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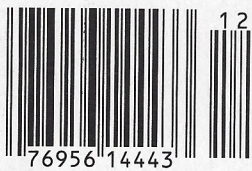
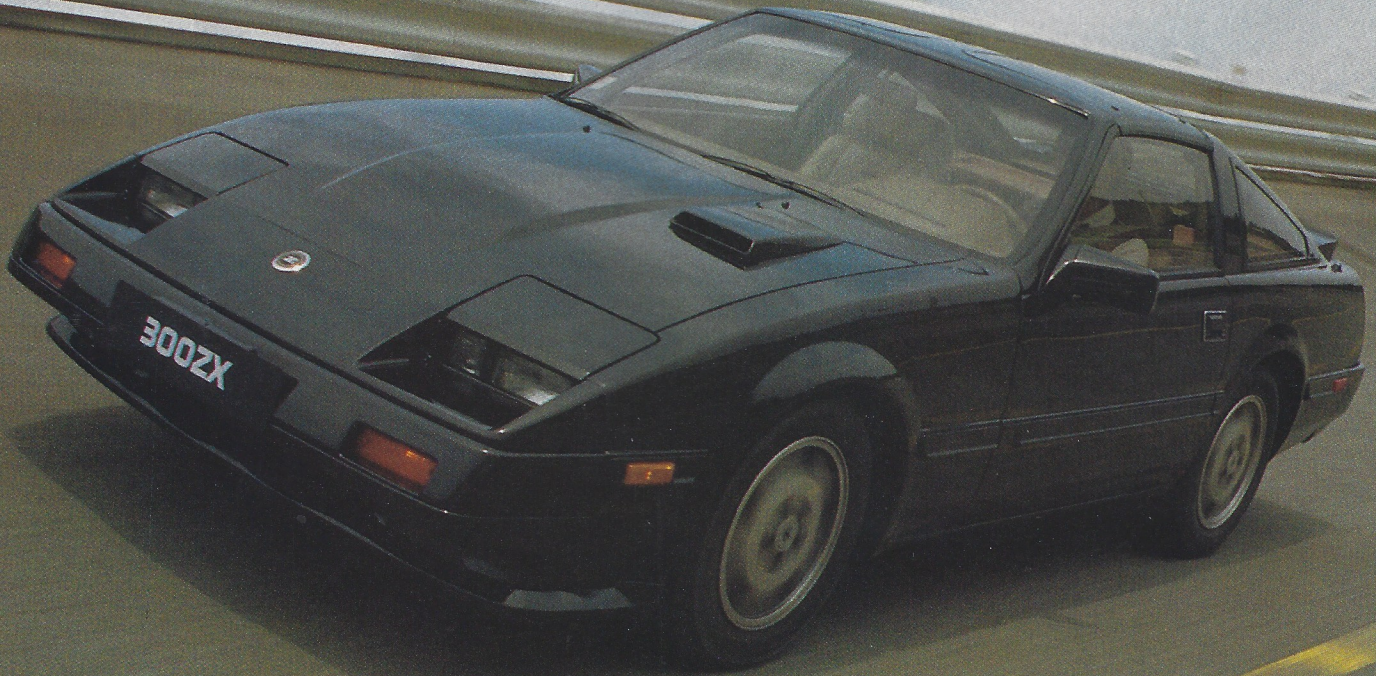
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# DRIVING SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Five Masters Who Can Teach You How To Drive Fast

By Gary Witzenburg

**T**wenty years ago, if you wanted to go racing, you started by locating the nearest bunch of SCCA crazies and joining up. Presumably, you already had something loosely resembling a sports car, so you bolted in a rollbar, taped over the lights and drove it to "Driver's School."

Driver's School was a weekend spent circulating around some dusty track or another under the eyes of people who already had their licenses. Your instructor might or might not have known what he was doing, and he might or might not have had a clue how to teach it. What it boiled down to, really, was supervised practice.

If things went well, you didn't bend or break your car or run over any instructors, corner workers or pit marshalls. You got your minimum three hours of track time and passed a test on the rules. Then you went to a second school and two regional races to qualify for a regional license, then six more to earn your national ticket. That qualified you for an FIA international license and the right to mix it up in any pro-series your budget could afford. All it took was time and money. If you never did any good, you probably had no idea why—maybe you needed better tires and a bigger motor.

