

SEBRING

Turn-By-Turn

*by Bruce MacInnes**

TURN ONE:

Sebring's turn one is one of the most challenging corners at this historic racetrack. It is a fast, fun, bumpy, and blind left hand sweeper where pinpointing a turning point reference is critical. The track recently changed the entry on driver's right, extending the pit wall to increase the length of pit lane. This has made finding the perfect turning point easier. Brake gently mostly in a straight line. Turn in just beyond the end of the new pit wall with minimal trail braking (unless your car has a high speed push). Add power early to settle the car over the bumps and clip the apex next to the wall. We have placed an apex reference point on top of the chain link fence on the inside wall. This is an extremely helpful reference on this blind corner. Track all the way out to the curbing on the exit and drive through the kink at turn two on the right side of the road.

TURNS THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE: The first Rhythm Section...

These corners are the first of three rhythm sections at Sebring. In turn three, the apex is the end of the inside curbing. Try to add lots of throttle at this point to help the car transition through these esses. Done correctly, this will lead you through turn four at full throttle (a right-hand kink) and still give you time to transition to the outside of the carousel (turn five). If you look closely, there is a strip of red clay & a dot referencing the turning point. Brush the brake gently to balance the car through the turning point, and trail brake smoothly to point the car at a late apex on to an important exit speed turn. The right turning point will enable the right front wheel to cross just inside the right corner of a very visible white pavement patch just after turn-in. Use the apron at the track-out to maximize exit speed.

GURNEY BEND AND TURN SEVEN:

Use all of the road on the left at the exit of Gurney bend approaching the very technical braking zone for the hairpin (turn seven). Keep the car perfectly straight over the bumps on the entry to this turn while threshold braking, turn with the brake on and trailbrake smoothly. As always, footwork is important for all threshold-braking corners. Turn, just past the middle of the curbing on driver's left and run over the inside curbs on the kinks leading to the Fangio Chicane (turns eight and nine). In the dry, these turns are flat out in almost any car.

TURNS TEN, ELEVEN, AND TWELVE: The Second Rhythm Section...

Approaching the braking zone for Cunningham Corner (turn ten), threshold brake on the left side of the road, and turn just before the beginning of the curbing. **THIS IS NOT A COMPROMISE CORNER...** You can track out early and drive around the curbing at

Collier Curve (turn eleven) to a wide track out at the exit of the Indy Car test track pit out. You can stay a bit wide of the right hand apex (Turn 12). This gives you a better angle approaching the diagonal braking zone for the Tower Turn (turn thirteen). Lots of time can be lost here if you don't track out at the exit of turn ten. If you think about it, it's not as confusing as it looks.

TURN THIRTEEN:

Brake on a diagonal to the outside curbing and turn so that your right front wheel crosses the pavement change in the middle of the racetrack. This is delineated by a seam in the road that crosses the track and by a second seam that intersects it in the middle: (It looks like the top of an upside-down "T" & your right front wheel should cross the top of the T). This turn is slightly uphill at the apex & faster than it looks...Track out all the way and watch the big drop off at the exit.

TURN FOURTEEN – BISHOP BEND:

If a speed adjustment is necessary for Turn 14, do it in a straight line and preload the suspension with power at the turning point. Turn just before the end of the curbing on driver's right, clip the inside curb, and track out two-thirds of the way on the exit. Get back to the left side of the road for the braking zone for turn fifteen. If you get in any trouble, no worries – Just bail out to driver's right & brake more for turn 15.

TURN FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN: The Third Rhythm Section...

Gendebien Bend (turn fifteen) approaching Le Mans Curve (turn sixteen) is also Not a Compromise Corner. Again, if you get in any trouble, no need to spin – Just jump the track out curbing & take a shortcut to the braking zone for Turn 16... (Note: This is a Great trick for Qualifying). At the entry to 15, break-turn & add power early to settle the car through the apex curbing. Let the car track out early to the inside curbing approaching turn sixteen. Clip the end of that curb & brush the brake for Turn 16. Just as power helped the car transition the esses of turns three and four, power will help the car transition to the turning point for the most important exit speed corner at Sebring (turn sixteen).

Le Mans Curve (turn sixteen) leads on to the longest straightaway and exit speed is critical. It is important to drive the car to the left, across the pavement transition to the concrete on the outside before turning in. Note: The entire racecar will be on the concrete, at least one car width off the asphalt entering this turn. Brush the brakes, and squeeze power through the apex. You can use the exit apron curbing, but absolutely do not drop a wheel. Most cars hook to the inside barrier if they go off on the exit of this turn. If you drop your outside tires, turn a bit left, and go to even throttle; If

you spin with TTO (trailing throttle oversteer), instant lock up is your friend. This is the most dangerous track out at Sebring if you let it hook to the inside...

TURN SEVENTEEN A & B – SUNSET BEND:

Turn seventeen is a double apex corner where braking and downshifting are done through and beyond the first apex. It really is two separate corners. This, as well as turn one, is a challenging corner at Sebring. Turn early at 17 A ignoring the last countdown reference cones on driver's left. Most people turn just before the second set of reference pylons. Apex the wall while brake-turning and downshift with good footwork. Trail brake wide in the middle on a line that leads you one and one-half car widths outside of the dark patch between 17 A & B. It is very bumpy at the apex just before the bridge at seventeen B so stay a car width wide at this point. No need to apex the grass beyond the bridge. Squeeze full throttle and let the car track out all the way to the tire wall, on the straightaway leading to Start/Finish.

RAIN LINES:

- As always, side-step the braking zones and drive around the outside of most corners.
- Change brake bias, if possible, away from the front.
- Soften (or remove) sway bars.
- Retaining the ability to see is the most challenging problem – Experiment to see what anti-fog works for you.

YOU CAN NOW DRIVE A PERFECT LAP ON ONE OF THE GREATEST RACE TRACKS IN THE WORLD. HAVE FUN AND I HOPE YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME.

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Bruce MacInnes has been professionally coaching racing drivers for over 40 years & has successfully competed in a wide variety of Production cars, Formula cars, & Prototypes. As former Senior Instructor at The Skip Barber Racing School, Bruce's credentials include two Pro Formula Ford National Championships, 18 lap records, Formula Magazine's "Driver of the Year" twice, and winning Lime Rock's Can-Am in a Lola T-333 Chevy (in the rain).

Bruce brings a love of racing, a passion for coaching, and a genuine concern for his students to our Sport. He is committed to helping every driver achieve progress & is also excited to be a part of Bertil Roos Racing School. Recently Bruce has enjoyed success coaching for several of America's best vintage racing teams & has seen his students win at the highest levels of American Racing.

Bruce lives in Sebring, FL during the Winter & in the Northeast in Summer & coaches at over 20 tracks Nationwide. He & his wife Vikki are both Private Pilots & are Lifetime Members of the Experimental Aircraft Association.

**Hobbies include restoring vintage cars, building kit cars, kit airplanes & custom motorcycles. Several projects and articles he has written can be seen at:
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