

NNJR Trackside Classroom Series

Overcoming a Plateau



Disclaimer

The techniques shown here have been compiled from experienced sources believed to be reliable and to represent the best current opinions on driving on track. But they are advisory only. Driving at speed at Lightning, or any other track, requires skill, judgment and experience. These techniques assume the reader has high performance driving knowledge and applies them as applicable to their level of driving experience.

High-performance driving can be very dangerous, carries inherent risks and may result in injury or death. NNJR and PCA make no warranty, guarantee or representations as to the absolute correctness or sufficiency of any representation contained herein. Nor can it be assumed that all acceptable safety measures are contained herein or that other or additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional conditions or circumstances.

- Driving “Plateau”
 - What is it?
 - Causes?
- How to improve?
 - Analyze
 - Practice...the correct way

NNJR “Plateau”: What is it?



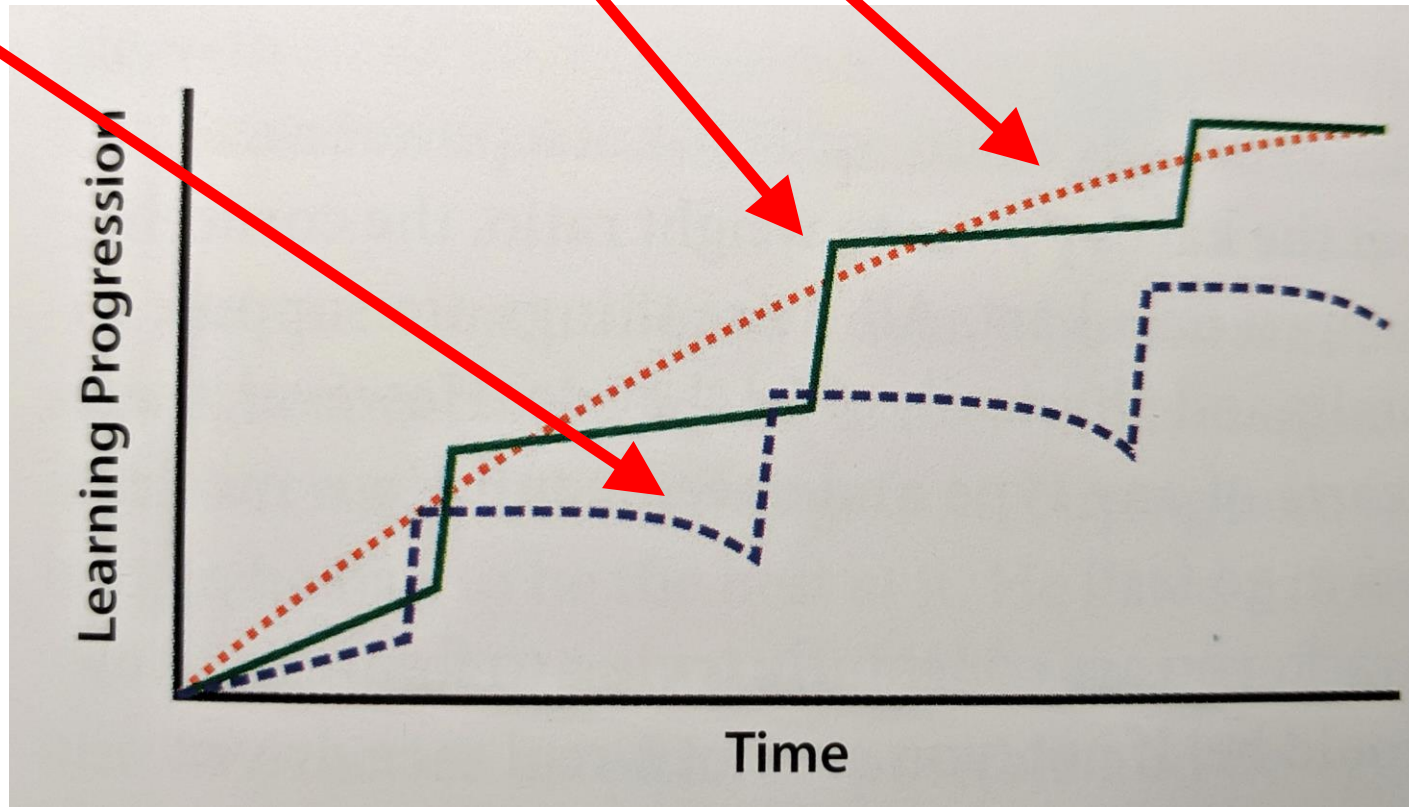
- Feeling “stuck” or “In a rut”
- Not Improving
- A “mental block”

