

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN VINTAGE RACING, LTD.



## DRIVERS' SCHOOL MANUAL

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# Introduction

The goal of the RMVR Drivers' School is to offer instruction that will result in the development of fundamental driving skills along with the proper attitude to ensure safe participation and enjoyment of the sport of vintage racing. Safety must be our top priority!

School participants will:

- Understand RMVR procedures
- Develop car control, judgment and reasonable level of driving skills
- Demonstrate awareness and courtesy on the track
- Understand the philosophy of vintage racing

## *RMVR Procedures*

The school is designed so that the majority of the training you receive will come from the driving instructors chosen to work with you. It is the beginning of a process that will continue throughout your "racing career." Our intention is for you to learn about RMVR and enter the sport safely and with the proper attitude. Your personal development as a driver will depend on your own expectations and motivation.

## *Car Control, Judgment and Reasonable Driving Skill*

Wheel to wheel racing, at any level, is complex and requires you to make instant decisions while exercising car control. During this school you are expected to drive safely and demonstrate that you are in control at all times. It is strongly suggested that you spend at least one day in your car at the track prior to the school to become comfortable in your car and be able to benefit from instruction. Having your instructor accompany you in a passenger seat is the best way to improve your skills. Consider bringing a street car if your race car will not accommodate a passenger.

We will encourage you to demonstrate a reasonable level of driving skill in competition. When errors occur you must learn from them. After completing this school in a race-prepared car, you will be observed for at least two complete race events before you will be considered eligible for a full competition license.

## *Situational Awareness*

You are expected to consistently demonstrate awareness of other cars, corner station locations, flags, and course conditions. Acknowledge flags and be aware of faster cars attempting to overtake you. As vintage racing is a cooperative sport, your lap times, driving skills, enjoyment and friendships will all grow if you wave a faster car by and follow his or her line, noting braking and turn-in points.

## *Philosophy of Vintage Racing*

Vintage racing is about the cars, fun and friendship. You are about to develop many good friends and create wonderful memories, from racing wheel-to-wheel to sharing parts and stories. No one will remember who won the race, but everyone will remember who ruined their car or who through carelessness, damaged a competitor's. It must be stressed that your racing license may be sanctioned, withheld, or revoked if you make contact with other cars, act in a reckless or disrespectful manner, place others in danger on the track or in the paddock or damage your own car. Remember that one careless moment, when emotions run unchecked, may result in ruined friendships and harm to yourself or others.

## *Car and Equipment Preparation*

We run cars upwards of fifty years old and without proper preventative maintenance you may experience mechanical and electrical problems that can end your weekend prematurely. Race car preparation includes frequent inspection (wheels, bearings, brakes, frames, throttle cables, crack testing etc.) This is an important part of racing SAFELY.

*Have Fun!*

**We hope you have a great weekend and Welcome To Vintage Racing!**

## **Overview of Drivers' School**

### **Friday Evening**

Refreshments and Mandatory Drivers' Meeting

“Classroom” Topics – RMVR Goals, Procedures and Processes

- The Vintage Spirit
- Registration and tech
- Timing and scoring
- FLAGS (Be familiar with their meaning prior to the school)
- Entering and exiting paddock procedures
- Licensing process
- Who's who in RMVR

## **Saturday Morning**

Van rides will begin early in the day and be offered during the day. There will be four classroom sessions during the day. With your instructor, ride or walk the track again during the lunch break. Get a better feel for visual landmarks, braking points, corner entry, apex, and exit points. Observe tire marks and discuss braking zones for passing other cars.

The following is a brief list of the concepts and exercises you will be working on during your first on-track day. Your instructor will provide many details, answer questions and provide further clarification of concepts at various times during the day. Spend as much time as you can with your instructor, observing other sessions and walk to specific corners that you may find challenging.

### **Session 1: Follow the Leader – Learn "The Racing Line"**

You will learn the course layout and the racing line by following or riding with your instructor at a slow pace.

- No passing, single file, low speed
- Concentrate on position, comfort with controls, and relaxing
- Note location of corner stations
- **Place your car on the "racing line" and use all of the track – use the cones placed on corner entry, apex, and exit points as guides**
- Practice visual sequence (look for flags, check you mirrors, look for the apex,) before each turn-in
- Visually rehearse the sequence of the track while waiting for your next session.