Remarkably, some world-class drivers emerged from this system—Hill, Gurney, Penske, Shelby, Bondurant, Donohue and Follmer included. All had incredible natural talent combined with the ability to watch, study, think, concentrate and essentially teach themselves how to win.

SCCA schools are better now, but the system is little changed. Luckily, though, a handful of dedicated pros have brought European-style professional driver training to North America and are making it work. If you want to go racing, you need one of these schools. Even if you don't want to hit the track, you can learn to become a better *street* driver and have the time of your life learning.

Most people consider themselves excellent drivers. Most of them are wrong. Natural ability provides a head start, but expert driving, on the street or on the track, is an art that must be learned. Without coaching, you can learn by trial and error—so long as you survive your errors. Professional driving schools eliminate costly errors.

Of the many national and regional driving schools available, we took a look at five of the top "racing" schools. The first was the Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing in Riverside, California.



# DRIVING SCHOOL ROUNDUP

## Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing

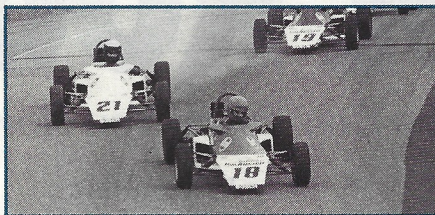
The JRBSMR course is a three-day school. The first day consists of a classroom session on cornering techniques, weight transfer, oversteer and understeer; braking and heel-and-toe downshifting are practiced in the school's Van Diemen Formula Fords; then students walk around the track and its lines and danger spots are discussed. Day two starts with practice and demonstrations of the proper techniques through individual corners and ends with full-course lapping sessions at slowly increasing speeds. Day three is when you dial it all in and are awarded higher redlines (and therefore lap speeds) in accordance with your individual ability and learning curve.

The next step is to come back for a "lapping day," a combination of supervised practice and more advanced instruction at still higher redlines. If you're deemed ready after that, you can progress into one of the Russell racing series (still in school cars) and, ultimately, the annual Formula Ford festival. Coaching from JRBSMR instructors (under the guidance of chief instructor Jacques Couture) is excellent. The Russell technique is firm but controlled: They don't turn blue and rant or rave when you screw up, they just let you know they're mightily disappointed. They watch from different points on the course and don't miss much. After each session comes the critique. "You don't seem to be paying attention," they'll say. "Where did I lose you?" Once they've made you understand your errors, you really dig in and start to learn. Then it's refining time: "You're a few inches wide of the line here; try apexing a little later there."

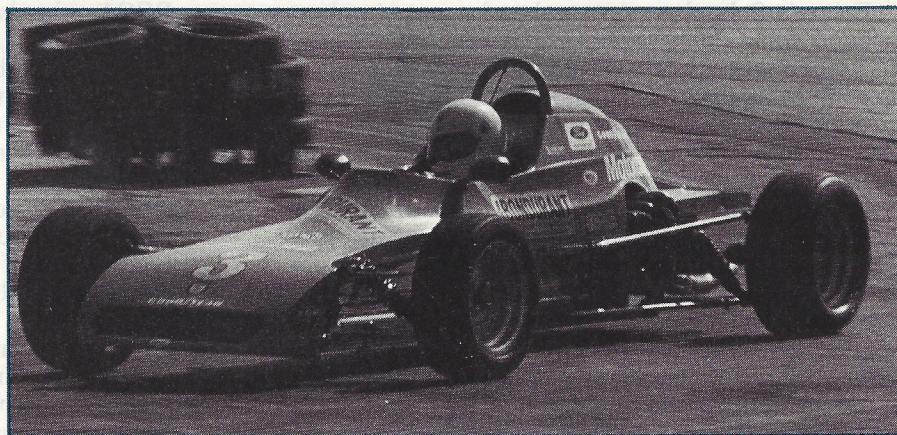
A former Canadian national champion, Couture worked extensively under Jim Russell in England before bringing Russell's name and methods here. In the 16 years since establishing the first Canadian JR school, he has honed those methods razor-sharp while developing an excellent textbook and visual aids. The Canadian school is at Mont Tremblant in Quebec; California branches are at Riverside and Laguna

Seca; and a fourth facility opened last spring at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Couture teaches late apexes (both for safety and speed), emphasizes smoothness and consistency, believes in straight-line braking approaching a corner (no "trail" braking) and in teaching racing in *racing* cars on racing tires (no street cars; no radials). A one-day "Introduction to Racing" is offered in addition to the three-day competition school, lapping days, weekend race series (at all but the Charlotte location) and season-ending festival. Couture also is developing advanced racing and street driving schools.