- But: Is it Bad?

- How to measure?
 - Lap times?
 - How we feel?
 - Our individual performance?

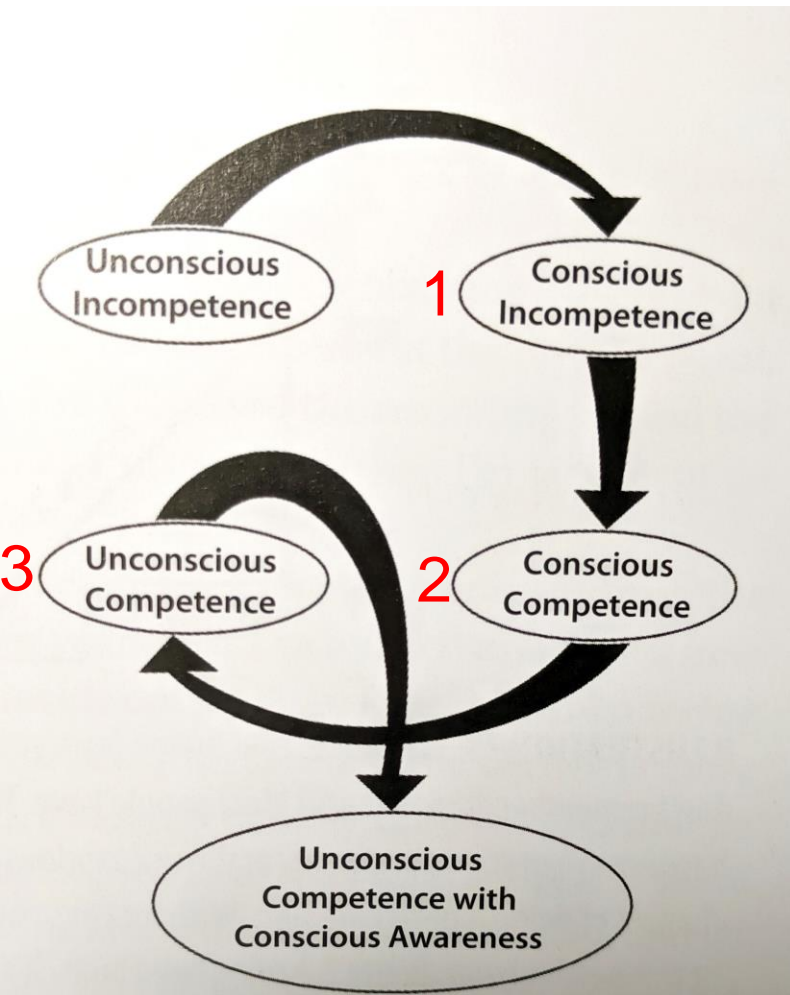


- Theoretical “Learning Curve”
- Typical Learning Pattern
- Plateau



Source: Ross Bentley, Ultimate Speed Secrets