### **Session 2: Higher Speeds and Learn "The Visual Sequence"**

You will increase the speed to a more brisk pace and practice the **visual sequence** when approaching a corner, (**look for flags, check you mirrors, look for the apex.**)

- No passing, single file but with increased speed
- Increase familiarity with the track and **work on developing a rhythm to your driving**
- **Scan for flags and check mirrors, be predictable**
- Practice "high eyes" after locating apex
- Wave at corner workers after the checkered flag, during the cool down lap

### **Session 3: Passing and Being Passed – Awareness is key!**

You will learn how to pass, how to be passed, and how the line changes when passing occurs. LIMITED passing with "point-by" will be described in the classroom session.

- Pass and be passed –on front and back straight ONLY
- Use acknowledgment signals
- **Watch your mirrors and practice the visual sequence**
- **Cooperate with the passing car, be predictable**
- Adjust your line and corner entry speed when passing

## **Session 4: More Passing and More Practice – More Passing Zones.**

The **passing zones will be expanded** as described during the classroom session. You will **continue to develop comfort with passing and being passed** with point-by and acknowledgement.

- Complete several passing maneuvers in a variety of turns
- Develop comfort with how braking and corner entry points change when passing
- Practice the visual sequence when entering corners
- Practice smoothness, develop a rhythm, hit turn-in, apex, and exit points.
- **Identify goals you wish to address tomorrow**

Discuss with your instructor specific areas in need of improvement. Watch other sessions and discuss troublesome corners with your instructor.

## **Sunday Early Morning**

Refreshments and Van Rides

## **Session 5: Picking Up Where We Left Off**

Just like the tires and the track surface, the driver is a little cold so take some time to warm up. Precision drivers will still honor the “point-by” system in the restricted passing zones.

- Race Prepared Cars: pass and be passed – **Anywhere on the track WITH a point-by.**
- Point-by and acknowledge
- Practice the visual sequence when approaching corners, especially using mirrors
- Concentrate on smoothness, hitting the turn-in, apex, and using the entire track
- Be predictable and remain on-line when faster cars approach
- Flag practice

## **Session 6: Typical Practice Session – How to best use “practice”**

This will be the first unrestricted practice session for race prepared cars. Continue to work on the areas you’ve identified for improvement.

- Continue to always “point by” when being challenged.
- Practice the basics and continue to improve driving skills
- Be relaxed and aware... situational awareness
- Practice visual sequence
- **Pick something specific to “practice” and really focus on that one thing.**

## **Session 7: Side-By-Side Practice Starts**

This session will require students to grid according to their assigned position, form up side-by-side, and practice flying starts. The session will include three green flag starts that will quickly

end using the yellow flag at the corner stations. Cars will be expected to slow and “re-form side-by-side” according to their current position once the yellow flag is out in preparation for the next start. After the third “start” you will practice your skills until the end of the session.

- The pole position car sets the pace for the warm-up lap.
- Passing is unrestricted (under green ONLY)
- Acknowledge flags
- Continue working on your skill goals

### **Session 8: Practice Race –Students and Instructors full race.**

This is when you put it all together. You will be assigned grid positions, line up side-by-side and wait for the green flag. The session ends when the checkered flag is thrown.

- **Maybe team up with someone to practice passing each other often.**
- Practice all you’ve learned.
- The pole position car will set the pace for the warm-up lap.
- Acknowledge flags
- Use the visual sequence

## **Driving School Concepts**

Be sure to review the following terms and topics with your instructor during the weekend. *They need to be discussed, practiced and observed, then noted in the Provisional License book.*

### Line

Track layout  
“Racing” line and “ideal” line  
Use of entire track (turn-in, apex, track-out)  
Locating flag stations/Black flag station  
**Hand position on wheel**  
Consistency  
Predictability

### Cornering

Visual sequence  
**Low/High Eyes**  
Exit speed  
**Turn in point/Track out point**  
Constant, decreasing, increasing radius of corner  
**Under-steer and over-steer**  
**Late apex**  
**Early apex**  
**Car rotation**  
Conditions that affect apex  
**Track camber**, elevation, pavement changes, traffic, grip  
Smoothness (**heel/toe**)  
**Trailing Throttle Over-steer**

## Braking

Conditions that affect braking  
Temperatures, track camber and surface, **contact patch**  
Coasting  
**Reference points/Braking points**  
**Center of gravity**  
**Threshold braking/Trail braking**  
**Trajectory**  
**Weight transfer** – smoothness

## Awareness, Safety, Judgment and Courtesy

Visual Sequence  
Corner Station Location/Flags  
Hand signals (grid, on-track, off-track, acknowledgement of flags)  
Passing (point-by and acknowledgement waves)  
Starts

## Passing

Visual sequence  
“Who owns the corner?”