Each location has more than enough well-maintained Van Diemen Formula Fords to assign one to each student, so you don't have to share. (Unlike most schools, you also don't have to pay for crash damage.) Having your own personal car is great, because it's very important to be properly fitted to one of these little four-wheeled missiles. You lie almost prone, just upright enough to see over the nose. Somewhere up there under the fiberglass and between the wheels are the pedals and almost enough room for a pair of feet. The steering wheel is about the size of a 45-rpm record, the shifter at your side is like a



*Two-and-a-half of the three days at JRBSMR is spent on the track; no real racing is encountered. Learning to race in traffic is reserved for lapping days and the school's popular race series.*



*The Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving uses both Ford production cars (modified Mustangs, Escorts and LTDs) and Crossle Formula Fords. A day-and-a-half of the four-day sessions is devoted to open wheel cars.*

marble on a stubby pencil. You wear these cars like mechanical suits of clothes, and every movement of the controls at speed gets a magnified response.

## Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving

Next up was a trip to the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving at Sears Point Raceway, Sonoma, California. Their competition course runs four days. The school recently switched from Datsun sedans and Z-cars to a fleet of Ford Escorts and Mustangs. (Not coincidentally, this happened shortly after Ford Motor Company President Donald Petersen took the four-day course in a hot V-8 Mustang whipped up for him by Ford Special Vehicle Operation engineers.)



*At the Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing, every student is assigned their own well-maintained 1600cc Van Diemen Formula Ford. Students keep the same car throughout the three-day course, so no time is wasted readjusting seats, mirrors, etc.*



Bondurant's competition school is the longest, most comprehensive and most expensive of the five mentioned here. It has the advantages of an extra day and a lot more practice time in which to dial things in, plus a great deal of *dual* instruction in the sedans. The Bondurant instructors ride with you to see how and what you're doing, and you ride with them so they can demonstrate. Bondurant considers this highly important for learning the basics—seating and hand positions, heel-and-toe downshifting, double-clutching, proper braking and racing lines. You also follow instructors around and they follow you (in a surprisingly good police-package LTD). The one disadvantage for serious racing students, especially those intending to run open-wheel cars, is that you get less Formula Ford time—just a day-and-a-half in the school's Crossle FFs.

All Bondurant courses begin with chief instructor Bill Cooper's terrific ground school: seating and hand positions, use of the controls, under- and oversteer, heel-and-toe downshifting, racing lines, cornering techniques, trail braking, emergency maneuvers and more. Students then progress through a trio of driving exercises—a two-turn oval, a greased-down skid pad and an "accident simulator"—before moving onto a seven-turn "first loop" portion of the Sears Point course. The oval, with a hairpin at one end and a sweeper at the other, gives repetitive braking, downshifting and late-apexing practice. The ice-like skid pad provides excellent car-control training as you work through various types of skids and spins. The accident simulator, a pylon highway with a traffic light over each of three lanes, teaches driving around a sudden obstruction instead of locking up the brakes and skidding into it.

On the third day, competition students graduate to the full circuit in

Mustangs and (by late afternoon) to the Formula Fords. Along the way are additional talks on passing, gauge monitoring, specific lines (and potential trouble spots) through Sears Point's 11 challenging turns, racing rules, flags and safety in general. Brief classroom sessions complete each of the first two days, and an SCCA rule and flag test begins the third. Street driving students get one, two or three days of essentially the same menu, not including the full course, specific racing instruction or Formula Ford time. Advanced racing students can skip the ground school (if they've had it before) and the accident simulator, progressing quickly through the oval and skid pad to the first loop on day one and the full track on day two. The three key factors stressed throughout any Bondurant course are smoothness, consistency and concentration.