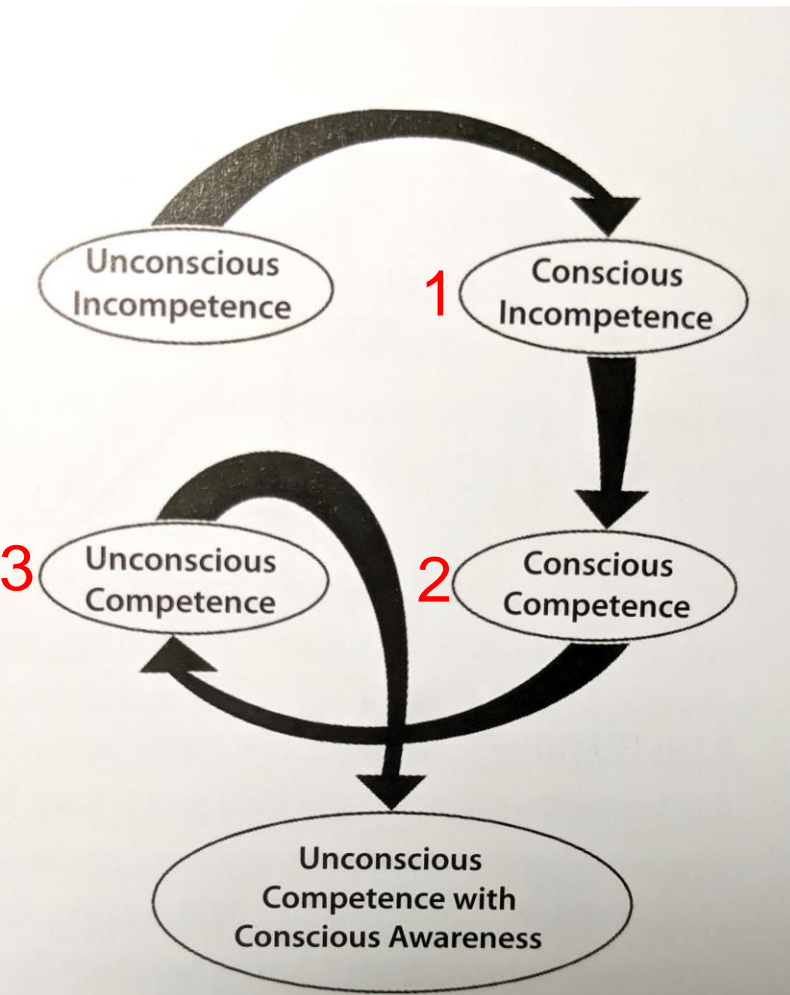
NNJR Plateaus are Normal



1. Try riding a bike the first time
2. Balance the bike while consciously thinking about it
3. Ride the bike without thinking about it

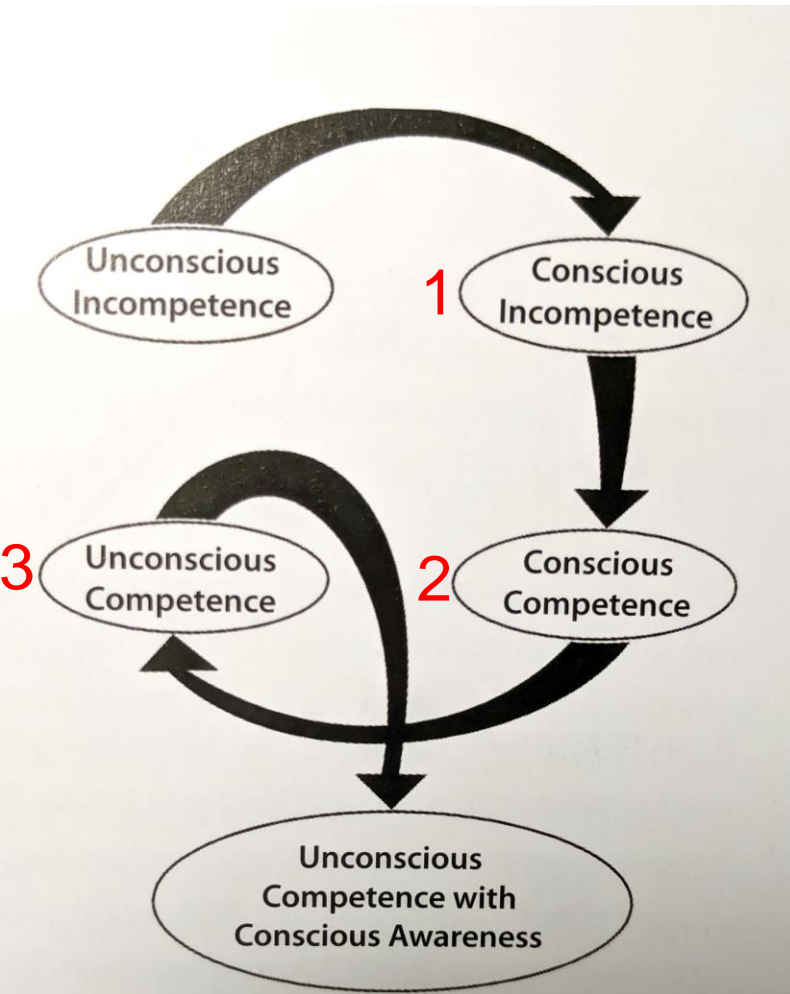
Source: Ross Bentley, Ultimate Speed Secrets





