

# Welcome to Sonoma Raceway!

Thanks for joining us for Wednesday Night Drags at Sonoma Raceway, powered by Universal Technical Institute.  
Here's a basic guide to help you learn how to race and hone your skills on a national-caliber, NHRA-sanctioned drag strip.



## STEP 1: TECHNICAL INSPECTION

- Once you have purchased your tech card, go to the line used for technical inspection (Before 4 p.m.: main paddock next to garages; After 4 p.m.: on pit road to the right of the Sunoco gas pumps).
- Fill out the front side of the tech card.
- Once your vehicle has passed tech, go to your assigned lanes.

## STEP 2: THE STAGING LANES

Now you're one step closer to hitting the track! Below, you will find your assigned lane number (00-16):

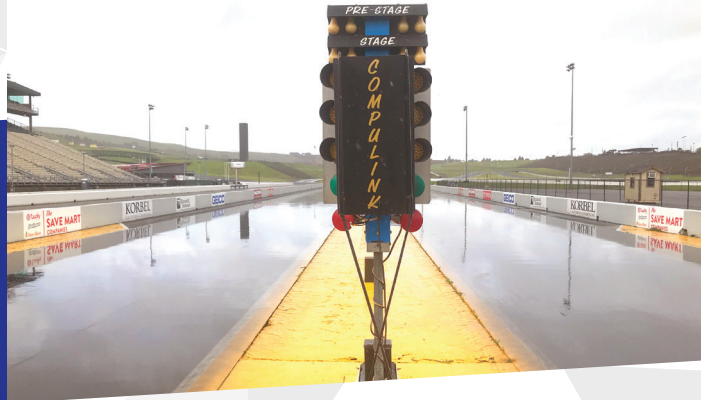
- LANES 00 AND 0: HIGH SCHOOL
- LANES 1-4: STREET
- LANES 5-6: SPORT STREET
- LANE 7: MOTORCYCLE
- LANES 8-9: COMP ROD
- LANES 10-13: GEAR JAMMER
- LANES 14 AND 15: JACKPOT
- LANE 16: TIME ONLY (TIME PERMITTING)

## STEP 3: MAKING A PRACTICE RUN

- Once your lane is moving forward and it's your turn to run, track officials will direct you toward the starting line.
- If you are doing a burnout, drive through the middle of the lane until the official signals you to stop. If you are not doing a burnout, drive on the outside of the lane around the water until the official signals you to stop.
- After the burnout box, you will approach the Christmas tree.

*There is a set of 2 infrared light beams (7" apart) that indicate staging position on the starting line (Pre-Stage and Stage). Once you have pre-staged, you have 7" (less than 1/4 of a tire rotation) before you are staged.*

- Once a driver has both stage bulbs lit and the other driver has the pre-stage bulb lit, the other driver has 10 seconds to stage.
- As both drivers are fully staged, each of the 3 amber LED bulbs will light up from top to bottom with a .500 second interval between them. The clock officially starts after the vehicle exits the stage beams.



- Drive in the center of the racing groove (tire tracks) in your lane until you reach the finish line (the last orange cone in the center of the track by the scoreboards).

**After crossing the finish line, slow down!  
DO NOT HOLD THE THROTTLE WIDE  
OPEN PAST THE FINISH LINE.**

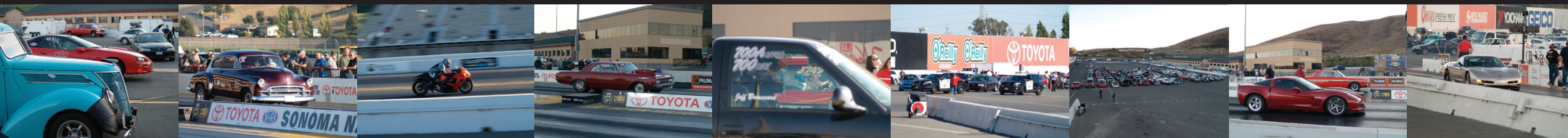
- There are 2 exits on the right-hand side of the track to the return road (right lane always has the right-of-way).
- Drive down the return road to the brown time slip booth parallel to the drag strip tower (15 mph maximum speed on return road).
- After receiving your time slip, line up in your assigned lanes for the following run.

