

RACING ROOM

CLUB RACING BY JOHN NESBITT

STOPPING A RACE

We continue a series of articles looking at what happens during your track session. This month, we dig into stopping and restarting races – the what, why and how. The team in Race Control tries to clear incidents with the absolute minimum of disruption to your racing. We do this under a local yellow, if possible; if not, we have to escalate the flag condition.

FULL COURSE YELLOW/ SAFETY CAR

The operating steward orders a full course yellow when a local yellow is not adequate for the incident (for example, when emergency vehicles need to take space on the track) or when drivers fail to respect the local yellow. If a full course yellow comes out, close up with the cars in front as quickly as you safely can. The entire purpose of the full course yellow is to gather the field in a single pack behind the safety car. This provides the space that the emergency responders need in order to clear the incident.

You may *carefully* pass emergency vehicles while closing up. You may also pass cars that cannot keep the pace if the driver signals you by.

The safety car usually dispatches from pit out. If you are the leader, slow down a little more as you approach the launch point, in order to give the safety car a clear space. If no safety car is available, the race leader becomes the safety car. You may not pass the safety car unless the official in the car waves you by.

When the emergency team has cleared the incident, the safety car will shut off its lights and come into the pits. The pack continues single file at safety car speed until Start shows the green flag. All stations drop their double yellows and racing resumes all around the track. Laps run under full course yellow count as race laps.

STOPPING A SESSION

Depending on the circumstances, the operating steward may decide to stop the session. There are several ways to do this: checkered flag, black flag all or red flag.

In practice or qualifying, if the cleanup will take most of the remaining session time, the operating steward will end the

session with a checkered flag or a black flag all plus checker.

In a race, the operating steward has some options. If the race is more than half complete, and the conditions suggest it, the steward may simply order a checkered flag, ending the race. Since the race is more than halfway, it is a complete race.

The steward can stop the race with a black flag all or a red flag (followed by a black flag all), depending on the circumstances. You can pass under a black flag all, but there is no advantage in doing so.

RESTARTS

For a restart of a practice or qualifying session, the pit team will simply release cars in the order in which they present themselves.

For a race restart, the GCR specifies two alternatives, at the discretion of the Chief Steward. The first is a complete restart, in original grid order. This is the typical restart following a start-line or first-lap accident.

The other option is to restart according to the on-track order at the end of the last completely scored lap. For example, if the race stops on the leader's 10th lap, the restart order would be the on-track order at the end of lap nine.

During a full course caution, the safety car will enter the track. When the safety car's lights go out, the safety car will pull into the pits and the race will restart single file when the green flag is shown. If there is no safety car, the lead car will act as the safety car.

“THE PACK CONTINUES SINGLE FILE UNTIL START SHOWS THE GREEN FLAG”

The grid team will inform you whether the restart will be single file or two by two. On a restart, every pace lap counts as a race lap.

IF IT STARTS RAINING

If a race starts in the dry, but it begins to rain, the Chief Steward has the option (not the obligation) of stopping the race with a black flag all, and giving participants 15 minutes to change tires, if they so choose. Remember that this is optional, not obligatory, and that the Chief Steward weighs a number of factors in making the decision.

Restarts are as described above.



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