

NEW HPDE PASSING RULES FOR INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

For as long as we have been doing HPDEs we have pretty much maintained the same passing rules for students and instructors. Several years ago we did expand the passing zones on Friday's lapping day to include any place except in a turn (Passing in turns has been strictly verboten by PCA). Last year National decided that the time had come to evaluate the use of more liberal passing rules to better prepare advanced drivers for Club Racing. They designed and ran some trials at selected DEs where Instructors were invited to drive side by side through the turns. The drivers were instructed to imagine that the turns had a yellow line down their center and that each car then "owned" half of the road. All went well and based on the success of this pilot program, the passing rules for the INSTRUCTOR's run group were expanded to permit passing anyplace on the track after receiving a signal. That is, the car being passed must signal the passing car which side to pass on before a pass can be made. If the signal is given coming into a turn it is assumed that the car being passed is allowing the pass to occur in the turn (or immediately thereafter if the passer elects to wait until exiting the turn). This format was used in the instructor's group at VIR with NNJR this past November and it worked very well. *Based on this, OVR will adopt this expanded passing format during the instructor's run sessions starting this spring at Mid Ohio. Unfortunately, until otherwise permitted by National, this will only be for the instructor's run group sessions.*

For students OVR has always used left side passing regardless of whether the upcoming turn was a right hander or a left hander. While some regions follow this easy to remember rule, others use a more "track logical" approach. That is that the slower car stays "on line" and the passing car passes "off line". For example on a straight approaching a left hand turn, the slower car would stay to the right and the passing car would pass on the left. Conversely, if approaching a right hand turn, the pass would be made on the right side. However, when exiting a right hand turn on to a straight, the slower car would track out to the left and signal the faster car pass on the right and conversely if exiting a left hand turn the pass is made on the left. While this does require a little more thought on the part of the drivers it is a more logical approach and the way that most on-track passing is done when racing. It should be noted that many regions specify the side to pass on for a given passing zone. This is usually based on the nature of the turn you are approaching rather than the turn you are exiting. *We have decided to change our long held "pass on the left as on the highway" rule for all student groups so that when you drive at a region's school that requires right side passing in some areas you won't be intimidated. It will just be a simple rule stating that the slower car stays on-line and signals the passing car to go off-line. We will now allow passing on either the right side or the left side. The appropriate signal to give for an overtaking car to pass on the left is for you to extend your arm straight out the window and the appropriate signal for an overtaking car to pass on the right is for you to extend your arm out and up. All signals should be given out the window, not inside the car.* Another benefit this should have is that when exiting a right-hand turn onto a passing zone, the slower car will stay on line and signal the faster car to pass on the right and not have to wait until he has moved over.

While on the subject of passing this might be a good time to cover some of the related guidelines and issues that often arise around passing. Our primary goal is to always have a fun, safe event. While students are placed into different run groups primarily based on their experience, some cars/drivers will

always be faster than others in the group so that passing is necessary for everyone to have a fun, safe experience. The following are some guidelines that should be followed by all drivers:

- When a car behind you catches up with you in the corners but can't stay with you on the straights, let them pass and the chances are it won't be long before they are gone.
- After giving a passing signal, back out of the gas and give the car a chance to make the pass and check to see if others want to also pass.
- When allowing more than one car to pass, a separate signal is required for each one.
- When behind a car that you want to pass, stay behind them and do not move into their blind spot. Also, do not tailgate them to get their attention but if it doesn't seem like they are aware that you are behind them, try briefly flashing your lights.
- Just because you receive a signal it doesn't mean that you have to make the pass. Especially if you don't think it can be completed before entering the upcoming turn.
- If the car behind you does not make the pass at the first signal, it doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to pass. Give them a second chance at the next passing zone.
- Check your mirrors whenever entering a passing zone so that you know if anyone is maybe looking to pass at the next opportunity.
- After clearing the car being passed only move back on-line if there is sufficient distance so that you do not cut-off the passed car or have to immediately initiate the turn-in. Just stay off-line and slow down a little more for the turn.
- If you feel that you should be in a faster/or slower run group suggest it to your instructor to get their feedback. If they agree with you they can ask the Chief Instructor if this can be done.

If you have any questions feel free to e-mail at jwolf5@cinci.rr.com.

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