

RACEPACK

A Car Racing Game For The Piecepack

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2-8 Players. 40-120 minutes, depending on player count and race length

INTRODUCTION

Racepack is a car racing board game for 2-8 players. The game is almost entirely skill-based with chance only entering the picture as a result of poor driving judgment or deliberate risk taking. For games utilizing one piecepack, when playing with four players each player assumes control of one car, and when playing with two or three people each player assumes the role of team manager and controls two cars so there are always at least four cars in a race. If two piecepacks are combined, 6 to 8-car races are supported, for three to eight players.

As with most racing games, the fun-factor is higher when there are more cars and more players.

The main body of the rules describes the game using one piecepack and supporting 2-4 players, and then the differences for versions with more than four cars or with five to eight players are explained in the section VERSIONS UTILIZING TWO PIECEPACKS.

Some variants are also described, including one with pit stops and one that utilizes a move timer to speed up the game and ratchet up the excitement.

SETUP

Construct The Track

Turn all twenty-four tiles grid side up and use them to construct a closed circuit. This may be rectangular to represent an Indy-style or stock car track, or it may be constructed with additional corners or esses to represent a road racing course. Each tile should be orthogonally adjacent to exactly two other tiles. The resulting track will be two lanes wide all the way around. Next, the location of the start/finish line is chosen, preferably near the middle of the longest straight. One of the dice is placed against the outside of the track and oriented to show the number of laps in the race on top. It serves as a start/finish line marker and lap indicator. Figure 1 shows a recommended track design. The suggested race length for this track is three laps. Cars rotate clockwise.

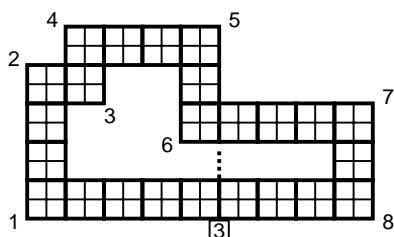


Figure 1. Recommended track showing lap die, start/finish line, and numbered corners.

The four null tokens are used to indicate hazards around the track (loose gravel, oil slicks, etc.) that develop during the race. Roll a die and starting from the corner-1 tile, count TILES equal to the die roll (for example, if the die shows a 4, go to the fourth tile past the corner tile). Tilt the tile up for a moment and note the location of the small suit icon in the corner, then put the tile back. Place one of the null tokens on top of the tile in the space that corresponds to the location of

the small suit icon on the bottom of the tile. Now roll the die again and *starting from the new tile*, repeat this procedure. Place the remaining two null tokens along the track in the same way. At the start of the race all four tokens should be blank side up. Note: hazard tokens are not shown in Fig. 1.

Determine The Order Of The Cars On The Starting Grid

The four pawns are used to represent the cars.

Each player rolls three dice together to determine starting order, with the first two cars setting side by side on the two spaces behind the start/finish line and the remaining cars behind them. The player who rolled the highest total secures the pole position, and starts on the inside lane. When each player is controlling a pair of cars, one of a player's cars should start on the inside lane and his other on the outside, and the player whose first car is on the pole should start his second car last, etc., in the interests of fairness.

Distribute The Strategy Tokens

After setting up the starting positions of the cars, distribute the remaining tokens to the players. These are called *strategy tokens* and each player receives a set of five (ace through 5) *for each car they control*. It's handy to match colors between the cars and the corresponding sets of tokens. Players keep their tokens number side up nearby and in a 2-player game they must be careful to keep the tokens for each of their cars separate.

Penalty Die

One die is used for penalty rolls. The color of the die is unimportant.

This completes the setup of the game.

DEFINITIONS

Driver: the controller of a car. Note that in a 2 or 3-player game each player will represent two drivers.

Movement: drivers must normally perform three movements per turn. There are two types of movements and these are, *forward movements*, and *lane change movements*.

Speed: the number of straight-ahead spaces that a car moves along the track during any given forward movement is called the car's speed. Speeds may range from 1 to 7, depending on track design and driving conditions. Each increment of speed represents 30MPH. Thus a movement of 5 represents 150MPH.

Corner or Corner Tile: a tile that forms one of the corners around the track. The corner tile *is* the corner, and all four spaces on the tile are part of the corner.

Turn: standard game definition, but remember that the turn order goes by driver, not by player. Once the race starts the turn order is established by the order of the cars in the race.

Note concerning corners and turns: in the rules text, the word *corner* always refers to a place where the track changes direction via a corner tile. The word *turn* always refers to a player's opportunity to move one of his cars. So remember, a *corner* is something on the track whereas a *turn* involves the game mechanism.