Incidentally, trail braking—carrying near-maximum braking through the turn-in point into a corner to keep the front tires loaded and sticking, then gradually releasing it ("trailing" it off) through the early part of the turn before transitioning smoothly to acceleration—is a controversial subject among these five schools. No one knows who invented the technique, but Bondurant claims to have coined the term, and the late, great engineer/driver Mark Donohue was one of its greatest advocates. Bondurant (a former Ford factory driver with Formula 1 and Can-Am experience) and Skip Barber teach it like religion; Bertil Roos and the Russell School's Couture are adamant nonbelievers (they admit it helps compensate for an understeering car, but say the best solution is to better set up the car); Bill Scott's instructors told me it's a good advanced technique to have in your bag of tricks once you learn to brake properly in a straight line, but they don't teach it in their regular competition course.

## Skip Barber Racing

After that came a whirlwind tour of the three major eastern schools. First, were two days of advanced racing under Skip Barber's chief instructor Bruce MacGinnes at windy, rainy Pocono Raceway in northeastern Pennsylvania. Barber, a three-time SCCA national champion with Formula 1, Can-Am and Formula 5000 experience, was at Mid-Ohio conducting his unique three-day competition school, which travels year-round throughout the East, Midwest and South. MacGinnes, a two-time Formula Ford pro-series

champion and holder of some 14 lap records in four different SCCA classes, was ably assisted by twice national champion and former Shelby and Group 44 driver John McComb.

MacGinnes, too, gives good ground school. He takes his driving very seriously and treats it scientifically, yet teaches with an easy grin and a refreshing sense of humor. ("Threshold braking varies from day to day, depending on track temperature and how much you drank last night.") His three key factors for success in racing are attitude, knowledge and skill. He boils down cornering into a simple equation:  $15 GR = \text{mph squared}$  ( $G$  is  $g$  forces;  $R$  is radius). This puts several facts of life into perspective: When the car is cornering at maximum  $g$ 's, you must decrease speed to decrease radius (turn more), and vice versa. (Example, if your speed is too high and you don't lift, you're going to run out of road.) To achieve more speed through a given turn, you must either improve the car or tires to get more  $g$ 's, or you must take a wider radius. "There is no magic."

He uses Donohue's "traction circle" to explain why "we're convinced that trail braking is the fastest way to drive a race car." Visualize the maximum traction a given tire can generate as a circle. Maximum braking is at the top of the vertical axis, max acceleration at the bottom; max *left* cornering is far left on the horizontal axis, max *right* cornering on the far right. The tire can do any one of those four things 100 percent, but must give up some of one to achieve some of another. To make the transition from 100 percent braking to 100 percent cornering, it makes sense to move around that circle's circumference, gradually trading one for the other, always using all the traction the tire can generate—instead of jumping directly from one to the other with a wasted moment of zero traction in between. (Also, coming off the brakes unloads the front suspension; getting on the gas transfers weight rearward and unloads it again—not the best conditions for generating turn-in traction at the front tires.) Once max cornering is achieved, you move downward along the circle trading cornering traction for acceleration as you "let-out" the steering past the apex toward the exit point.

The Barber school also teaches Alan Johnson's three types of turns, from the latter's excellent book *Driving in Competition*. Type One, the most important, leads onto a straight and therefore requires a late apex and a long, straight exit for maximum acceleration coming out. A Type Two turn, at the end of a major straight



Chief instructor at the Skip Barber Racing School is Bruce MacGinnes, a two-time FF pro-series champion. Students alternate in cars and are able to learn from others' mistakes as well as their own.



# DRIVING SCHOOL ROUNDUP

(but not leading to another) allows late braking and sacrificing the line coming out to maintain top speed an instant longer going in. Type Three, a turn leading into another turn, is least important and doesn't much matter how it's taken *provided* your line sets you up properly for the next Type One. All sorts of other useful tips come out of MacGinnes' ground school—how and when to downshift; how double-clutching works and why (with a non-synchro racing gearbox) it's necessary; how to relax and achieve calm under pressure in the heat of battle; how to analyze each turn of a race course; drafting and passing science and strategy; tire technology and slip angles. All the instruction is punctuated by memorable MacGinnesisms ("Your job in a race car is to maximize traction." "Lap times are determined by throttle position.") supplemented by an occasional paraphrased Donohueism ("How fast you go is a function of how straight you keep the steering wheel.")