1. Try the first time (and mess up braking and downshift)
2. Practice, practice, practice while consciously thinking about it
3. (Eventually) Smooth downshift without thinking about it

Source: Ross Bentley, Ultimate Speed Secrets



0 Don't notice brake release (rough)

1. Pay attention to brake release

2. Practice, practice, practice while consciously thinking about it

3. (Eventually) Smooth(er) release without thinking about it

- Refinement: aware of technique but performing it unconsciously

Source: Ross Bentley, Ultimate Speed Secrets



- Are you stuck because of
 - Consistency (lack of)?
 - A common trait/limitation in many/all corners?
 - e.g. brake release or corner entry speed
 - One corner?
- Tools
 - Careful observation/notes
 - Data
 - Video
 - Coach

Adapted from Speed Secrets Weekly 455





- “... to learn to be the best driver you can be, you have to flirt with being uncomfortable...”
 - There’s a fine line between being relaxed and uncomfortable so that you’re not over-trying to accomplish something, and pushing your limits just enough to feel slightly uncomfortable (but not so uncomfortable that you move into the panic/fear mode).
 - Part of this process should be to stay as relaxed as you can when feeling slightly uncomfortable. That's a mindset that I hope you can imagine right now: **relaxed uncomfortableness**.

Ross Bentley: Speed Secrets Weekly 455



- Identify one thing to work on
 - Consistency: relax and focus on being as consistent as possible
 - Ignore lap time
 - Technique/skill
 1. Relax your hands and grip on the wheel
 2. Add vision points: further ahead
 3. Smoother brake release
 4. Pick one corner to practice on

Speed Secrets Weekly 455

NNJR What Does “Practice” Mean?



- **How you practice is more important than the *amount* you practice.**
- Purposeful practice:
 - Get outside your comfort zone but
 - do it in a focused way,
 - with clear goals,
 - a plan for reaching those goals, and
 - a way to monitor your progress.

Source: Ross Bentley, Speed Secrets 322



Practice Example: Vision

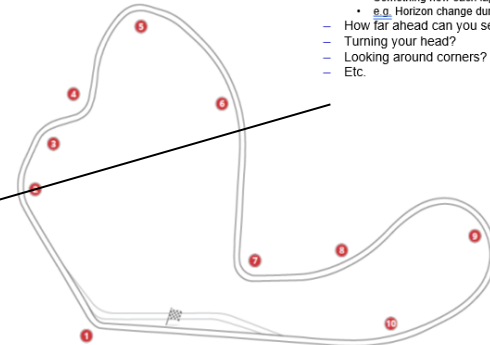


Improving Vision

- How far ahead can I see?
- Something new each lap

NJMP - LIGHTNING Deliberate Practice Worksheet: Vision 1

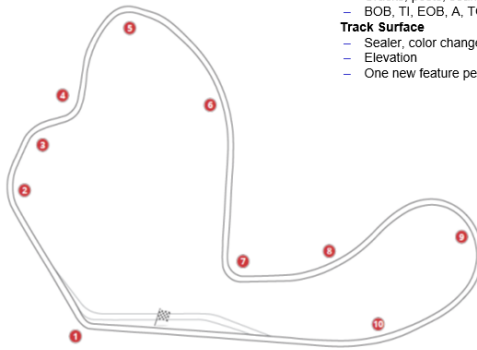
- General**
- Everything you see on and off track surface
 - Something new each lap
 - e.g. Horizon change during cornering
 - How far ahead can you see?
 - Turning your head?
 - Looking around corners?
 - Etc.