Inside Lane: At any given point on the track, the inside lane is the lane on the side that the NEXT corner turns toward. This holds true for straight sections of the track as well as within corners. Note that on a corner tile it is the *next* corner along the track that determines which lane is defined as the inside.

MOVEMENT DETAILS

Drivers are allotted three *movements* per turn and they must use all three if it is possible. There are two types of movements, *forward* movements and *lane change* movements, and drivers may do any combination of these totaling three during a turn. Note: in rare cases it may not be possible to do three movements without bumping another car and this is discussed under **Blocking**.

Forward movements are always *straight-ahead* movements of 1-7 spaces. Lane change movements are always 1 space diagonally.

Forward Movements

Forward movements represent forward motion around the track. The smallest possible forward movement is 1. A car going this fast moves one space forward along the track for that movement. The fastest allowable forward movement is 7. A car going 7 moves seven spaces forward along the track for that movement.

WITHIN A GIVEN TURN, the change in speed of a car from one movement to the next is constrained; *cars may accelerate by 1 per movement, while decelerations of either 1 or 2 per movement are allowed*. For example, to do three consecutive forward movements during a turn the following speed sequences are some (but certainly not the only) legal ones: 1-2-3, 3-3-4, 6-4-2, 4-2-3. An illegal speed sequence would be 5-4-1. The change from 4 directly to 1 is illegal because a car's deceleration from one movement to the next may not exceed 2.

Speed information is NOT saved or carried over from turn to turn; the speed a car is traveling during the *last* movement of a turn has NO effect on what speed it can start out at during the *first* movement of its next turn. For example, a car could end a turn in a corner at a speed of 1 then when that driver's next turn came along, he could immediately move at any speed from 1 to 7, *assuming the road was straight and clear*. See Fig. 2, turn B, first movement.

Note: some of the movements illustrated in the figures involve the use of strategy tokens; their use is explained later.

Forward Movement Speed Summary:

Allowed speeds during the first movement of a turn: 1 to 7, if track is clear.

Allowed speeds during second and third movements: same as speed during previous movement or accelerate by 1 or decelerate by 1 or 2.

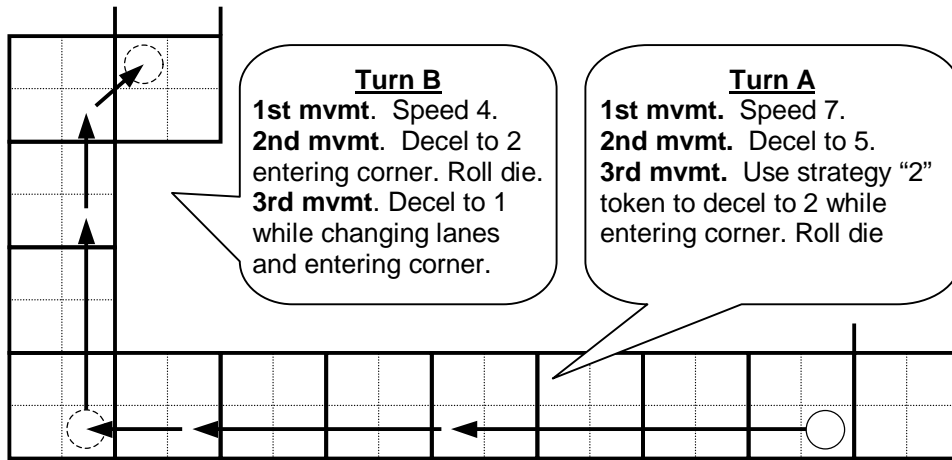


Figure 2. Showing two complete player turns for one car.

Lane Change Movements

The actual move for a lane change is always 1 space diagonally. Even though they are always 1 space diagonally, lane change movements have an *associated speed*.

The allowable associated speed of a lane change follows the same rules as for the speeds of forward movements; if the lane change is the first movement of a turn its associated speed can be anything from 1 to 7 at the driver's choosing. If it is the second or third movement of a turn the associated speed can be 1 higher, equal to, or 1 or 2 lower than the speed of the previous movement. When a driver does a lane change movement the player must state what the speed of the car is for the benefit of the other players.

See figures 2, 3, and 4 for examples of lane changes. Note that lane changes may be made on straights or in corners.

Lane changes may *not* be made that cut across inside corner edges. In figure 3 there are two blocking cars (shown as filled-in circles); it would not be legal for the bottom car to move up and to the right as a lane change because it would be cutting across the inside edge of the track corner.