The remainder of the first morning was spent on basics: practicing maximum "threshold" braking, double-clutch/heel-and-toe downshifting, and trail braking at increasing speeds into a narrow turn marked off with pylons. With ten students for five cars, you do have to alternate; but students are paired up by size as much as possible, and it is helpful to observe the other group's mistakes and listen to the instructors' comments. After lunch you move to a 1.8-mile portion of Pocono's road course.

One feature of MacGinnes' advanced Skip Barber school is a lengthy after-dinner tech session the first evening. (It's optional, but everyone usually comes.) This covers the finer points of suspension setup and troubleshooting, and it's useful even for nontechnical types to learn how to interpret and communicate what a car is doing and how this or that adjustment will affect it.

The second morning of our Pocono session brought rain and (not coincidentally) a comprehensive talk on rain driving. The three common mistakes that lead to accidents (mismatching revs on a downshift, early apexing, lifting of the gas in a turn) are accentuated in the wet, so

you concentrate harder and are extra gentle and precise with every movement of the controls. Drive where the traction is, which is usually *not* on the normal line (because the pavement gets polished there) but outside it where the surface is still rough, avoiding inside apexes entirely. Or, try the Donohue method: Because tires work better under braking and acceleration than under cornering in the wet, you can turn the course into a series of straight-line braking zones, super-late apexes, and dragstrips by simply squaring off the corners the best you can. Don't trail brake, learn where the puddles and slippery spots are, experiment and adapt to changing conditions, especially when the line starts to dry.

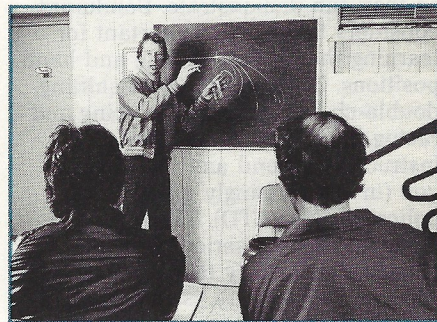
Another MacGinnes tip: Take precautions to preserve your vision in bad conditions.

After lunch, the track was so flooded it was undrivable. There was nothing to do but have one final classroom session and call it a day. This session covered preparation of yourself (take potassium, not salt, in hot weather; don't drink alcohol for *three days* prior to a race) and your car (bed brakes, charge battery, etc.). Check gas, oil, water, tires, tire pressures, and wheel torques every time you go out. Look at the starting grid to see who's around you, and plan your strategy accordingly. Watch the starter (the guy with the green flag) for idiosyncracies. Warm up your engine *before* getting to the false grid, and your tires and brakes on the pace lap. Deflate your emotional bubble, stay calm. Be flexible on the start, not committed to one course of action. ("No race is ever won in the first turn of the first lap, but a lot are lost there.") If you're on the inside, stay there. ("The sun always rises in the East and sets in the West, and the guy on the outside always loses.") And finally, "Be competent, not brave. Don't take dumb chances. No turn, race, or even championship is worth jeopardizing your life or earning power for, or someone else's."

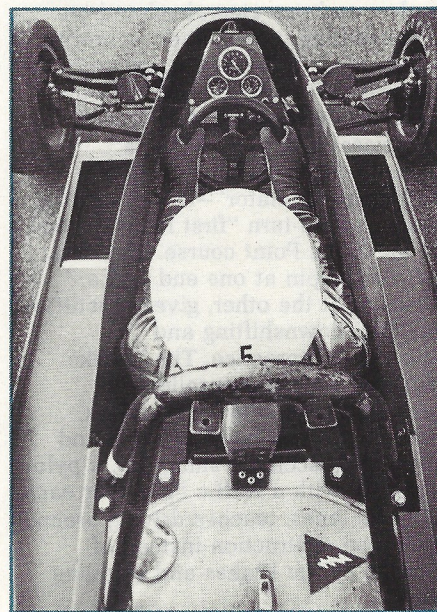
Skip Barber Racing also runs two terrific racing series—one East, one Midwest—with the school's Crossle Formula Fords.