SPEED SECRETS
SpeedSecrets.com

NJMP - LIGHTNING Deliberate Practice Worksheet: Vision 3

- Reference Points**
- Not cones!
 - Cracks, posts, seams, curbs, etc.
 - BOB, TI, EOB, A, TO, in between
- Track Surface**
- Sealer, color change, etc.
 - Elevation
 - One new feature per lap



Remember: Capture learning immediately: in the first 10 minutes

- Write down what you saw, heard, felt
- Before lap times, data, video, socializing

SPEED SECRETS
SpeedSecrets.com

NJMP - LIGHTNING Deliberate Practice Worksheet: Vision 2

- Mirrors**
- Adjusted properly? (no blind spots)
 - How many cars behind?
 - End of front straight? Entering Turn ??
 - Closing speed: is car in mirror closer or further away?
 - What color(s) is/are cars behind?
 - Etc.
- Safety**
- How soon/far ahead can I see flag stations?
 - Bail out area(s) for each corner



Remember: Capture learning immediately: in the first 10 minutes

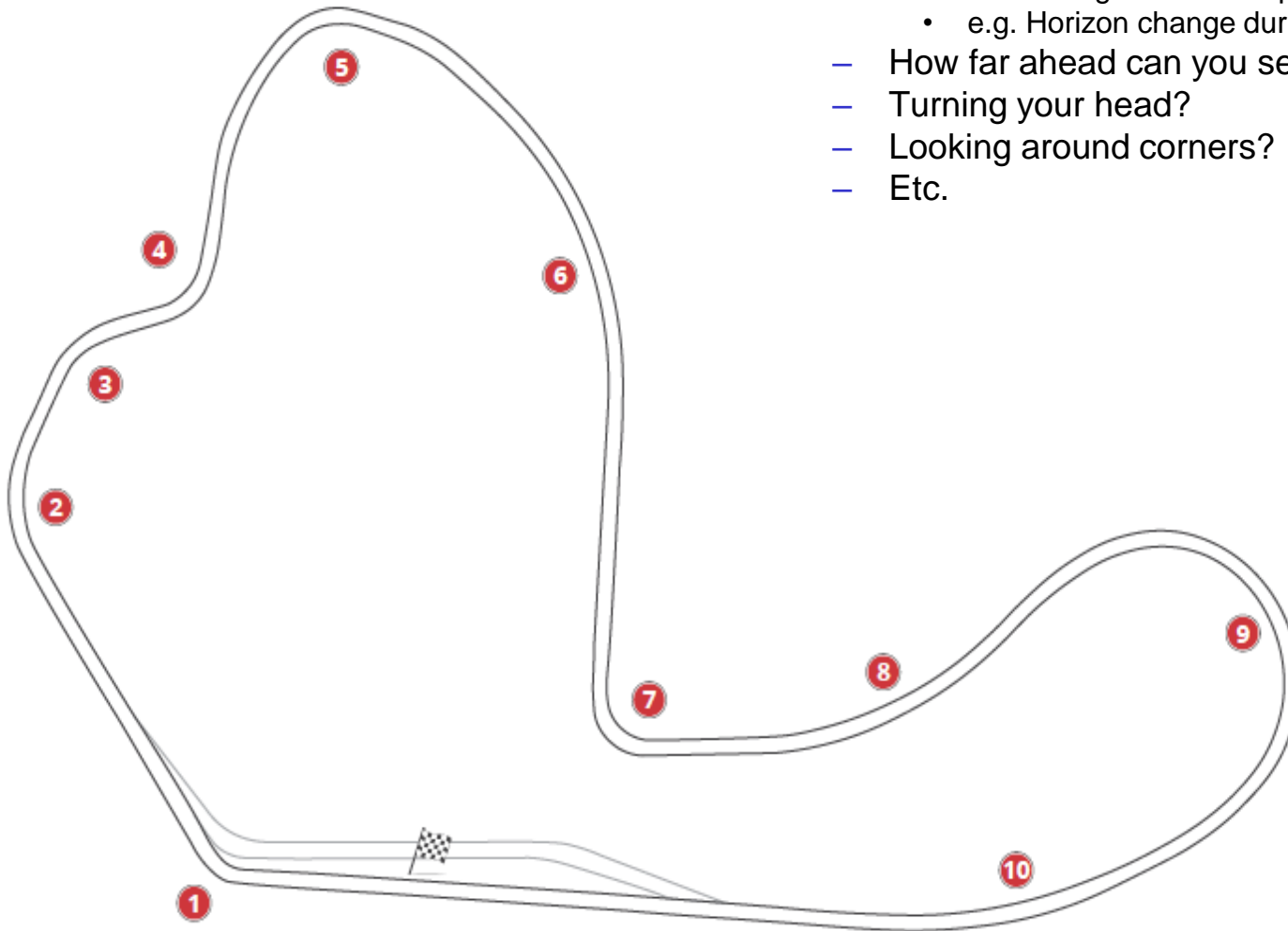
- Write down what you saw, heard, felt
- Before lap times, data, video, socializing

