

A Beginner's Guide To iRacing

Revised 9/09/10



By:

Ryan Field & Dan Rowe

Contributors:

Lincoln Miner & John Bodin

Forward

Although the *Quick Start Guide*, *User Guide*, *iRacing Driving School* and *Sporting Code* are essential tools for iRacers of all experience and ability levels, our documentation has also needed a “How to” manual, a primer if you will, for the newest members of the iRacing community. Better yet would be a primer written by some of our members; iRacers with a practical knowledge not only of how the system works but of the questions they and their fellow sim racers had in their early days on the service and, in some cases, as new features have been introduced.

I’m delighted to say that Ryan Field and Dan Rowe (with assistance from Lincoln Miner and John Bodin) have done just that. *A Beginner’s Guide to iRacing* is a commonsense, easy-to-understand guide, not just the nuts and bolts of the service but on the mental approach and sportsmanship that will maximize everyone’s enjoyment of what we proudly believe is the world’s foremost online race simulation service.

I can honestly say I have learned a few things from *A Beginner’s Guide to iRacing*, and I would urge every iRacer – not just newcomers – to give it a read. I promise it will be time well-spent.

Many thanks Ryan, Dan, Lincoln and John.

Tony Gardner, President

iRacing.com

Preface

I hope the following document will assist new members to iRacing get up to speed with the user interface, rules, regulations and everything else it takes to be a master of the service. At first glance, iRacing can be extremely daunting to a newcomer. There are so many different rules that someone who hasn't been a member can struggle to figure them all out. Safety Rating, iRating, the ever-complicated TTRating can all be confusing. Sometimes people turn away in frustration over something that can be simple if explained the right way, which is what I hope to do in this document. Hopefully, this guide will address and answer all of a beginner's usual questions.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 1. Quick Start Guide
 2. Controllers and Settings
 3. Graphics Settings
 4. Using a Microphone
 5. Navigating the iRacing.com Members Site
2. Getting on Track
 1. Practice, Practice, Practice
 2. How hardware issues and your practice approach can affect your race performance
 3. Qualifying, is it necessary?
 4. Getting Started with Racing
 5. Joining Sessions
 6. General Racing Etiquette
 7. Racecraft Tips
 8. Useful Tools
3. The Rating Systems
 1. iRating
 2. ttRating
 3. Safety Rating
 4. Seasons and Points
4. Other Tidbits
 1. Saving Replays
 2. Downloading/Loading Setups
 3. Protests
5. iRacing.com Widgets
 1. Race Planner
 2. What's Hot
 3. Service Status
6. The Community
 1. Forums
 2. Leagues
7. Resources
8. Closing

1. Introduction

1.1 – Quick Start Guide

After officially joining the service, the [Quick Start Guide](#) should be followed step by step. The Quick Start Guide provides an introduction to the service and helps you set-up everything you need to get going quickly and easily. Everything in this guide should be read and followed. We will go back and fine-tune some of these things and explain others in more detail later.

1.2 – Controllers and Settings

1.2.1 – Available Options

Though iRacing allows controllers of all types (joysticks, controllers, anything that has analog inputs) to be used, it is highly recommended that members use a full steering wheel and pedal set. Steering wheels allow for more precise control and generally promote better racing. Obviously there are cases where people use joysticks and controllers out of necessity (disabilities, etc), but if at all possible, a steering wheel should be used.

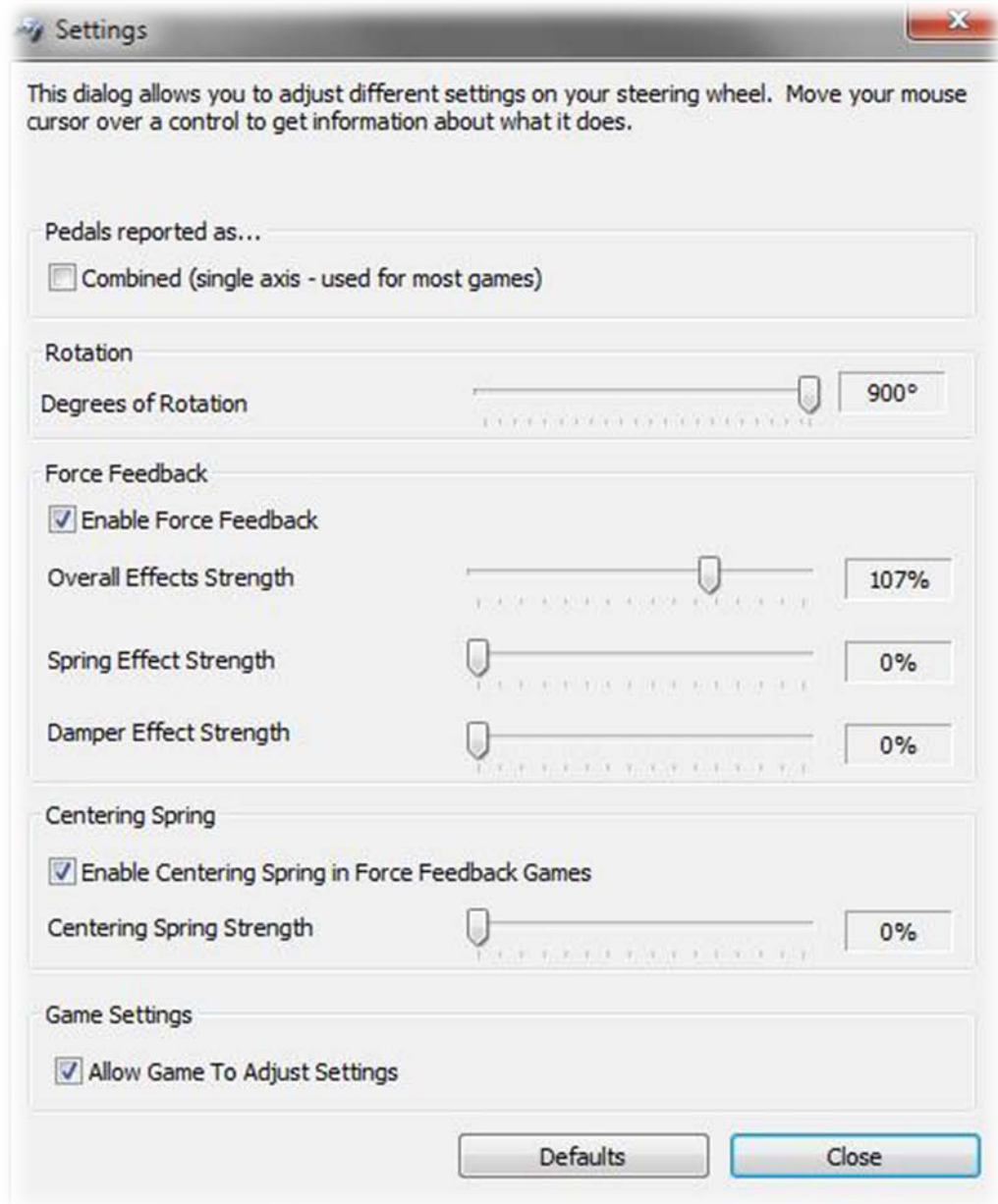
There are many different options for steering wheels ranging from fifty dollars to over two-thousand dollars. Many recommend the Logitech DFGT as an excellent entry level wheel for people just getting into sim racing, but who aren't looking to spend loads of money yet. This wheel offers the preferred 900 degrees of rotation (more on this shortly) at a good price of around one-hundred dollars. The next step up from the Logitech DFGT is the Logitech G27. At nearly three times the price of the DFGT, it isn't exactly an entry level wheel, but it is also a much higher quality wheel with more features. It offers a six-speed H-pattern shifter, leather-wrapped wheel and high quality pedals including a clutch. I won't go into detail on the expensive wheels as those reading this guide probably aren't interested in them, but companies such as