## STEP 4: ELIMINATIONS

- After receiving 2-3 time trials prior to 7 p.m., the track announcer will inform the racers when eliminations will start.
- In eliminations, each driver will choose a dial-in (predicting the elapsed time of the vehicle).
- The goal is to run as close to your dial-in as possible without breaking out (going quicker than the dial-in). Breaking out is an automatic disqualification.
- The winner of each round is determined by "best package," which is the combination of the reaction time and how far you run over your dial-in. If your reaction time is .100 and you run a 14.10 on a 14.00 dial-in, your package is .200.
- Prior to running eliminations, the dial-in must be written on the right side window, and the upper corner on the passenger side of the windshield.
- After pulling through the burnout box, each dial-in will appear on the scoreboards.
- Once both cars are staged, the slower car's amber bulbs will flash first before the opponent's in the exact margin of the dial-ins. If your dial-in is 14.00 and your opponent's dial-in is 13.00, your side of the tree will activate exactly 1 second before your opponent. (If both drivers have a perfect package, they will reach the finish line at the exact same time).
- If both drivers go faster than their dial-in, the driver that breaks out by less will win the round.
- If one driver red-lights and the other driver breaks out, then the driver with the break-out wins. Red-light disqualification has automatic precedence over a break-out. If both drivers red-light, the driver that red-lights by less will win the round.
- If you win a round of eliminations, line up in the same set of lanes assigned for your category.

*On behalf of myself and the Sonoma Raceway Dragstrip crew, thank you for supporting our Wednesday Night Drags program powered by Universal Technical Institute.*


**-KYLE SEIPEL  
DRAGSTRIP MANAGER // 510.912.4160**







## TIPS & TRICKS:

- For maximum traction and consistency on the starting line, lower the pressure in your tires to 25 PSI using a tire gauge.
  - For best reaction times, leave the starting line as soon as you see the third amber bulb flash to compensate for driver and vehicle reaction time.
  - It takes over .300 of a second for your vehicle to react and .200 for your mind to process the flash, therefore leaving on the third amber will time it perfectly.
  - If you are going to cross the finish line substantially ahead of your opponent, let off the gas before the finish line. Tightening up the margin at the finish line can help you avoid a break-out.
  - Use a log book (sold by Summit or Jegs) to record your time slips for future reference, calculate split times, and record weather conditions.
  - Weather conditions are critical in predicting your vehicle's elapsed time. Purchase a weather station or wind meter to assist with your predictions.
  - All semifinalists, runners-up, and winners in each class will receive a trophy. All class winners will have a winner's circle photo taken in Sunoco Victory Lane.
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## BASIC RULES:

- All drivers and passengers must wear full-length pants, short or long-sleeved shirt (no tank tops), and closed-toe shoes with socks.
- Passengers must be at least 16-years-old and are permitted in vehicles running 14.00 or slower.
- Drivers of vehicles quicker than 14.00 must have a Snell 2010 or newer helmet.
- Drivers of vehicles quicker than 11.50 must have an SFI 3.2A/1 or higher racing jacket and a 5-point racing harness SFI 16.1.
- Pre-2008 vehicles running quicker than 11.50 must have a roll bar. All convertibles quicker than 13.50 must have a roll bar.
- Drivers of vehicles running 9.99 or quicker or 135 mph must have a valid NHRA competition license, and the vehicle must conform to the general regulations of the NHRA.
- Motorcycle riders must have an approved full-face helmet (Snell 2010 or newer), leather jacket, leather boots or shoes that cover top of ankle and leather gloves (must be Kevlar-lined or equipped with slide buttons).
- Motorcycle riders running 120 mph or faster must have full all-leathers or SFI Spec 40.1/2 suit.
- ALL vehicles are limited to 114.9 dB of sound measured on the starting line.

PHOTO CREDIT: Ron Love

# 2019 BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DRAG RACING

## SONOMA DRAGS

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### ALSO FEATURING:

*Students can race against local officers on the track!*

PARTICIPANTS MUST BE LICENSED DRIVERS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH STREET-LEGAL VEHICLES THAT PASS A PRE-RACE SAFETY INSPECTION.