## Bill Scott Racing School

Next came the two-day Bill Scott Racing School at Summit Point, West



All driving schools feature classroom sessions that cover everything from racing rules, mental preparation, and finding the fastest way through corners.

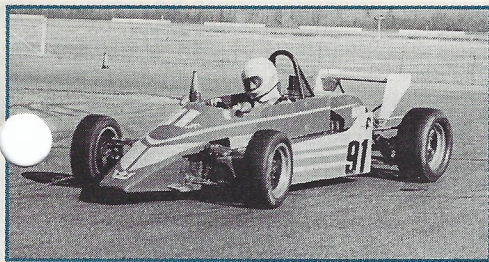


The fit in any Formula Ford is extremely tight. The proper seating and hand positions are shown.

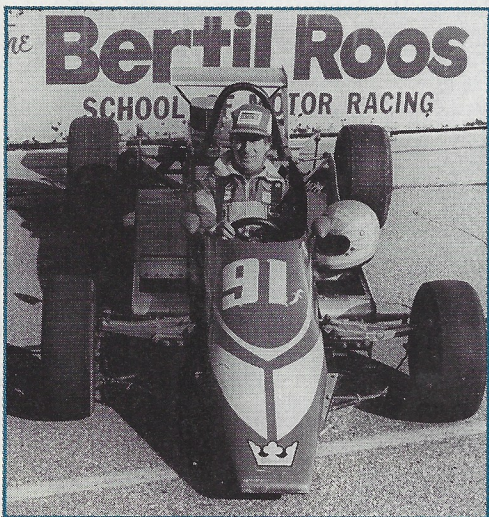


Advanced highway driving schools are offered by several of the racing schools. Instruction includes time in students' own vehicles.





The Formula Fords used for instruction at the Roos school are Formula "Super" Fords of Roos's own design. They feature 2.0-liter engines, sidepods and rear wings.



Bertil Roos still actively competes and has won six major championships, including the 1982 Under-Two-Liter Can-Am title.

Virginia (about 70 miles northwest of the Washington/Baltimore area). A two-time Formula Super Vee Champion, Scott stays busy building, preparing and running race cars for VW of America and a few individual customers. Showing me around his spacious shop, he explained that the school's major effort was its expanding highway safety and corporate counter-terrorist programs, but he keeps the racing school going (once a month) largely as a courtesy to people in the area. He offers individualized advanced training on request, plus an occasional weekend Solo I course.

School director Peter Minogue conducts the ground school, which is short but high in content and aimed at that day's students' specific needs. He emphasizes smoothness, consistency and threshold



Roos uses specially modified Saab "slidecars" to evaluate students' abilities.

braking—in a straight line, but all the way down to the turn-in point so as not to unload the front tires before turning. Also discussed are prevention and control of understeer and oversteer; using tire noise to find proper lines (quiet going in means early apex, quiet coming out is late; there should be noise all the way through); Alan Johnson's Type One, Two and Three turns; what to do when you go off (let off the gas and steer as straight as possible); rain driving (both methods); car preparation; pace lap and starting tips; passing techniques; chassis and tire pressure adjustments; and, finally, Donohue's traction circle. Johnson's book, IMSA and SCCA application forms and some other useful literature are distributed to each student.

Then it was out to the track to meet BSR instructors Tommy Schweitz and Bruce Reichel, and the cars. The school has a small fleet of police-package Chevy Malibus for the corporate programs, but only three cars for competition courses. These are a pair of Datsun 510s for dual instruction and one Zink Formula Ford. The instruction is first-rate and highly personalized. They work tirelessly to bring you up to the limits of the cars, and they spend considerable time riding with you to correct your mistakes. The cars and pit rail become an extension of the classroom as the flow of helpful tips, advice and information continues throughout the two days. With only three students, there is as much driving time as anyone could want—and all three well-used school cars performed valiantly, with no time lost to mechanical troubles. There was a very good braking seminar on the second afternoon, followed by timed sessions to check our consistency and rate of improvement.