## Philosophy of Vintage Racing

Attitude  
**10/10ths vs. 7/10ths**  
Car control  
Friendship and fun

## What Is Vintage Racing?

Vintage racing is about something other than winning. Although the competitive spirit is there and we would all like to improve our times and maybe even win, there is much more to consider. Our cars are too valuable to get into the “pushing and bumping” game, parts are hard to find, and our drivers tend to have considerable differences in their skill and experience. Cars with a wide range of horsepower and handling capabilities are on the track at the same time. We’re not doing this to get sponsorship, awards and fame. Dicing with those in front of us and behind us, setting a personal best and simply finishing are worthy goals. Competing in an event is a joy unto itself.

We develop many good friends in vintage racing and together, create wonderful memories. Welcome and enjoy!

## What Is Over-Aggressive Driving?

The following is a definition of over-aggressive driving from the Vintage Motorsport Council:

- Failing to slow down when passing a waving yellow.
- Weaving at the end of the straight, even once, to block a faster car
- Driving 10/10ths all the time.
- Continually putting wheels off the pavement.
- Sliding into another car due to driving beyond you or your car’s capabilities.
- Ignoring the black flag.

- Diving deep into the inside of a corner not being able to get a nose in front thus forcing a competitor wide to avoid you.

Over-aggressive driving is **NOT**:

- Ignoring the passing flag – it is for information only
- Executing a racing pass to the inside of a corner by **CLEARLY** out-braking another car and having a **SUBSTANTIAL** part of your car ahead at turn-in

## What Can I Expect For My First Event?

1. At registration you must present your RMVR Competition License or Provisional License. You must sign the release forms as failure to do so places the club in great jeopardy. Sign yourself in, and enter any crew member or visitor expected. You will receive an event schedule, a wrist band, a run group list and a run group sticker. Place the sticker in a prominent (visible) location on your race car and put the wrist band on your left wrist. You must not enter the track without your wrist band and doing so is a serious infraction.
2. Find a pit space in the paddock area. This is actually much more fun on Friday than on Saturday morning, but in either case be aware that pit space is at a premium. Generally, you can count on a 34' x 11' space. Be sure to have practiced backing up your trailer prior to Friday morning.
  - Use only the space you need
  - Be a good neighbor to adjoining spaces
  - You are responsible for your kids, pets and visitors
  - Adult friends and pit crew must abide by our rules
  - **NO alcohol until the track is “cold” at the end of the day**
  - **No marijuana...period!**
3. Unload the race car and drivers' gear (helmet, suite, etc.) and determine where Tech Inspection is being held. Tech inspectors can be identified by the orange “TECH” hats. If it's Friday afternoon, you can often get a Tech person to your pit, otherwise it is usually performed at a location designated by a long line of race cars. Have your car's log book, your Provisional License book, safety gear and completed Tech Inspection Form with you. Formula cars need to have the front body and engine cover removed. “Debates” with the Tech inspector are not recommended.
4. **FIND YOUR INSTRUCTOR!** Pit nearby if possible. Arrange a general plan of where to meet before and after each session and discuss the instructor's agenda for the weekend. Walk the track if possible, but be certain to take a van ride, offered to those new to the track, prior to the drivers' meeting.
5. Attendance at the Drivers' Meeting Saturday and Sunday morning is mandatory. The agenda for the day will be discussed, possible changes announced and other pertinent information such as track conditions will be made available. If you are scheduled to run



in Group 1, you should be wearing your driving gear and your car should be driven to the grid prior to the meeting.

6. Be aware of which group is currently on the track so that you can budget your time accordingly. Each session is generally 15-20 minutes in duration. Shortly after the run group prior to your group leaves the grid, bring your car to the grid along with your driving gear. It is better to be too early than too late. Drink lots of water.
7. Pit and grid workers will blow a whistle and hold up five fingers to begin the grid count while the prior group is still on the track. There is roughly five minutes before your group will leave the grid, so get in your car, get the belts on, arm restraints, etc. Most drivers get the belts and straps in place and tight before putting on the helmet and then gloves. As the countdown proceeds, pit and grid workers will blow the whistle and hold up four, then three, etc. fingers. Start your engine at about two minutes, giving it time to warm up, but not overheat. When it is time to roll out, pit and grid workers will blow the whistle and show a raised fist. If you are lining up for a start, the pit and grid workers will direct you as to which side of the track you are to line-up on. Acknowledge by gesturing which side, it will help you remember.
  - Mentally prepare for the session, focus on what you want to accomplish.
  - Occupy the grid position you are assigned.
  - Observe the pit and grid workers and follow their instruction.
  - Acknowledge the five minute countdown with hand signals
  - Your crew must be alert to other cars, and vacate the grid at the one minute count.
  - If you have a problem and cannot leave the grid with your group, raise your hand as soon as possible to signal both the driver behind you and to get the attention of the workers.
8. When lining up for a race, as you get approximately half-way through the warm-up lap, the corner workers will slow the lead cars to assemble the group into the “start” configuration. At this point, weaving and hard braking tactics need to be curtailed. When the green flag falls, the session has begun.
9. During the start, hold your line, be predictable, and use your mirrors. No race is won or lost in the first turn. If another car spins or slows unexpectedly in front of you, do not lock-up your brakes as you then lose all steering and stopping power. Try to signal the cars behind you by raising an arm into the air. If it is your car that slows, stay on line and raise your hand in the air to be seen.
  - Check corner stations for flags, every station, and every lap!
  - If yellow flags are shown, no passing!
  - Check condition of the track, debris, potholes, oil, etc. during your warm-up lap.
  - When you pass the start/finish check for a green flag to begin your session. Some practice sessions are under the green flag from the moment you first enter the track.
  - If you have a car problem, raise your hand, make sure you are clear of traffic, reduce speed and gradually (as in predictable to other traffic,) get off the racing line.
  - You must not stop on the racing surface, if at all possible. Get off the track safely