Entering Corners and Spinning Out

Corners (corner tiles) may only be *safely* entered at a speed of 1.

If a driver is willing to risk spinning out, a speed of 2 is allowed. Entering a corner at a speed greater than 2 is not allowed.

When a car enters a corner at a speed of 2, the player whose car it is must roll the penalty die to check for the possibility of a spinout. If the die shows a 5, the car spins out. If it shows any other face there is no penalty.

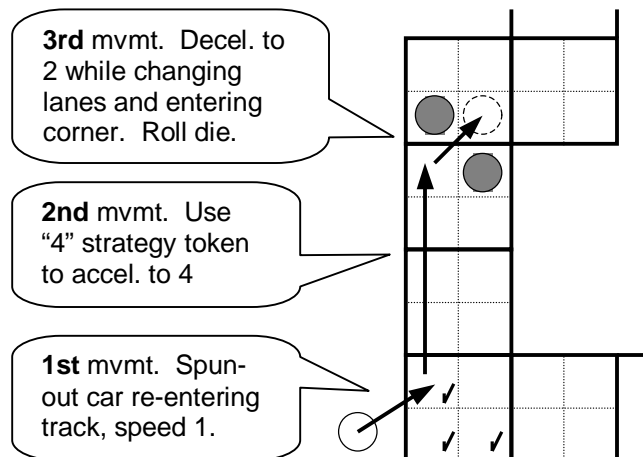


Figure 3. Turn of player who spun out on their previous turn.

Spinning out immediately ends a driver's turn, *even if he has not used up all three of his movements*. A car that has spun out is placed off the track, on the outside of the corner.

At the beginning of his *next* turn the driver must use up one movement to re-enter the track at a speed of 1 (he does NOT move 1 space *along* the track; the movement is expended in *re-entering* the track). He places his car onto *any one* of the three outside spaces of the corner tile. These are identified in Fig. 3 with check marks.

The driver may now use his remaining *two* movements as he chooses according to the normal rules of movement. In the example, the driver uses a strategy token during his *second* movement to accelerate to a speed of 4 and then, for his third movement, decelerates to 2 while doing a lane change to avoid other cars and enters the next corner. Note that since this is a lane change movement the car moves only one space even though the speed of the car is 2. Since the corner was entered at a speed faster than 1, the driver must then roll the die to check for a spinout.

Exiting Corners

When a car has ended a movement within a corner it is *automatically assumed to be facing out of the corner for its next movement* (in rare cases a driver may wish the car to still be facing in the direction it was moving in the previous movement, and this is also allowed). The next movement can then be another forward movement, exiting the corner. See turn B first movement in Fig. 2. There are no specific speed restrictions for exiting corners. The general speed rules for forward movements apply.

The Use Of Strategy Tokens To Affect Movement

Players start the race with five strategy tokens for each car they control. The tokens are specific to the cars and in a 2-player race a player may NOT share them between his two cars. Each strategy token may only be used once. After being used a strategy token is removed from the game.

Players may use strategy tokens either *offensively* to help the progress of their own car(s), or *defensively* to hinder the progress of other player's cars. When played to help a car, strategy tokens

represent exemplary driving or exceptional engine tuning, etc. When played to hinder, strategy tokens represent poor driver judgment, bad track conditions, etc.

To help his own car a player may use a strategy token to set the speed for a movement *without regard to the acceleration and deceleration rules*. The speed is set equal to the number on the token used. Aces count as 1. For example, the 5 token could be used to instantly accelerate to 5 even if the speed during the previous movement that turn was less than 4. Or, the 1 token could be used to instantly decelerate to a speed of 1 even if the speed during the previous movement that turn was greater than 3. See Fig. 2 for a deceleration example and see Fig. 3 for an example of using a strategy token for high acceleration. Strategy tokens may be played offensively during any movement *except when starting out, such as when beginning the race or while re-entering the track following a spin-out*.

A strategy token may be used against another player only when that player is rolling the penalty die. When a player enters a corner at a speed of 2, he must roll the penalty die to see if he spins out. *Following a successful roll* another player may play a strategy token to force the player to re-roll the die with the condition that he spins out if the number he rolls is equal to or higher than the number on the strategy token. For example, a player enters a corner at speed 2 and rolls the die, getting a 3, which would mean that he has successfully entered the corner without spinning out. Immediately following his roll however, another player plays his 2 strategy token and demands that the first player re-roll. The first player must now roll the penalty die a second time and if it comes up showing a 2 or higher he spins out.