## Learning from the Masters

School	Location	Course	Days	Cars	Cost*	Comments
Skip Barber Racing School, Rte. 7, Canaan, CT 06018 (203) 824-0771	Various (East, S-east & Midwest)	Competition	3	Formula Fords	\$ 895	Year-round
		Competition	5	Formula Fords	1545	
		Adv. Comp.	2	Formula Fords	725	
		Intro	1	Formula Fords	295	
		Lapping Day	1	Formula Fords	350	
		Race Weekend	2	Formula Fords	775	
Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving, Hwys 37 & 121, Sonoma, CA 95476 (707) 938-4741	Sears Point Raceway, Sonoma, CA	Competition	4	Ford Escorts	\$1500	Year-round
		Adv. Comp.	2	Mustangs	900	
		Adv. Comp.	3	Formula Fords	1350	
		Highway	1	Own (or rental)	250	
		Highway	2	Own (or rental)	550	
		Highway	3	Own (or rental)	825	
Jim Russell British School of Motor Racing, 22255 Eucalyptus Ave., Riverside, CA 92508 (714) 656-3576	Mt Tremblant Quebec, Can.; Riverside Raceway, Riverside, CA	Competition	3	Formula Fords	\$ 950	Feb-Dec.
		Intro	1	Formula Fords	325	(May-Oct. in Canada)
		Lapping Day	1	Formula Fords	425	(360 Can.)
		Race Weekend	2	Formula Fords	700	(825 Can.)
		Festival				
Bertil Roos School of Motor Racing, P.O. Box 221, Blakeslee, PA 18610 (717) 646-7227	Pocono Int. Raceway, Blakeslee, PA	Competition	3	Pintos	\$ 975	April-Oct.
		Intro	1	Formula Fords, Saab Slidecar	325	
		Adv. Comp.	2	Own, Slidecar	450	
		Highway	2	Own, Slidecar	450	
		Slidecar	1	Slidecar	325	
Bill Scott Racing School, J. Box 190, Summit Point, W. VA 25446 (304) 725-6512	Summit Pt. Raceway, Summit Pt., W. VA	Competition	2	Datsun 510s.	\$ 825	Feb-Dec.
		Adv. Comp.	1	Formula Fords	400	(\$550 with B. Scott)
		Highway	1	Own	245	
		Solo I	1	Own	75	

NOTE: Most schools also offer corporate and chauffeur courses; call for details.

\* Prices subject to change. Contact schools for further information.

## Bertil Roos School of Motor Racing

The last stop on the tour was two days of advanced training at the unique Bertil Roos School of Motor Racing back at Pocono. Currently the most active driver among these five, Roos has competed in virtually every kind of car imaginable, including Indy cars and Formula 1, in 16 countries. He has won six major championships (most recently the 1982 Under-Two-Liter Can-Am title) since starting racing in his native Sweden—in a Formula Vee he built himself—in 1967. He does most of the teaching himself, assisted by fellow

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# Driving School Roundup

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Swede (and 13-year racer) Ove Falck, takes strong personal interest in his students and believes *passionately* in his methods. His driving is bold, aggressive, often tail-out, yet he makes precious few mistakes; he expects his racing students (the advanced ones, at least) to do the same. His training vehicles include several stock Volkswagens (used mostly for highway and corporate courses), some very old Pintos, a fleet of very good Formula "Super" Fords (his own design, with 2.0-liter engines, instead of the legal 1.6, sidepods and rear wings) and two Saab Slidecars (his own invention) with rear suspensions modified to simulate driving on glare ice. In addition to his own very successful racing program and competition schools, Roos also runs the Precision School of Advanced (highway) Driving and Racetune, a race car preparation and rental service.

First order of business was an evaluation of each student in one of the Slidecars. Believe us, if you're making even little mistakes, those tail-happy, rear-steering Saabs will magnify them tenfold. Egos properly deflated, we were then assembled for the first of several very comprehensive Roos chalk talks. He has what is probably the best textbook in the business and tries to cover virtually everything he's learned in 16 years of racing and winning, but he breaks it up into fairly short, easily digestible sessions. The most important factor of all, he tells us right off, is what he calls Ocular Driving Tactics (ODT). Think about it—if you're sliding off the road, where are you likely to be looking? Probably where you're going and at what you're about to hit. Wrong! You should *always* be looking, and pointing the front wheels, at where you *want to go*.