and close to a corner station. Wait for their direction.

- In the event you leave the racing surface, re-entry will only occur under direction of the corner worker or grid worker (if you are near a corner station).
10. At the end of all sessions, practice or race, you will see the checkered flag. Do not slow suddenly. Take your cool-down lap and wave at the workers, (at Tech and the spectators,) enter the pits and be very careful of pedestrians in the pit area. Try not to stop in the middle of the access lane in the paddock as this may cause a traffic jam. After you've had some water, go find your instructor.
- Watch your speed in the hot pits and in the paddock!
  - As soon as possible, check over your car for leaks, tire wear and anything that may need to be checked before your next session.
  - Consider inviting spectators to sit in your car, but be careful as they may not choose to get out!
11. During lunch and at all social times scheduled for the end of the day, be sure that corner workers are served first. Without them, we wouldn't be here.

## Random Advice

The driver is always the best place to begin to improve lap times. There is no substitute for seat time. Don't try to go fast before working on smoothness, line and consistency. Get all the experience you can.

Make the car reliable and consistent first, improve your driving, and then think about improving the car.

Don't expect too much, too fast. Try to work corners at least once, especially if you find a specific corner to be challenging.

Check over your car after each session. Look for oil, water and fuel leaks. Check for tire wear and wheel torque.

Pick a few things to work on at every race, create a list at the beginning of the season. Use a notebook. Organize it in specific areas and add information at every opportunity.

Find mentors. This is more important than you may realize! A mentor should have experience in your racing class. Ask questions and get feed back. Make friends and help to create a friendly atmosphere. If someone else struggling, lend a hand.

Prepare the car before the event, not at the track.

Take care of yourself. Be rested, exercise, use sunscreen, drink lots of water, and eat healthy foods. **And remember — it's about the cars, camaraderie and fun!**

## Recommended Reading

### *The Ace Factor – A Guide to what you need to know about Vintage Racing*

Compiled by E. Paul Dickenson – Published by VMC

The booklet, published by the VMC (Vintage Motorsports Council), is **provided to you as an integral part of your RMVR curriculum. Ideally you should review the contents of this book BEFORE the Drivers School weekend** in order to be familiar with its content. This will better equip you to quickly use it as a resource DURING and AFTER the School weekend. While mostly devoted to the beginning race car driver, it is an excellent resource to re-visit as you continue to develop your racing skills.

### *Going Faster! Mastering the Art of Race Driving*

Carl Lopez

Bentley

ISBN 0-8376-0227-0

This is an exceptional book, even for beginning drivers. It is well illustrated with examples and clear explanations. Carl is a career instructor for the *Skip Barber Racing School*. This book is the most clearly written and well thought-out in presentation. Carl and the *Skip Barber Racing School* (800-221-1131) have been teaching race car driving at a high level for many years and they have distilled their collective experience into this book.

### *Bob Bondurant on High Performance Driving*

Bob Bondurant and John Blakemore

OSPREY

ISBN 0-87938-158-2

### *Jackie Stewart's Principals of Performance Driving*

Edited by Alan Henry

OSPREY

ISBN 0-905138-34-0

This is about driving, mostly by describing Jackie Stewart's approach.

### *Think to Win, the New Approach to Fast Driving*

Don Alexander

Robert Bentley

ISBN 0-8376-0070-7

Any of **Carroll Smith** books support race car fabrication and preparation.

Speed Secrets Series and speed secrets weekly by **Ross Bentley**

### **Safe Is Faster**

Bobby Rahal