Blocking And Bumping

When two or more cars are close to each other on the track blocking may occur and drivers must adjust their speeds accordingly to avoid running into or *bumping* other cars. *Bumping is not allowed* and can always be avoided within the movement rules.

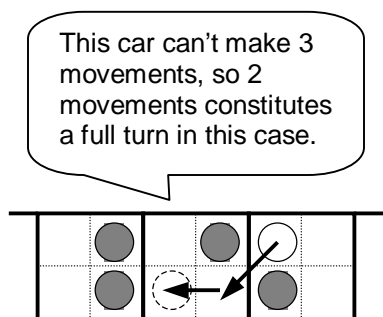


Figure 4. Complete blocking of a car.

In rare cases a driver may find the road completely blocked at the beginning of his turn by other cars two spaces or fewer ahead of him in both lanes. In such a circumstance it is not possible to do three movements. *In this case alone*, a driver is allowed to use fewer than three movements during a turn to avoid bumping the car in front. Figure 4 shows a situation in which a car can make only two movements before it is *fully blocked*. In such a case, when three movements are not possible, the driver makes as many as *are* possible and this then constitutes the driver's turn. Note that a car may pass between two other cars on diagonally adjacent spaces by doing a lane change.

Track Hazards

Prior to the start of the race four track hazards are placed as described under SETUP. The four null tokens are used to indicate the hazard locations and they are all initially placed blank side up.

For the first lap of the race the hazards are not in effect (the track is clean and dry at the start of the race and hazards only develop later). During the first lap, as the last place car passes by each hazard token it is flipped over, so that when the last place car has passed the fourth hazard marker they will all be suit side up, and they remain this way for the rest of the race.

When a car passes directly over or lands on a suit side up hazard marker, the driver may not make any further movements that turn, *even if he has some left*. He finishes the present movement and then his turn is over. Note that passing over a hazard marker on the first movement of a turn results in the loss of two movements while passing over a hazard marker on the last movement of a turn has no effect.

STARTING THE RACE

Set the cars up at the start/finish line as described under SETUP. The driver on the pole goes first and completes a full turn of three movements. Then the driver starting next to the pole position takes his first turn, followed by the other drivers in order, with the inside lane cars always going before the outside lane for each side-by-side pair of cars.

ALL cars start from one of the two spaces directly behind the start/finish line. After the first two cars are off, the next two move up before taking their first turns, etc. Cars may not switch lanes as they move up to the starting line.

Drivers must start the race with a first movement speed of 1.

TURN ORDER

Following all driver's first turns, the turn order is set by the order of the cars in the race, with the driver in the lead going first, followed by the driver in second place, etc. Each driver takes their next turn, and then the turn order is re-determined for the next set of turns. Determining the order of the cars can sometimes be tricky. When two cars are side by side, the car on the inside lane is ahead. A car on a corner tile is always ahead of a car that has not yet entered the corner. When two cars are on the same corner tile, the car that is closest to the next corner is ahead. If they are equally close, then the car on the inside lane is ahead (with inside being defined as the side that the *next* corner turns toward). A car that has just exited a corner is always ahead of a car still in the corner.

A car that spun out during its previous turn is always behind any cars that are presently in the same corner or further around the track, but it is ahead of any cars that have not yet entered the corner where it spun out.

WINNING THE RACE

Each time the lead car passes the finish line the lap die number is reduced by 1. The driver of the first car to pass the finish line on the last lap wins the race. The remaining cars continue past the finish line to determine the 2nd and 3rd place positions.

VERSIONS FOR THREE PLAYERS

When there are three players and a single piecepack is being used, each player assumes the role of team manager and controls two cars, so there are six cars in the race. Since there are only four pawns in a piecepack, two of the dice are pressed into service to represent cars. Team A uses the red and black pawns, team B the blue and green pawns, and team C uses the two dice.

In a 6-car race the strategy tokens are distributed a little differently and color matching between cars and tokens is not possible. Each *player* receives one A-5 set of tokens that they keep number side up plus any two additional tokens from the fourth set, to form a single set of seven tokens. The additional tokens are kept *suit side up* and may be used as either 2's or 4's during the race. Note that token color has no significance in the game play. Unlike the 2-player game in which each player must keep the tokens for their two cars separated, in this case a player's seven tokens form a common strategy token pool for use with both cars. Once a token is used for either car it is removed from the game.