"Eye technique is what makes everything possible," Roos emphasizes. It's the very key to the kingdom of good, safe driving and car control, whether on the track or on the road. Peripheral vision is plenty good enough to see what's directly around you and to place the car where you want it. Extended to racing, this means that you watch the turn-in point while braking and downshifting to enter a corner, but *before getting there* shift your eyes to the inside to pick up the apex. Your speed and position relative to that

apex will tell you when to initiate the turn; and, *because* you're already looking at it, you'll know exactly how far to turn the wheel to aim for it. Six to eight feet before clipping the apex, shift your eyes up to the outside to pick up your exit point. And before reaching that, look up to the next place you want to be. If you don't master this, he adds, "there are going to be short periods on every track when you're lost, can't find a landmark, don't know what to aim for. This can cause a crash."

Beyond that, Roos's technique involves straight-line threshold braking (eyes firmly on the turn-in point so you can immediately detect and correct for any instability), turning in fairly abruptly, getting back to full throttle as quickly as possible, and making minor corrections with the throttle and steering to achieve the desired path. The fewer corrections you need, the better you did the turn. Like everyone else, he believes in late apexing ("Turning in too early is a sickness that most drivers have these days."); unlike Barber and Bondurant, he definitely does *not* believe in trail braking. ("A crutch to compensate for an understeering car.") Yet, he teaches holding some braking pressure through the turn-in point in medium to sharp turns to increase front-tire traction—the sharper the corner, the farther you brake into it. ("If you want to be fast, you can't always turn with the front wheels alone. You sometimes have to let the back pivot out to get the front pointing. The minute it starts pivoting, you must release the brake and get on the gas to glue the back end to the road.")

He also discusses how to recognize the need for, and make safe, smooth corrections while cornering at the limit ("Correct problems early, *blip* the gas to change the car's attitude, never point the wheels farther than where you want to go and *never* lift. Backing off is when you spin."); proper apexing ("no more than an inch from the edge . . . better one-half of the tire *inside* the edge. An experienced driver *never* misses an apex."); how to learn a new track (start with extremely late turn-ins and apexes, then work back toward early to find the proper lines for each turn); how to work up to a potentially flat-out turn (start by backing off, not braking, as you approach; then lift later and less each time until you can do it without lifting at all); and even how to spin safely ("If you're spinning, back off to avoid the inside—the car will go off on the outside. To avoid the outside, stay on the gas and you'll go off the inside. With experience, you can learn to spin without ever leaving the

pavement.")

The first day's driving was spent on the 1.8-mile training course, alternating between the new Volkswagens and the old Pintos, plus occasional dual instruction with Roos in a Slidecar to check our progress. The second day's driving (in the advanced school) is done in the students' own cars.

Barber, Bondurant, Russell, Roos, Scott—each school has developed and refined the techniques of its founder into a package that can be effectively taught to people with widely varying backgrounds, experience and skill. Each is, or was, a winner, a master at his trade, whose methods obviously work for him. All can point to winning graduates, even champions. If some can win with trail braking—or some other specific technique—and others without, which is better or more correct? Any good driver, we believe, eventually will develop techniques and a specific style that works for him. Anything new that can be learned is assimilated into that style and used when a situation calls for it. We doubt whether anyone could ever learn to drive *exactly* like Bertil Roos or Bob Bondurant or anyone else; but you can adopt bits and pieces from all of them to help you drive better and faster.

All of the schools are good places for a beginner to start; for experienced racers to fine-tune and learn some more; for *anyone* to improve his (or her) highway driving no matter how good he may think he is already. In all five schools we never met a bad instructor.

While not knocking clubs or other schools, it just makes good sense to spend the time and money for professional training in someone else's equipment instead of investing twenty times as much in a car, tires, tools, trailer and spares of your own to take to another school. What if you decide you don't want to race after all, or can't get the car working right, or break it or crash it and can't afford to fix it? The Russell and Barber series even offer an opportunity to race your heart out all season long, for a lot less money than any serious, competitive amateur effort could cost, without ever buying a car, working on it or towing it all night, getting your fingernails greasy or bribing your friends to help. You just show up and drive; if you're any good, you'll win.

While these schools may seem expensive for someone who has no intention of ever racing, consider this: How much would the accident have cost that such training can help you avoid? Final argument: Attending one just may be the most fun you've ever had sitting down with your clothes on. **SCG**