FrexGP and ECCI offer commercial quality wheels at a premium price for the serious sim racer with a lot of money to spend.

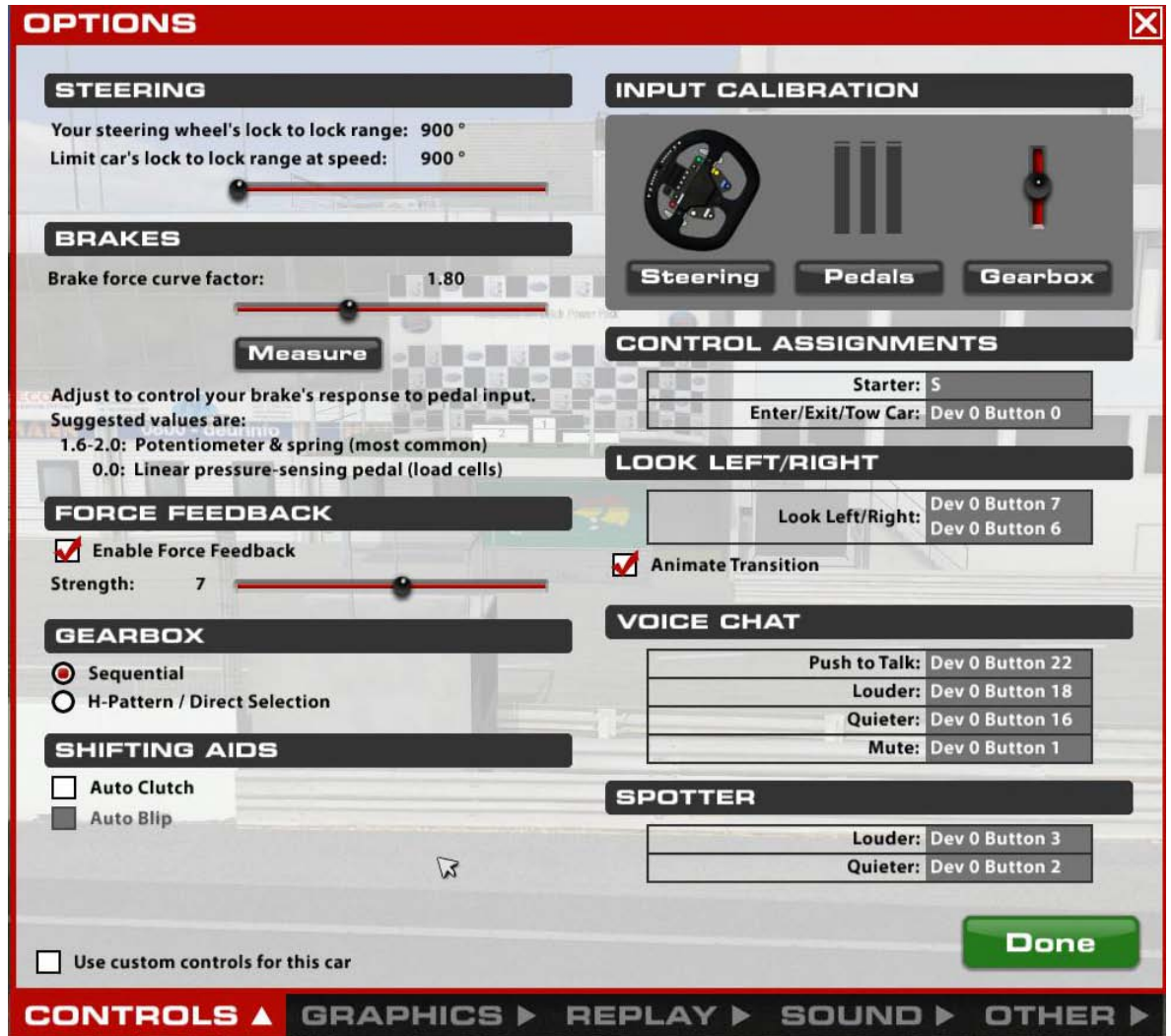
1.2.2 – Settings

There are many different settings floating around, but I will provide the most commonly accepted settings that I believe the majority of people use. I will also provide instructions on changing settings for Logitech wheels because those are also the most popular. Instructions for adjusting settings on other wheels can most likely be found on the manufacturers' website or in the documentation that came with the wheel.

To access the Windows Settings for Logitech wheels, hit the Start button and go to "Devices and Printers." In the window that pops up, right click your Logitech wheel and select "Game Controller Settings." In the following window, select "Properties," then "Settings." In the resulting window, enter the following settings. These are the commonly accepted settings that I mentioned earlier.



Once those settings are entered, close out of all of those windows and navigate to the [iRacing.com Members Site](#). From here go to the test tab and hit the green “Test Car on Track” button. For now, it does not matter what car and track combo is selected, as we are only going to change some settings. Once in the sim, enter into the options menu and stay on the Controls tab. If you haven’t done so already (which you should have if you went through the Quick Start Guide that I mentioned before!), configure all of the controls, doing as it asks. Once done, you should get something that looks similar to this:



As you can see, I chose to go with sequential shifting and using the paddles. If you have a Logitech G27 with an H-pattern shifter, you can elect to use that, but if you are new, the fewer distractions, the better. Continuing with the recommended settings, check Enable Force Feedback and put the strength somewhere between 5 and 15 or so. Higher values will have stronger Force Feedback, but can lead to some problems. I usually limit that range to 7-12 depending on the car, but that is one setting that can be played with as you drive to find what you like the best.

Another key setting on the Controls tab is the Brake Force Curve. This changes the linearity of the brake pedal. Depending on what type of pedals you have, different settings are required. For typical store-bought wheel and pedal sets (Logitech), a setting around 1.8 is desired. For pedals that use load cell technology such as the Club Sport Pedals from Fanatec and the Cannon Simulation Pedals, a setting of 0.0 is

desired. There is also a setup walkthrough that will go through steps to estimate the correct setting if you are unsure.

