

## **“Hot Lap” of the VIR South Course**

A lap of the South Course begins at the exit of the famous “Oak Tree” turn leading onto the Back Straight, NOT in fact straight, but undulating up and down as well as left and right. After passing the pit lane exit and the “Madison Avenue” testing complex on the left, get ready to take the first crest on the left, away from the curbing on the right as you go over the hill. Immediately after the car comes back down after becoming light over the crest, brake hard in a straight line, slowing substantially and turning very late for Turn 1, the “Bitch,” a complex, decreasing-radius, more-than-180-degree hairpin with an off-camber exit. After keeping the left side wheels close to the grass after the infield section begins, cross to the inside placing the right front wheel against the curb for some time at or near the end of the curbing at Turn 2, the “Ditch”, be careful with the application of power at this crucial stage. Tracking out all the way to the handy exit curbing, fight the road camber to the left and touch the left front tire midway along the curbing through the fast left sweep, Turn 3. Track out to the right and use the uphill elevation change to compress your braking distance, placing the right front wheel very near the edge of the road as you head up the hill. After braking hard you will, under mild, station-keeping power, turn in hard to the left through Turn 4 and, as the world drops away, align the left side of the car parallel with the left side of the track as you enter the abyss called “The Spiral.” Allow the car to settle before turning right decisively into Turn 5. The car will gain grip for Turn 5 as the car is forced down against the pavement much like an elevator reaching the ground floor. Stay tight to the right so as to enter the long sweeper left, Turn 6, with a decisive, quick turn-in to aid in the transition from right to left with the goal to unwind the wheel and accelerate as soon and as fully as possible. The left hand sweeper at the bottom of “The Spiral” opens significantly and climbs slightly at the exit. After touching the inside front tire against the curbing 2/3 to 3/4 of the way through, use the throttle instead of unwinding the wheel and track out to the right, continuing the arc that will bring you back over to the left in preparation for heading up the hill into the long and complex “Fish Hook” corner, Turn 7. Braking sensitively at the uphill entrance, get the car slowed more than you think you have to in order to decisively begin the long arc around and to the right, rejoining the Main Course midway up the “Climbing Esses,” Turn 8. Not only does the exit of the Fish Hook fall away in elevation, it also loses road camber to the left, not a pretty sight with a lot of steering lock on and trying to apply power. Be patient and track out all the way to the left through Turn 8 so you may continue the arc and come back over to the right, touching the curbing on the right at Turn 9 and making the right side of the car parallel with the right side of the road as you go over the “yump”. All this in preparation for negotiating “South Bend,” Turn 10, the crest of the “Uphill Esses,” this mighty test a top speed sweep left that drops away immediately at the exit, sort of a mirror image of the old Turn 11 at Road Atlanta before the elimination of the “Dip.” Turn in is from the right just as you see the beginning of the curbing, apexing midway on the left hand curb with the left front tire and as the road drops away, be sure to unwind the wheel and track out all the way to at least the 3/4 mark of the right

hand curbing going down the hill. No place for a “crisis in confidence”, South Bend is best taken under at least mild power to keep the car as stable as possible. Try not to “pinch” the exit going down the hill. As you are now parallel with the right side of the road, make the car drive straight on a diagonal from right to left headed up the hill into Turn 11, an easy, open sweep right that leads into the slowest corner on the Main Course, “Oak Tree” turn, Turn 11A. Think of the two right hand corners as similar to, albeit a slower version of, the Turn 6 and Turn 7 complex at Road Atlanta, with the goal of going through Turn 11 as quick as you can slow down for Turn 11A, or “Oak Tree.” As you climb the hill into Turn 11, place the left front wheel as close as you can to the grass and brake gently, releasing the brakes and turning in to the right, placing the right front wheel on the middle to 2/3 of the inside curbing. Unwind the wheel, driving diagonally between the right side of the road and the projected turn in for “Oak Tree” that you desire. Creating an additional braking zone, aim to place the left front wheel for turn in to the right approximately halfway down the length of the left side curbing and slow more than you think you have to in order to get to the inside curbing around the corner and out of sight at the entrance of “Oak Tree.” In more powerful cars, you will have to discipline throttle application as you exit onto the straight because the road drops away in both elevation and camber. Track out about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down the left side exit curbing and take a deep breath. At this point, you can raise your hand to enter the South Course pit lane, or cinch down your belts and get ready to do another lap!

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