SPEED SECRETS
SpeedSecrets.com



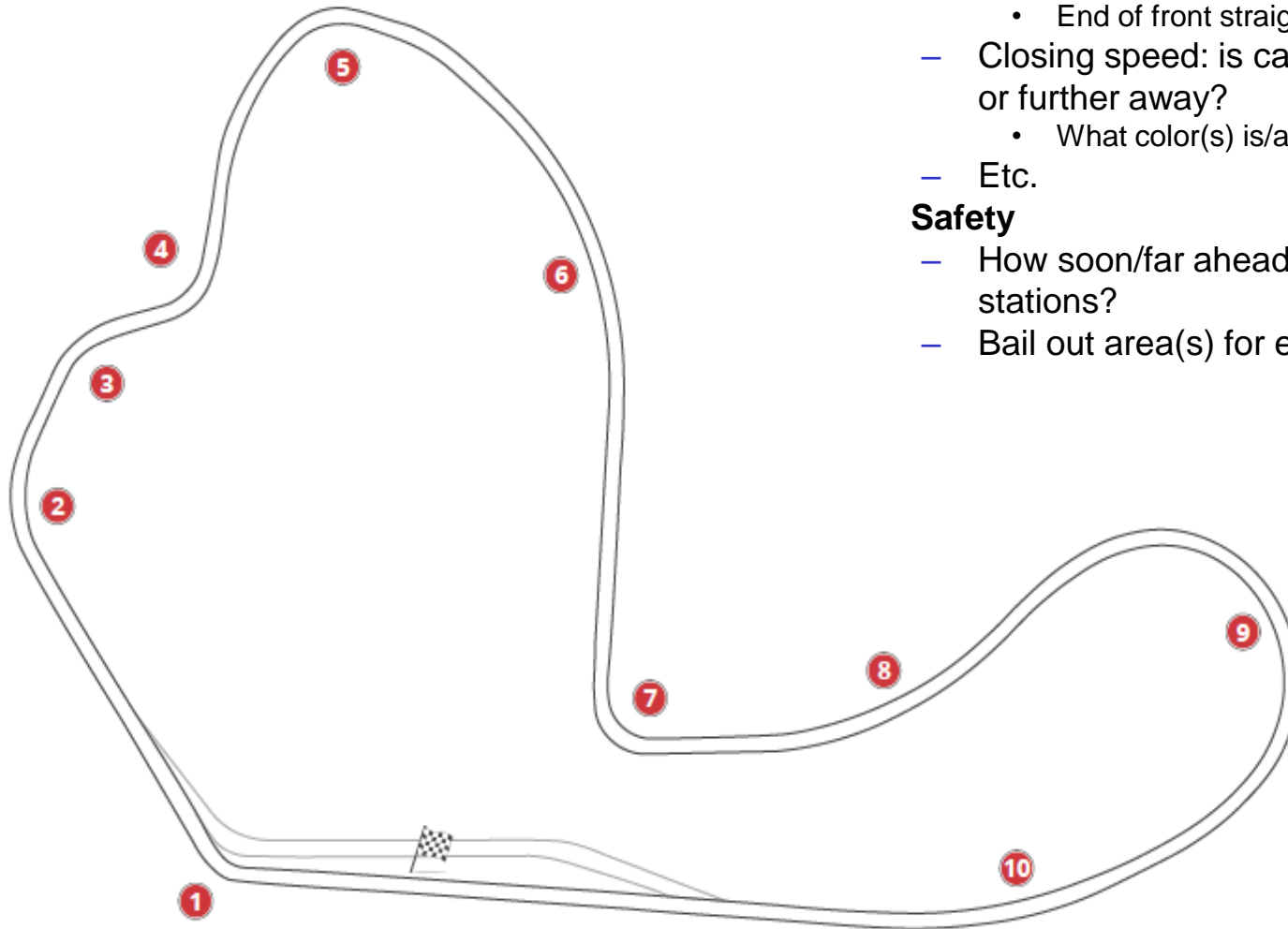
General

- Everything you see on and off track surface
 - Something new each lap
 - e.g. Horizon change during cornering
- How far ahead can you see?
- Turning your head?
- Looking around corners?
- Etc.



Remember: Capture learning immediately: in the first 10 minutes

- Write down what you saw, heard, felt
- Before lap times, data, video, socializing



Mirrors

- Adjusted properly? (no blind spots)