1.3– Graphics Settings

When first setting up iRacing, the service should go through a test to automatically set your graphic settings to what it thinks will be best. Sometimes they aren't. While you're on track, there is a box in the top right corner of the screen that displays your Framerate Per Second (FPS). If this number is very low (less than 30) or constantly fluctuating, you probably need to adjust your graphics settings. To do this, go to the options menu within the sim and go to the graphics tab. If you aren't comfortable with adjusting all of the options individually, you can use the slider to adjust them. Dragging it to a higher number will decrease the quality of the image which should raise your FPS. If it is already at its lowest settings, you should probably consider upgrading your computer or buying a new one (the [Hardware](#) section of the forums are a good place to get help if you are unsure).

If you are prepared to test some settings, go ahead and use the custom settings option. If you see that shadows are turned on, that should be the first thing to turn off. In order to run all of the shadows, you need a very powerful computer and even then some still struggle to process them. Remember to restart the sim after making changes.

1.4– Using a Microphone

To use a microphone, first set it up in Windows. To do this (if you are using Windows Vista or Windows 7), simply type “microphone” into the search bar in the Start menu. This should find a Set up a microphone option. Run through this wizard to make sure it is working correctly.

Once you have done this, go into the sim and bring up the options menu. Go to the sound tab and select your microphone from the drop down. iRacing also requires a Push to Talk button which must be held while talking. In the options menu, go to the controls tab. Click on the push to talk control and press a key that you would like to use for this function. Other options for increasing the volume, muting chat and muting individual drivers can be set as well.

1.5 – Navigating the iRacing.com Members Site

At first glance, the iRacing site can be a bit confusing. It contains a massive amount of information, all of it useful to some degree. I will try to go into the most important parts that generate the most questions.

1.5.1 – Resources

This page is very important, and should be studied carefully. It contains all of the important documents related to the iRacing service including the Sporting Code. The Sporting Code lays out all of the on track rules and regulations - how to behave on track, how to file a protest, the license levels - pretty much everything you need to know to be a successful member of the online community. The Sporting Code should be read and followed closely. Failure to do so will greatly increase the chances of your stay at iRacing being shortened.

The User Guide is another good document. It will answer any questions about the site that are not answered here.

The remaining documents include specific contests and series that take place such as the World Cup of iRacing, and the Pro Series, as well as two additional resources: FAQs and the iRacing Driving School.

1.5.2 – Series

This page is where you can elect to enter any series for which you are eligible and own the content. The series are divided by the license level they require. Any series you are able to race in will simply have a “Select” button on the top right corner of the series banner. Hitting that button will register you for that series allowing you to join Practice, Qualifying, Time Trial and Race sessions. Any series you are not eligible for will say “License Ineligible.” I will explain the licenses in more detail later.

1.5.3 – Hosted

This page lists all of the sessions that are hosted by members. They do not count for Safety Rating or iRating, though everyone is expected to drive in a respectful manner still. It costs \$3 to host a session with any car/track combination you can think of as long as you own the content to do it.

1.5.4 – myRacing

This page allows drivers to customize their cars, helmet and driver suite to colors that they prefer.

1.5.5 – Stats

Clicking on the Stats button takes you to the Personal stats page. This lists details of all the official races you have taken part in.

On the Stats page, there is a second menu strip directly below the main navigation bar. This bar is full of other stat pages, the most important being the Series page. The Series page is a complete archive of every championship run on iRacing. It lists the Standings for the season in both racing and time trial as well as qualifying and time trial results for each week.

1.5.6 – myRacers

To access this page, hover of the myRacing link in the main navigation bar and select myRacers. This page will show the online status (unless hidden) of those who you call Friends or are Studying. It will show when they last logged-in and what session they are currently in, if they are racing.

It's also possible to access this page by clicking on the myRacers Online (hovering over it shows a quick link to those of your friends who are online) link below your name. Another nice piece of information is on the left below the iRacing.com logo. This shows how many people are currently logged-on to the site (it does not show how many are actually registered for a session).

1.5.7 – FAQs

The FAQs Section is one of the most under-utilized sections on the Members Site. But it is extremely useful. From questions about your iRacing account, hardware compatibility and the iRacing Code of Conduct to driving and chassis set-up tips and troubleshooting, the FAQs section is an invaluable resource for iRacers. If you've got a question, chances are good that not only some of your fellow iRacers have had that same question, but that you'll find the answer here.

The FAQs Section can be found directly above your name at very top of the Members Site home page.

1.5.8 – iRacing Driving School

A unique asset of the iRacing service is the iRacing Driving School, which is designed specifically to help new members grasp the fundamentals of racing –

and also provide veteran iRacers with useful refresher courses they can take advantage of at any time.

Developed in collaboration with the world famous Skip Barber Racing School and veteran driving instructor/ real world racers, the school covers topics ranging from braking and negotiating corners at speed to the rudiments of chassis set-ups and racing techniques used in competition. The iRacing Driving School consists of 16 different instruction modules from three to six minutes long, together with exercises for iRacers to practice behind the wheel in their own time.

The iRacing Driving School can be found in a drop-down on the Members Site home page under "Resources."

2. Getting on Track

2.1 – Practice, Practice, Practice

While everyone is eager to get right into a race as soon as they join, it is never a good idea. There are many people who take sim racing very seriously and jumping right into a race with no experience is always a recipe for disaster. It is always best to run as many practice sessions as you need to be able to run clean, consistent laps before joining a race. It may seem like a chore to run lap after lap, but it will pay off in the end. It is also a good idea to join online practice sessions so that you can learn how to race around other cars, and potentially get assistance from other people if you are struggling.

2.2 - How hardware issues and your practice approach can affect your race performance

As you strive for consistency, you may find yourself in a situation where it seems that your practice, test, Time Trial, and Qualifying goes better than your race. If you find this happening, you might first want to check your graphic options and make sure you don't have things turned up too high. Ultimately, you want to get the same framerate (or close to it) during a race as you get on your own in a Time Trial or test session. If not, scale back your graphics a bit by reducing details to "medium" or "low" and turning off shadows, for example, or consider looking into a hardware upgrade if you've already considerably scaled-back the graphical details.

While hardware performance can sometimes be a limiting factor, you also need to be aware that your practice performance will affect your race performance (or *how* you practice will affect how you race). Time Trials are a good first step in preparing to race, and being able to do time trial-length runs will help "condition" you for a race-length run; but be aware that the Time Trial lap requirements typically represent half a race length, at

best. If you find your performance dropping off at the mid-point of a race, it's easy to dismiss it as struggling with the tires as your grip goes away due to wear, or struggling to deal with a quicker/lighter car as the fuel load lightens, but quite often it could be that you literally don't have the stamina to go the full length.