VERSIONS UTILIZING TWO PIECEPACKS

When two piecepacks are combined there are more pawns available and the construction of larger tracks is possible. This supports races with eight cars, either as four teams of two cars each, or with eight separate drivers. Five, six, and seven player races are also possible, with each player controlling one car, and six car 3-player races may now be run without having to use dice for two of the cars. In all cases the cars are represented by pawns and there is a full set of strategy tokens associated with each car (as in the 2 and 4-player versions described in the main body of the rules).

For races that include more than six cars, the main straight should be two tiles wide from the starting grid up to the first corner to avoid an unfair amount of blocking during the first couple turns of the game. This can either be designated as a 4-lane stretch of road, or as a 3-lane stretch with the outer lane representing a pit lane and not useable to cars that are not entering the pits. In general, somewhat longer tracks are appropriate with races of more than six cars, but keep in mind that longer tracks also mean longer races with fewer laps and less opportunity to *learn the track*. The section OTHER VARIANTS gives more details regarding pit stops and track design.

VARIANT WITH TIMER

This is the same as the standard game except that a sand timer is employed to enforce quick decision making, keeping more in the spirit of a real race situation. The requirement for faster thinking leads to more mistakes by the drivers; the result is a faster more dynamic game with a higher level of tension and excitement.

As soon as one player completes a turn (moves the car(s) and finishes with the penalty die and its consequences if applicable), the timer is flipped to re-start it for the next player. The timed period ends with the movement (setting down) of the player's car (or their second car in the case of 2-car teams). The rolling of the penalty die, if required, and its consequences are *not* part of the timed period. The penalty for not completing the car movements within the allotted period is the loss of the turn. If a player completes the movement of one car but not both (2-car teams) then only the movement of the unmoved car is forfeited. It is suggested that a period of thirty seconds be tried for games having one car per player, and forty seconds for games in which each player controls a team of two cars. Experienced players may wish to use shorter times to increase the tension.

OTHER VARIANTS

If two piecepacks are available, larger tracks may be constructed. Keep in mind however that larger tracks will increase the length of the game, especially if the extra tiles are used to add many additional corners.

A track can also be constructed with a long main straight and a 4-tile pit lane (using a row of four tiles against the outside of the straight). Speed in the pit lane is restricted to 3. After making a pit stop (if pit stops are included it is suggested that one stop per race is mandatory), a driver's strategy tokens are renewed. If players run color-matched teams of two cars (pawns) each, then dice of corresponding colors can be placed adjacent to every other square in the pit lane to indicate pit stopping places for the teams. Pit lanes are applicable in longer races, with 5 or more laps on a short course, or 3-6 laps on a long course. It is suggested that players become familiar with the basic game before attempting to try a longer race with pit stops.

The other advantage of having two piecepacks is that there are more tokens available. These can be used to place additional track hazards and it can be done in a variety of ways. One is to place a track hazard on a corner tile whenever a car spins out on that corner. Place the hazard on the space the car was setting on when the driver rolled the penalty die. Continue this practice throughout the race until all available additional track hazard tokens are used up. Then the next time a car spins out, *move* a hazard token to the corner from elsewhere on the track (driver who just spun out chooses which hazard token to move), except a hazard may not be moved *from* a corner tile, and no corner tile may hold more than two hazards.

The regular rules specify that each track tile should be adjacent to exactly two other tiles. There are some other possibilities however. For example, a tight hairpin corner can be constructed as follows. Assume there is a straight that is three or more tiles long. Place a tile adjacent to the last tile of the straight to form a right-hand corner. Now place an additional tile that is adjacent to both the just placed corner tile and to the second-last tile of the straight. Lastly, place a tile that is adjacent only to the most recently placed tile, on the side away from the straight. From this point, continue the track as desired. The hairpin can be a little confusing visually because two sections of the road run parallel to each other with no space in between. The appearance can be improved by cutting a piece of thin cardstock 2" long by $\frac{3}{4}$ " high and then sliding it between the two road sections, acting as a wall. Note that a hairpin as described above is composed of three corner tiles in a row and as such, it will be a very slow section of track.

Another possibility that makes efficient use of tiles is to form a chicane by offsetting a tile in the middle of a straight by 1 space. This puts a little jog in the track but it also is a constriction point where the road goes down to a width of 1 lane at the entrance and exit of the chicane. Because of this, a chicane should never be placed on the main straight after the start/finish line because it would then unfairly favor the pole-setter at the beginning of the race. Lane changes across inside corner edges are not normally allowed but it makes sense to allow them in a chicane of the sort described.