- How many cars behind?
 - End of front straight? Entering Turn 7?
- Closing speed: is car in mirror closer or further away?
 - What color(s) is/are cars behind?
- Etc.

Safety

- How soon/far ahead can I see flag stations?
- Bail out area(s) for each corner

Remember: Capture learning immediately: in the first 10 minutes

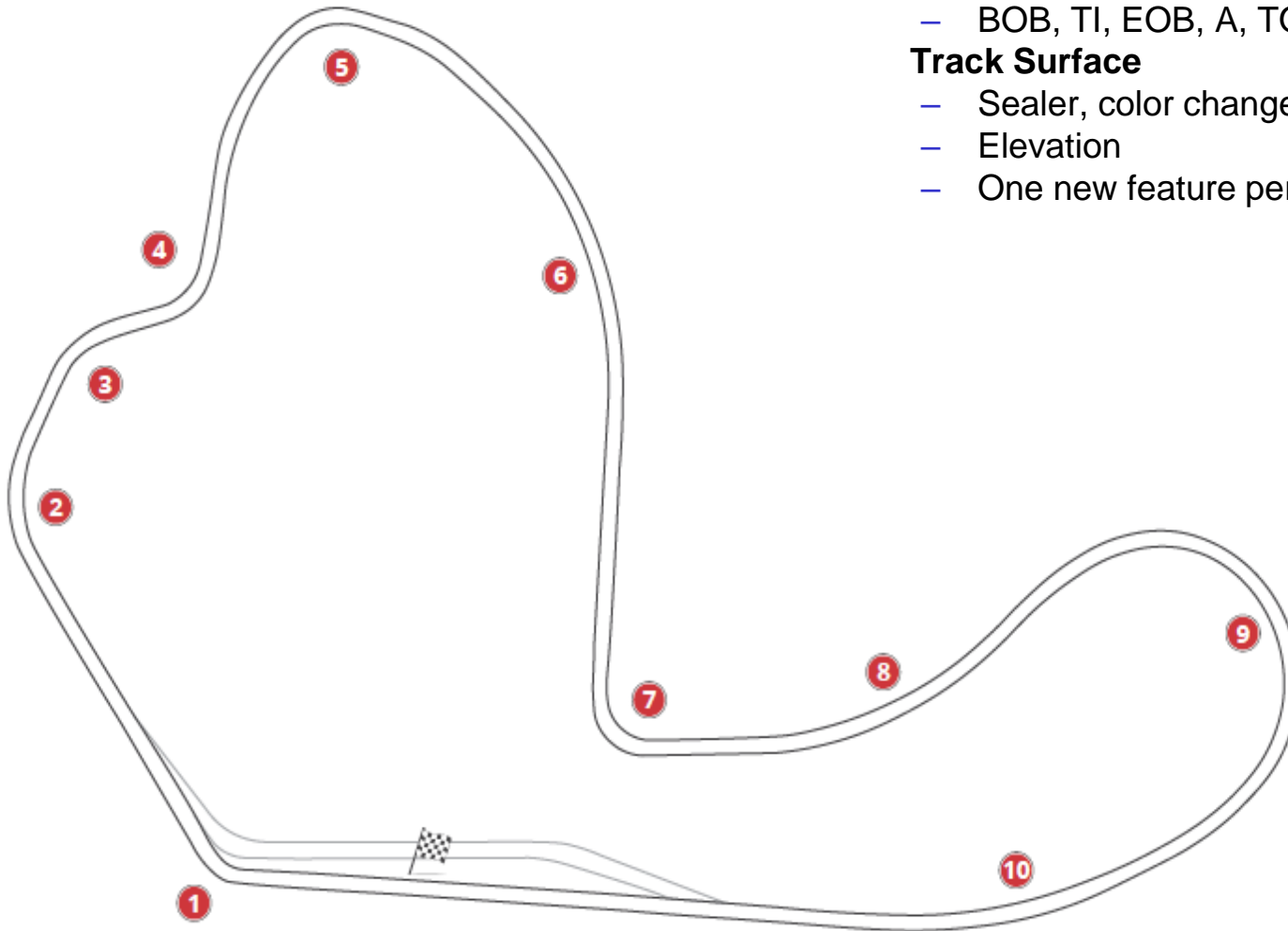
- Write down what you saw, heard, felt
- Before lap times, data, video, socializing