To help ensure that lack of "stamina" isn't an issue with your race performance, it's a great idea to try to put in at least one (or ideally more) race-length runs BEFORE entering a race. In league play with other race sims it's relatively easy to run an offline race against the AI opponents to prepare for a "live" weekly league event, but with no AI in iRacing you have to take a slightly different approach, and there are several ways you can accomplish this:

- 1) In offline solo practice, try to run the number of laps equal to a full race length uninterrupted with no "offs," and try to get to the point where you can turn in consecutive laps that are close to your qual laps or your personal best, and/or;
- 2) In Time Trials or Qualifications, try to make your run as long as the number of laps in a full race length -- make it a goal to turn in an uninterrupted number of laps equal to a race length with no "offs," and try to get to the point where you can turn in consecutive laps that are close to your qual laps or your personal best, and/or;
- 3) On a practice server with other cars on the track, try to put in an uninterrupted run equal to the number of laps in a full-length race (again, consecutive laps with no "offs"), and try to get to the point where you can turn in consecutive laps that are close to your qual laps or your personal best (I tend to think of this as a "final preparation" step, because if you can do this with traffic around then you're dealing with near-race conditions).

Once you're able to put in a race-length run at close to your own personal competitive speed (e.g., near your personal best or your own Time Trial average), that's a good sign that you've developed the necessary "stamina" and focus for a real full-length race. At that point you should be well-prepared to complete a "real" race without losing concentration or focus at the mid-point, and you should find that your overall race performance will start to improve considerably once you start following this type of preparation regimen.

2.3– Qualifying, is it necessary?

It might not always be the best idea to qualify before running races, especially if racing is new to you. Starting in the middle of the grid with cars on every side can be hairy to say the least, especially in a race full of Rookies. Starting in the back might be a good idea if racing around other cars in close quarters is a new experience. Remember that Qualifying

sessions count towards Safety Rating, so don't run one until you are comfortable enough to not get many incident points.

2.4– Getting Started with Racing

Once you are comfortable running laps in online practice sessions and are confident that you can run safely around other cars, it is time to start racing. In a perfect world, races will be divided into equal splits based on iRating (a measure of driver skill, and explained more later). Though as we know, the world isn't always perfect so it doesn't always end up like that.


2.5 – Joining Sessions

Start by selecting the series you would like to participate in. There is a drop down menu on the left side of the Race tab that lists all the series. On series you do not own content for it will say Purchase Required. On series that you do not have the correct license for, it will say License Ineligible. This means that a higher license is required to participate in the series.

To join sessions for the series currently entered, start by opening the Race bar near the top of any iRacing web page.



Once this bar is visible, click the green Select Session button to bring up a page that lists all of the sessions running for the series. If you do not see the select session icon, it means you are registered for another session. In order to join a new one, you must withdraw from the old one.

2010-06-18  **NEW HAMPSHIRE** OVAL

PRACTICE			QUALIFY		RACE		TIME TRIAL	
Session	Server	Time Left	Week: 7 New Hampshire Motor Speedway - Oval		Week: 7 New Hampshire Motor Speedway - Oval		Week: 7 New Hampshire Motor Speedway - Oval	
306 (9/20)	US-MA	00:10	00:45 GMT [08:45 pm] (0)	01:45 GMT [09:45 pm] (0)	02:00 GMT [10:00 pm] (0)	04:00 GMT [12:00 am] (0)	00:02 GMT [08:02 pm] (0)	00:04 GMT [08:04 pm] (0)
354 (1/20)	US-MA	00:21	02:45 GMT [10:45 pm] (0)	03:45 GMT [11:45 pm] (0)	06:00 GMT [02:00 am] (0)	08:00 GMT [04:00 am] (0)	00:06 GMT [08:06 pm] (0)	00:08 GMT [08:08 pm] (0)
499 (1/20)	US-MA	01:10
545 (0/20)	AU-Syd	01:21	Qualifying sessions determine the overall weekly qualifying order, which is used to set the starting order, or grid, for each race session. Qualifying times are		Races are real-time, wheel-to-wheel, multi-car sessions. The number of entries required for the race to be considered official, as well as the race distance, will		A Time Trial is a competition between the driver and the clock. Time Trials are single-car sessions. Incidents are recorded	
550 (0/20)	US-MA	01:22	Practice sessions are typically 30 minutes long and open to multiple cars. Official lap times and					

All sessions that are joinable will be highlighted in red. Sessions that are starting within 30 minutes will be highlighted in red. For races and qualifying, once registered for a session (you are registered once you click on the time slot) the race bar will change. It will show a countdown clock to when the session starts. When it reaches zero, the clock will change to a green Join button. Another big thing to pay attention to when joining races is the Withdraw button. This button is below the countdown clock. When the button changes to Forfeit, you are locked into the race and forfeiting at that point will impact your iRating as you will be given last place in the race.

2.6 – General Racing Etiquette

Often times iRacing is the first racing game or at least the first racing sim new drivers have ever played. This can often lead to problems on the track. I will list some general rules that should be followed to make for an easier time as a rookie as well as earning more respect while on track.

One of the biggest issues in any race or practice session is the way new drivers enter and exit the track. When entering the track, do not pull right into the racing line. If you pull into the racing line right out of the pits you are going to be traveling much slower than cars on the track. This is almost guaranteed to cause an accident, or at the very least, annoy other drivers. Drivers on track could be trying to do a long run to feel how their setup is handling and all that work would go away if they got into a wreck because someone pulled out in front of them. Compare it to driving on a regular road. You are driving down the road and someone on another road pulls out right in front of you forcing you to slow down to prevent hitting them. It's annoying, right? It's the same concept here.

Another issue is stopping on track. Do not stop right in the middle of the racing line to exit your car. The best way is to enter the pits or pull way off the racing line and slow down to a stop.

After a wreck, the best thing to do is stay exactly where your car stops moving until the track is clear. "I'm in the way," you say? While you might be in the way, it's a lot easier to avoid a stationary target than one that is moving. It is easier for cars to avoid you if you are predictable. Being predictable means staying where you are until the track is clear to move again. I will talk about how to do this in the next section.

It is also never a good idea to start trash talking right after a wreck. Even if others are doing it, it doesn't mean that you should. It doesn't earn you any respect and most likely others are still trying to race. Wait until after the race (and viewing the replay to figure out what actually happened) and discuss it in a thought-out manner once everyone has finished.

2.7 – Racecraft Tips

Races often seem to play out much differently than Time Trials, qualifying, and practice sessions, and while a lot of this can be attributed to "race day jitters" fueled by competitive aggression and a healthy dose of adrenaline, things like aerodynamics could also be a contributing factor. Aerodynamic issues are much different during race conditions, and this can often have unforeseen effects that most people don't even take into consideration.

For example, people very quickly forget that when you're following another car, aero tow definitely comes into play. This changes your braking points significantly because you're hitting your brake points at a higher speed, so the usual amount of braking is typically insufficient, which means you're trying to take the corner at higher speeds than usual.

