

SEBRING
A Track Description
*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 widens at the end of the pit wall after the bridge. Drive to the extreme outside next to the pylons. Brake gently in a straight line. Turn with minimal trail braking, well after these cones start to parallel pit out. 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.

URNS 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 full 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 extreme outside of the carousel (turn five). If you look closely, there is 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 the right corner of a very visible 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 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). These turns are flat out in almost any car.

URNS 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 at 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. This will bring you to the diagonal braking zone for the Tower Turn (turn thirteen). Lots of time can be lost here if you don't track out and compromise 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, one third of the way into the corner. 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"). Track out all the way and watch the big drop off at the exit.

TURN FOURTEEN – BISHOP BEND:

This turn is taken flat out in most cars. If a speed adjustment is necessary, 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.

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, add power early to settle the car through the apex curbing and let the car track out early to the inside curbing approaching turn sixteen. Just as power helped the car transition the esses of turns three and four, full throttle 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 the turning point. Note: The entire racecar will be on the concrete, at least one and one-half car widths 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.

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. This, as well as turn one, is a challenging corner at Sebring. Turn early, ignoring the last countdown reference cones on driver's left. Most people turn flat out just before the second set of reference cones. Looking closely on driver's left, you will see a red clay reference that some smart driver put to mark the turning point. (This might be slightly early.) Many drivers turn in flat out, apex the wall while brake-turning and downshift with good footwork. Trail brake one and one-half car widths outside of the dark patch, (which is really dark blue paint that Terry Earwood and I have been repainting for decades between the apex at seventeen A and the bridge at seventeen 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 grass, 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 – Flex Balsam Shampoo works.

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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