Reference Points

- Not cones!
- Cracks, posts, seams, curbs, etc.
- BOB, TI, EOB, A, TO, in between

Track Surface

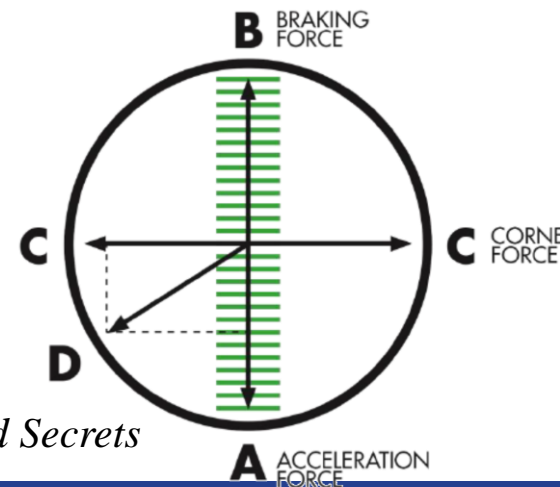
- Sealer, color change, etc.
- Elevation
- One new feature per lap



Remember: Capture learning immediately: in the first 10 minutes

- Write down what you saw, heard, felt
- Before lap times, data, video, socializing

- If it seems you are not improving, you are about to
- If you feel your driving is on a plateau and you're not improving, rest. Then push yourself, harder than ever before. Make yourself a little uncomfortable, just as you would when pushing to do one more rep when weight lifting. Then, rest again. Do something different, working outside your comfort zone. Rest. Give your mind time to process and turn what you struggled to do into something you do without thinking.



Source: Ross Bentley, *Ultimate Speed Secrets*

- Plateaus are a normal part of learning
- But avoid getting “stuck” on a plateau
 - Requires conscious effort
 - Analysis
 - Practice
 - May require pushing beyond your “comfort zone”
 - Delicate balance
- Improving/refining the basics “breaks through” a plateau

“It is not always possible to be the best, but it is always possible to improve your performance – gentle, smooth and progressive.”

--Sir Jackie Stewart