The difference may only be a few miles per hour -- not really enough to even feel, but definitely enough to throw off your line through the corner. This can make the difference between making it through the corner at optimal speed and **trying** to make it though the corner at just a hair past **your** limit.

Add-in the fact that a lot of people still try to hit their own braking points even when following someone else into a corner, combined with the fact that the car in front of you might brake sooner than you're used to braking, and you've got the perfect formula for the car **feeling** "off" when in reality it's **YOU** who's "off."

Then there are those cases where you follow someone in deeper than usual and try to match their braking points, and what works for them doesn't work for you -- sometimes because of the draft/tow, sometimes because their setup is dialed-in differently. This is

another case where things can go badly wrong and it will feel like it's the car, but in reality it's probably again you who are a bit "off."

It takes a while before you begin to figure out when it IS you and when it is really the car, but most of the time when things don't feel right or when you screw up, it's often better to assume that it really is just you who is at fault, rather than blaming the car or the setup.

Fellow iRacer Michael Lorensen pointed out that we can gain 2-3 mph from a good draft even in a slow car, which is more than enough to affect the braking point. For example, 3 mph is 2.5% of 120 mph, which is about as fast as you ever get going in a Skippy. That is a substantial change, when you're already living on the edge in getting slowed-down and turned-in. Plus, it is always 3 mph worth of inertia, regardless of the percentage of your speed.

Then there is the accordion effect, or what Michael calls 'racing relativity.' If you are directly behind the car in front, with basically no gap, and it brakes at the exact spot you normally do, you will run right over it if you don't brake a bit earlier than normal, even without a draft. At the corner exit, the opposite effect happens; if you both accelerate at the same spot on the track (not the same time) the gap to the leading car expands. You see this clearly when there is a gap between equal cars and the following car visibly closes under braking, only to give it back at the corner exit.

That timing issue in brake and accelerator applications between cars in close proximity is complicated by the fact that distance changes with speed, even when the time-gap is constant. The distances represented by a 1 second gap are proportionally different at 50, 100, and 150 mph, so the distance gap at 150 is three times the gap at 50, even though it is always 1 second.

This is part of what makes racing so different from time-trialing, but you learn to manage your distance to a leading car with practice. It becomes an automatic thing mostly in your mental background, though it becomes more conscious as the gap narrows!

2.8 – Useful Tools

There are many built-in tools to make racing life simple, the biggest ones being the F key black boxes. These boxes are selectable using the F keys along the top of your keyboard starting with F1 and ending with F9.

F1 lists general information such as how many laps you have completed, how many to go, and the distance to the car in front/behind.

F2 is an overall leaderboard. By default, the arrow keys on your keyboard control the box. Use the up and down arrows to scroll through the leaderboard and the left or right

key to center it around your position. This box is updated every lap as you cross the finish line.

F3 is also an overall leaderboard, but a live updated one. The same keys are used to control it. As I mentioned in the previous section, this box is very helpful in judging other cars positions. As described before, do not try to rejoin the track until the track is clear. This means making sure you have enough room to do so. The faster the cars are going on track, the more time you need to get yourself going again (rejoining 3 seconds in front of a car going 140mph is much more dangerous than pulling out 3 seconds ahead of a car going 35mph around a hairpin).

The next few keys are used for pit stops. Selecting tires, fuel, and any adjustments to be made to the car (those adjustments won't be explained in this guide but can be found in the [Setup Guide](#)). The same arrow key controls are used to navigate these boxes. By default the space bar unchecks or checks the boxes (tire and fuel screen).

The F9 black box is also very useful. This allows you to adjust your cockpit mirrors to get the best view. Once again, the arrow keys are used to navigate through it.

Two more useful tools are the spotter and virtual mirror. The virtual mirror provides a much better view than the standard cockpit mirrors. It is displayed in the top center of the screen and provides an unobstructed view out the back (no rollcage). To turn on the Virtual Mirror, go to the options menu in the sim and go to the graphics tab. Experiment with the Field of View. A larger Field of View will show a wider portion but be a little bit distorted (the whole 'Objects in Mirror are Closer than they Appear' thing). A narrower (smaller) Field of View will show less but offer a more accurate picture of what's behind you.

The spotter is also very important. This should be turned on before you ever enter the track with other cars. To turn it on, go to the options menu within the sim and go to the sound tab. The spotter can be voice, text or both. If you have a headset, it should be possible to have the spotter come through the headset with the regular car sounds through your speakers. You can do this by setting the playback source in the drop down.

3. The Rating Systems

A common confusion with new members is a distinction between iRating and Safety Rating. They are two entirely independent values. In the most basic terms, iRating

measures skill whereas Safety Rating measures safety. On the license images on your Personal Stats page, both your iRating and Safety Rating are displayed.



The number next to the license level, in this image “PRO” is your current Safety Rating. iRating and Safety Rating are obvious. Many people ask, “I won (or finished well in) a race, but lost Safety Rating, what’s wrong?” To answer, Safety Rating has no bearing on your finishing position, only the number on incidents you received in the race, qualifying or time trial session. The reasoning will be explained shortly.

At the end of every session there will be a link to see the results of the session you were just in. In races, it will show your iRating and Safety Rating. The circle labeled 2 (below) is your iRating, with how much you gained or lost next to it. The circle labeled number 1 is your Safety Rating gain or loss. When this results page comes up, it will show you some important info to the specific session, such as car used, Session Number (this is useful for the Protest system, which will be covered elsewhere in this guide) as well as some information specific to you, such as average lap time, fastest lap time, and which lap it was run on. For the purposes of this chapter, we are going to refer to the Safety Rating, and iRating (or TTRating for Time Trials) boxes.

2010 Season 1
 2010-04-23 11:44 pm
 Time Trial Session: 9967074/1912031 Official
 Homestead Miami Speedway - Miami Speedway
 2010 Season 1

RESULTS

Pos	Class	Car	Class	Car #	Driver	Out	Interval	Average Lap Time	Fastest Lap Time	Fastest Lap	Fastest 10			Inc	Div	Club	TTRating	License
											Lap	Start Lap	Laps Comp					
1	1		Truck	1	Daniel Rowe	Running	Laps	33.244	33.035	8	33.100	8	19	3	7	Massachusetts	1247 (+4)	CLASS C 2.50 (-0.01)

3.1– iRating

iRacing has developed a rating system called iRating which tracks how you perform against other drivers. iRating is a “zero sum” system which means for every value someone gains, someone else has to lose the same amount. iRating is used to divide each race into different “splits” of difficulty, represented by the “Strength of Field” box in the results page. Splits are determined by the iRating of every driver signed up for the race. If there are 100 drivers registered with ten cars in each race, the highest ten drivers will be in the first race, and the lowest ten rated drivers will be in the last race. In theory, the more drivers registered for a race, the more equal each split will be in terms of iRating based skill because each race will have closely rated drivers grouped together.

