 75%-80% throttle maintains a solid gap. If you are looking for speed and reactivity though, the better way to stay behind someone involves using the throttle and the brake pedal simultaneously.



This will keep the RPM's on the engine high while simultaneously slowing the car down. Taking your foot off the brake pedal will speed the car up quicker back to its previous speed than it would if you had lifted.

In the event of a big accident, there will be cautions (safety car yellows) that will bunch the field up again for a restart. Losing a position or two is not a big deal when pack racing, so instead of trying to go for the gap, just hit the brakes and move slowly away from the wreck. Those positions aren't worth ruining your race.



Its not worth it. Google "ARCA Brakes" to find out more.

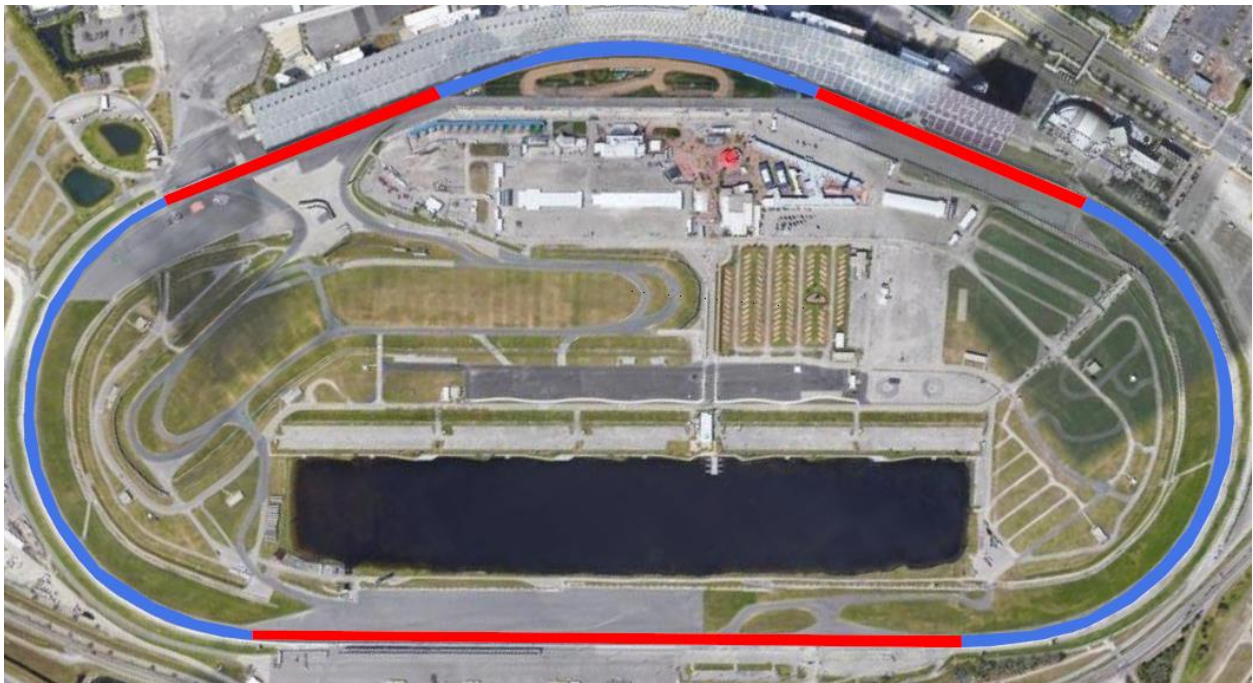
Advanced Tactics:

One of the more effective but hard to perform tactics is the bump draft. Since the car behind is inherently faster than the car in front, using the front bumper can move two cars along at a blistering speed. The rear car will hit the front car as square and straight as possible to physically push the front car along.



Those who attempt to use this tactic must do so with extreme caution. Assetto Corsa is infamous for its “ping pong” collision physics in which the force applied during a hit is greatly exaggerated. Use the brake to slow your speed down before you hit the car in front. The optimal bump draft occurs when you hook the two bumpers together and push over a long period of time. One big smack is more than likely to wreck the person you are trying to push. As a general courtesy for the 1990’s cars, only bump draft the car in front if they are the leader of a line, and only do it on the straights. This is because the 1990’s cars are very unstable, and many drives will not be able to save it if it gets sideways in the wrong place.

While organization and momentum are generally the most important things to consider when choosing a line, the high and low lines at Daytona have inherent advantages and disadvantages. The low line is the shortest way around the corners, and therefore will gain on the high line in the corners. However, the exit of the corner is compromised because the bottom lane must keep the steering to exit low onto the straight. The high line will lose ground in the corners, but since they can get the wheel straight sooner than the bottom line, their run onto the straights is much better. This is a minor factor but keep it in mind when choosing your preferred method of attack near the end of the race.



RED = Top line advantage
BLUE = Bottom line advantage

Conclusions:

Pack racing requires the cooperation of everyone involved to be successful. Please be careful but predictable in the pack, especially with these unstable 1990's stock cars. Every inch you take will require you to give an inch in return. Have fun!



***BOOGITY BOOGITY
BOOGITY, LETS GO
RACIN' BOYS!***