As a rookie, your iRating will not be visible; however it is always being calculated. iRating starts out at 1600, and will increase or decrease even though it can't be seen yet. Once you receive your D license, your iRating will become visible, and you will be able to see how it changes after each race on the results page. In general, finishing in the top half of the race will result in an increase in iRating and a finish in the bottom half will result in a decrease. The higher the Strength of Field, the more iRating you will gain for a better finish.

It also divides racers into one of ten divisions for each series (there are really 11, but the last one is a rookie only series, and rookies can't race in any of the other division). This will be explained in section 3.4.

The car numbers in each race are determined by iRating. The highest rated driver will have the #1, the lowest rated driver will have the highest number (depends on how many people are in the race as to which number that is). In general, your car number is a reference to your expected finishing position in the race. Finishing way ahead or below your car number will have a bigger impact on your iRating after the race. If the #1 car finished last in a race, they can expect to lose a lot of iRating. If the lowest rated car won the race, they can expect to gain a lot of iRating. A good rule of thumb: finishing in the top half of a race will result in an iRating gain, finishing in the bottom half will result in a loss of iRating.

The Strength of Field also plays a role in how much iRating can be gained or lost. If a high rated driver finishes poorly in a low rated race (loses to people with much lower iRating), they can expect to lose more than a low rated driver who finishes poorly in a high rated race. This also works the other way. If a low rated driver finishes very well in

a high rated race, they will gain more iRating than a high rated driver finishing in well in the same race. This is because the lower rated driver has exceeded the game's expectations and finished above where the rating system thought they should. The high rated driver did what was expected of them and isn't rewarded as much.

3.2– Safety Rating

Prepare to take some time to read this section. There is a massive amount of excellent information in this section. It will give you a great understanding of the entire Safety Rating system and how it works and why it works. It may seem like a lot, but it will be worth it to understand and most likely relieve some frustration later on.

From the [Sporting Code](#):

“Safety Rating is a measure of a driver's overall safety record and is calculated using a formula that takes into account the number of corners a driver passes through and the number and severity of incidents that driver accumulates in the process. These factors are averaged over a set number of laps and updated as each new session is finished.

Each class of license (in each category, Oval or Road) has a related range of Safety Ratings: 0.00 – 4.99.”

Why do we need to drive safe in iRacing? iRacing's Sporting Code is based upon safe, clean and respectful driving and competition.

The Safety Rating system is automated. Why not use real race stewards? iRacing users compete in over 250,000 races per season. That's over 2,000,000 races since launch. Additionally, it's round the clock racing, but never predictable. There may be zero splits, 1 split or 8 splits. Since launch, iRacing would have needed more than 8,000,000 race stewards on call waiting for a race to start. Then they'd need to watch and review each and every incident. It's a gargantuan task to staff and maintain such an organization. Keeping the quality of the race stewards at a high level would be equally challenging.

Live race stewards for special events might make sense at some point, but for the 250,000 races per 3 month season an automated system is the most efficient system.

Does iRacing's Safety Rating system assign blame to incidents? No. It's a no fault system. This eliminates any need for arbitration except in the cases of intentional wrecking where the protest system allows a driver to send in a replay of the specific incident. This will be reviewed by a race steward.

Ok, so with millions of races iRacing needs an automated system, but why not a fault based system? The reason is fairly simple. It's been proven time and again when polling sports fans on either side of a judgment call by officials that the vast majority of each team's fans vote on the side of their team. A fault based system would have to programmatically rule on every incident and on average each driver would vote against the ruling.

Additionally, racing closely with other drivers requires trust. Drivers would quickly find the gray areas in a fault based system and know when a slight tap on the brakes would cause a penalty for other drivers, but not themselves. Incentives to beat the system aren't what iRacers should be focusing on. A no fault system means both drivers lose, so both should avoid contact.

Isn't it obvious who's at fault in a rear end accident? Even in a rear end incident it's not easy to assign blame. Someone could be following too closely. Someone could brake check. Someone could brake earlier than expected. Someone could be slowing for an accident or potential accident ahead. There are so many complications to "who is at fault." With iRacing's Safety Rating system, both drivers will receive a 4 incidents added to their incident count if the contact is severe enough.

Why shouldn't I blame my SR rating on other drivers mistakes? Because the percentage of your Safety Rating that's made up of other driver's mistakes is typically quite low. If it's not, then you might evaluate the amount of risk you're willing to accept while racing. The 3 second rule is impossible, but you can give more distance to the other drivers and choose your spots to pass and/or be passed more carefully.

Here's a chart to explain the amount of incident points allowed to maintain a given Safety Rating. iRacing tracks your incidents per corner. They throw away old corners after a period of time. They do this to prevent a driver from racing so long that he/she could eventually drive recklessly, secure in the knowledge it would not affect his/her Safety Rating. It's roughly your last 10 -15 races that are used in your Safety Rating calculation.

In the chart below if you were to maintain an average of about 1 incident point for every 76 corners then you'd become a A class driver with a 3.00 Safety Rating. You'd either climb to that level if you started as a Rookie or drop to that level if you started as a Pro driver. How would you start as Pro? Remember, the calculation only counts the last 10-15 races. Some iRacers have 1,000 races. Only the most recent are counted. Past sins are forgotten so to speak and you're only as safe as your last 10-15 races.

NEW	Class	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.99
	Rookie	7.5	15	22.5	33.8
	Class D	11.25	22.5	33.8	50.5
	Class C	16.9	33.8	50.5	76
	Class B	25.25	50.5	76	114
	Class A	38	76	114	171
	Pro	57	114	171	256.3

What is Fastrack? iRacing introduced a Fastrack system, so that a driver who was very safe could become an A class driver in a weekend. Achieve a 4.00 Safety Rating and you instantly get advanced to the next higher class. This is how you could advance to A class in a weekend. However, the first weekend iRacing didn't end up with all A class drivers. In fact in the first 6 months of Fastrack the percentage distribution of all classes from Rookie to A class remained almost identical.

Why doesn't everyone become A class with Fastrack? I'd like to say testosterone, but what it really comes down to is that racing safe and racing hard is a balance. In order to have only 1 incident in 76 corners you need to first and foremost be able to do that without anyone else on the track. Add in other racers and you need to be able to drive in traffic while still staying on track. Everyone can do it in a time trial with no other cars, but even then you have to be disciplined enough to drive within your limits.

So, it's a bit of skill, a bit of patience, a bit of understanding what is and what isn't a risky situation. Lastly it's your willingness to accept risk. If you constantly put yourself in risky situations, you'll incur more incident points. Some people struggle with Safety Rating, but almost everyone learns how to manage risk after they become more experienced. The ones that don't are forever frustrated, typically blaming everyone but themselves. Don't be "that" guy. ☺

Why limit the number of corners calculated? Some drivers have 500 to 1,000 races or more. If the calculation weren't 10-15 races, but was 1,000, then those drivers with 1,000 races would have built up immunity to incidents. They'd be free to drive very aggressively with no loss of license and very little impact to Safety Rating. It needs to be a shorter window of races in the calculation. 10-15 works well. It could be a bit longer or shorter, but it's worked well enough for the past 2 years.

Why do two racers in the same race with the same number of incident points see different gains/losses in Safety Rating? The chart below shows the number of incident points expected to maintain a given license level. If you were to race 15 Rookie Solstice races at Lime Rock and averaged 1.8 incidents per race, you'd probably have risen to A

class in 15 races. This is where Fastrack comes into play. However, if you averaged 9.3 incidents per race in those 15 races, you'd still be a Rookie at the end of those 15 races. This is why iRacing doesn't have all A class drivers even with Fastrack. Sure, it's possible to average 1.8 incidents per race, but it's not that easy. It takes practice, patience and making intelligent decisions about how much risk to accept. These are lessons learned by most drivers over time, not in a weekend.

So, to answer the question of why two drivers can have the same incidents and one increases in SR and one drop, take the example of two drivers, who both get four incidents in a Rookie Solstice race at Lime Rock. If driver A was a Rookie 3.0, his Safety Rating would rise as his average would be moving *up* towards a C class 3.0 license. If driver B was an A class driver, his Safety Rating would be moving *down* towards a C 3.0 license. Thus, the standards are different. If you're an A class driver and want to maintain that standard it's a lot tougher. 1.8 incidents on average per 140 corners completed. As a Rookie if you want to stay a Rookie, it's a heck of a lot easier. 9.3 incidents. Considering 9.3 is 2 4x incidents and some change, it makes sense that Rookie races have a lot more incidents than A class races. A class drivers and A class races are generally 5 times cleaner than Rookie races. That's a good reason to try and move out of Rookie races.

Use this chart as a Rookie to set goals

Rookie Solstice Series 2010 Season 1					CPI Goals					
					114	76	50.5	33.8	22.5	15
					Target Incident Goal for a Specific SR Grade					
Week	Track	Laps for a Complete Race	Corners Per Lap	Total Race Corners	Pro	A	B	C	D	R
1	Lime Rock	20	7	140	1.2	1.8	2.8	4.1	6.2	9.3
2	Laguna Seca	11	11	121	1.1	1.6	2.4	3.6	5.4	8.1
3	Lime Rock	20	7	140	1.2	1.8	2.8	4.1	6.2	9.3
4	Laguna Seca	11	11	121	1.1	1.6	2.4	3.6	5.4	8.1

3.3- ttRating

Coming Soon!

3.4 - Seasons and Points

This is another topic that is brought up a lot, and is really not that difficult to understand. The section will answer all of the possible questions about seasons and the points system.

3.4.1 – Seasons

Each calendar year is divided up into four seasons. Each season is made up of twelve official and another largely unofficial (thirteenth) week. Every series races at the same track for a whole week before moving to the next week in the series where it will be at another track for a week.

Each week begins on Tuesday at 0:00GMT. This is either 8:00PM EDT or 7:00PM EST depending on the time of year. No matter what, the tracks will change based off of GMT. The weeks also end at the same time.

3.4.2 – Points

There are always a ton of questions about points. Don't people who race all the time have a big advantage? Why did I just lose points? What are drop weeks?

Let's get the basics out of the way now. We know that each season has twelve championship weeks. Of those twelve weeks, your eight best weeks are counted for your season total. To get the eight best weeks, the top 50% of your races are counted each week and averaged together. Now I will go more in depth and give some examples.

3.4.2.1 – Weeks

Each week, your top 50% point scoring races are averaged together to get your total points for the week. This final total gets tallied for your season total.

- Run 1 race, the points for that race are taken for your weekly points
- Run 2 races, the best of those races are taken for your weekly points
- Run 3 races, the best two races are taken and averaged for your weekly points
- Run 4 races, the best two races are taken and averaged for your weekly points
- Run 5 races, the best three races are taken and averaged for your weekly points

As you can see, stopping with an odd number of races is pointless. Running one more race will result in the same number of races being counted and can only help your points for the week. So let's see how this actually works.

Races	1	2	3	4	5
	50	50	50	50	50
		100	100	100	100
			80	80	80
				150	150
					30
Weekly Points	50	100	90	125	110

The bolded races denote the races that are not counted towards the weekly total.

3.4.2.2 - Seasons

Each season has twelve championship weeks of which eight count. Pretty easy to understand. It works very similar to the weekly points except they are added instead of averaged. Take these points for example: **100, 90, 80, 110, 105, 140, 125, 120, 131, 128, 144, 101, 65**. The four weeks in bold are the lowest and will be dropped from the standings. The rest of them are added together to get the points total for the entire season.

But wait, there are 13 weeks in each season. What happened to the last one? Week 13 is the source of a lot of confusion. At the end of each season, there is a 13th week. When this week starts, all of the regular championships are concluded and the champions are decided. This week is often described as an “off-week.” iRacing takes advantage of this week to release updates and schedule fun events. Most of them do not count towards iRating or Safety Rating though they should be rated as if they do. There are also a few series that do count for iRating and Safety Rating. There are no regular series that are usually run such as the Skip Barber, Late Model, etc. That is why it’s considered an off-week as most regular series are not active. But don’t worry, they will be back when the next season starts, usually with improved physics and features.

4 – Other Tidbits

This section will contain things that don’t really deserve their own chapter, but are important none-the-less.

4.1 – Saving Replays

Replays are a great way to share on track excitement with others. Have a great save? Great crash avoidance? Why not post it on the forums in the [Video and Screenshot Showcase](#) section to see what others think of it?

The replay controls are pretty straightforward and easy to navigate. iRacing used all of the standard icons for fast forward, rewind, skip to end, skip to beginning, etc. They also include a few controls for editing replays, the biggest one being the “cut tool.”



To access the cut tool, click on the hammer and wrench icon on the right side of the replay control box. Hitting this button opens the top replay bar with the floppy disk and scissor icon. To cut a replay, go to the point in the replay where you want to begin and hit the scissor icon. Now fast forward or skip to where you want to end the cut section and hit the floppy disk icon to save the cut section. The replay files are located in the Documents/iRacing/replays folder on your hard drive.

To view saved replays, or replays you have downloaded (<name>.rpy file) and placed in the Documents/iRacing/replays folder, hover over the Events link on the iRacing.com site. This should change the grey bar below the main navigation to show sub pages. Click on the Replays link. Replays are sorted by online and offline. If you do not see your replay it could be because you are looking at the wrong tab.

4.2 – Download/Loading Setups

Another great feature of iRacing is the ability to download others chassis setups. Many people post their setups for others to use on the forums. Each car has a designated forum section where members can discuss anything related to the car: driving tips, setups, etc.. When looking for a setup, make sure to browse to the correct section to look for one.

Setups are designated as <name>.sto. Once a setup is downloaded, you have to put it in the correct location in order to use it within the sim. Browse to the Documents/iRacing/setups folder on your hard drive. In this folder, there will be a

subfolder for each car you have driven (if the folder isn't there, make sure you have driven the car in the sim before. If you haven't, go run a lap and check again). All of the folders are obvious except for the Nationwide Impala and the COT. The Nationwide Impala used the "stockcars2 chevy" folder, the COT uses the "stockcars impala" folder.



Once you have placed the .sto file in the correct folder, go into the sim and open the Garage screen. On the Garage screen, click the My Setups button and simply select the setup and click Open.

Another great feature is the ability to share and receive setups within the sim. To view any setups people might have shared in the server, click on the Shared Setups button. This will show setups that others have shared with you, or anyone else in the current server. It is also possible to share your setup. Click the Share button allows you to share your current setup with everyone, your club or a specific member currently on the server.

4.3 – Protests

Protests are a vital means of preventing a relatively few thoughtless people from ruining the experience of other iRacers. Protest aren't likely going to do anything if someone simply made a mistake (say spun out and you hit them), or they attempted a risky pass and spun you out. They are meant for the people who intentionally take out other people by going flat out into turns, turning into cars, going backwards, etc. This isn't to say that if someone is constantly spinning others out (even though it might not be entirely intentionally) that a protest shouldn't be made and something might be done, especially if they keep doing it.

Protests aren't just for wreckless and dirty driving though. Anyone who fails to follow the Sporting Code is subject to protest. Foul language, verbally attacking others and anything else outlined in the Sporting Code could be protested.

To file a protest, the [Protest Submission Format](#) should be followed. This means sending a detailed email to protest@iracing.com outlining the situation that has occurred. If an accident is being protested, a replay of the incident should be included (section 4.1 describes this process). If it is some other offense (such as text chat) a screenshot of the offense would be sufficient.

5 – iRacing.com Widgets

The home page of the iRacing.com Members Site provides a lot of information including news items, promotions, as well as information about the service. Are there updates available? Has a staff member posted an announcement regarding downtime or new features?

The Press Room side of the home page has all of the news items and promotions going on.

Clicking to the dashboard side, you will see a bunch of different widgets related to the service.

While reading the subsections, if you are unable to see any of the widgets it might be because it is turned off. To customize the home page to your liking, click the gear on the right side of the main navigation bar. This allows for easy customization of the entire home page.

5.1 – Race Planner

The Race Planner widget allows you to announce intentions of competing in a specific race long before the actual registration opens. This does not enroll you in the race, it only enables you to show that you plan to participate in a given race. To use it, simply select the series and date you might want to race on. This will bring up a list of races on that day for that series. Hovering over the blue bell icon allows you to plan the session which will add it to the top section of the widget under My Planned Races. It's also possible to receive email reminders that the race is coming up. Remember though, this will not automatically register you for the race.

5.2 – What's Hot

Another useful widget is the What's Hot item. This shows all of the Open Practice sessions as well as upcoming race sessions that are open for registration. There is a lot of customization available in this widget to show only the sessions that interest you. Checking the Eligible box will remove any sessions you do not have the correct license for. Checking the Populated box will only show sessions that already have people in them.

5.3 – Service Status

This widget will notify you of any updates that are available for content that you own, as well as show any recent announcements from the staff. By clicking on the subject of the

announcement, it will open up the forum topic so you can read all of the details surrounding it. This is very helpful to know when there are planned downtimes, release notes and new schedules posted. The staff members also write blog posts frequently that sometimes hint at upcoming features or what they are currently working on. This widget is located on both the Dashboard and Press Room side of the home page.

6 – Community

One of the greatest resources iRacing has is its community. Almost any problem you have, if you ask for help on the forums, someone out there will know how to fix it. iRacing is the service of choice for many leagues as well, if you would like a place where you can have a set race every week, same day, same time. If competing with the same people week in and week out is something you enjoy, you should look for a league to join.

6.1– Forums

The iRacing forums are a great source of information and help. It is one of the best internet forums around. In almost all cases, any inquiries will be answered within a few hours and usually by well informed people.

The forum is divided into multiple sections. Putting a question in the appropriate sub-section will almost always get the best answers. If you are looking for hardware help, posting in the Hardware section would be the right place to go. If you are interested in setup help, posting your questions in the section specific to the car will get the most targeted answers.

One of the most important features of the forum is the club specific sections. At the bottom of the forum, you will have access to the forum section of the club you belong to. This is a greatly overlooked feature that is not often emphasized. Clubs often have real life gatherings which can be a good time to meet some of your fellow iRacers. There is also a wealth of knowledge and help available. It is amazing how far some people will go to help others near them. This is a great place to ask for any help and plan club gatherings, races or anything else that might be of interest.

6.2– Leagues

This is a relatively recent addition to iRacing. With the implementation of Hosted Racing, many leagues have moved to iRacing. Leagues allow competition between similar people week in and week out, something that doesn't always happen in official races. The Hosted Racing section of the forum is a great place to look if you are

interested in finding a league to race in. Nearly every car has some sort of league running and probably in a time that you can commit to.

7 – Resources

iRacing members have created many websites to try to help in different aspects of the service. These range from setups to paint schemes. These sites have been made by dedicated iRacing members who have set out to improve the service in one way or another.

For example . . . after iRacing released the ability to paint cars, Steve Luvender started a website called [Trading Paints](#), where any iRacing Driver can link their account, and upload their paint schemes, as well as download those of fellow competitors. This site is very useful for leagues, as many people like to paint their cars for the league they run. Steve also released a program at Trading Paints to help facilitate downloading of paints. On Trading Paints someone can create a “List” of cars, which is especially useful for leagues. A league can put every paint scheme being run on their list, and then in the Trading Paints downloader program, drivers can “Subscribe” to the list, and set the Downloader to automatically download the list. So all you need to do before your race is boot up the Downloader, and you will have all the paints ready to go.

Another site that Steve has setup is called [Race Setups](#) where a driver can use their Trading Paints account to upload and download setups. This is very useful if you need to find a setup for a track. It can be a very daunting task to try to make a fast and stable setup from scratch. Alternatively, on the forums each car has its own sub-forum. Many people upload the setup they are using for that week’s track in this sub-forum. If you cannot get your car to handle correctly, need a more controllable setup or need to find a faster setup, either of these resources can be of great assistance to you.

8 – Closing

We hope that this guide has been helpful in making your start on iRacing.com much easier. If you find that something has not been answered in this guide, the Quick Star Guide, User Guide, Sporting Code or any of the other more specific documents, the forums are always available to ask questions and hopefully receive a well thought out response and answer. We have enjoyed writing this guide and hopefully rookies and veterans alike will find it useful!