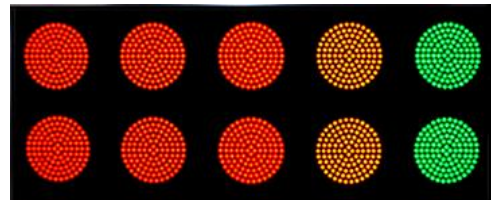




Race Starter's Handbook

Issue 1 September 2012



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1. Objectives of This Handbook

This handbook explains the role of the Starter at race meetings, and the start procedures for a number of racing formats. It recommends that training for a Starter should be a minimum of four races commencing in a lower category of cars and progressing to higher status events e.g. championships, working as an assistant to the starter at those events.

It is desirable that a Starter has spent some years as a more general race official, in that time gaining a good understanding of race procedures, communication systems and technique, the hierarchy of authority, and an understanding of the complexities of the various types of race cars.

This hand book defines the Starter's role and provides an overview of the procedures and the management systems used at a circuit.

This document, which has no regulatory value, emphasises the importance of safety and the Starter's role in maintaining the necessary safety standards.

2. What is a Start?

The word "Start" in this context refers to the procedure used to commence a race.

2.1 Types of Start - Details of start procedures are found in Race Meeting Standing Regulations.

- (I) Standing Start
 - where competing cars are assembled on the grid in a particular order, and the start signal is given while the cars are stationary.

- (II) Rolling Start
 - where cars are moving at a defined speed while approaching the start line and maintaining their position relative to each other, and are cleared to start by one of two means:
 - Extinguishing the red light.
 - Waving a green flag.

- (III) Handicap Start
 - where the field of cars on the grid is started at various times so that the faster cars, starting from the back of the field, will have to make up time as well as distance before they can reach the front of the field. The signal here is usually the National Flag being shown to each group of cars starting at the same time, while grid marshals hold back the cars starting later. It is essential to ensure the last car is started before the leading car completes its first lap.

(IV) Regularity Start

- where the cars are released from a marshalling area or the pit lane in single file in an order based on target times nominated following practice. The cars are sent on a formation lap and the event starts the first time the leader crosses the start line.

2.2 Starting Signals

In motor sport there are three primary signals used to indicate the start of a race:

- extinguishing the red light;
- waving the green flag; and/or
- lowering the National Flag.

It is essential that the significance of each of these signals is understood and committed to memory:

- extinguishing the red light indicates the commencement of a race.
- waving a green flag can indicate the start of a formation lap, the start of a rolling start, or a re-start after a safety car period.
- For traditional reasons, the National Flag may be used to start an historic race, or because of a failure of the lights system in a contemporary race.

2.3 Use of the National Flag

In many historic events the National Flag is used as a matter of tradition. It can also be used to start handicap races when the use of the lights would be impractical. In addition, if the light system fails for any reason the starter can revert to using the National Flag to start the race.

Always remember that motor racing is conducted in a very controlled situation and that the Starter should be (and also appear to be) in control at all times. Signals should be positive and perfectly clear to all persons. When a flag is used to start a race, it should be raised high above the Starter's head 5 seconds after the 5 second signal and then quickly dropped three to five seconds later to signify the start. If the start is aborted or delayed while the flag is raised, the flag should remain raised while it is furled, then lowered carefully so that the motion cannot be confused with the normal lowering of the flag. The last thing needed is some drivers thinking the race has started, and others knowing it has not.

2.4 Use of the yellow lights and/or yellow flags at the start of a race.

Yellow lights are used if there is an incident during the start procedure which necessitates the start to be aborted. This action may be initiated by the Starter

or race control (e.g. an incident elsewhere on the circuit will be reported by race control to the Starter who will activate the yellow lights) and display the "START DELAYED" sign. If the red lights are switched on when the start is delayed, they **shall** remain on, additionally the yellow lights shall be switched on. Race control will then direct whether the start will be re-commenced, aborted, or started behind the safety car. The race procedure will normally recommence from at least the one-minute signal.

2.5 Starting a race behind the Safety Car.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to start the race behind the safety car. This may be caused by an incident or, extreme weather which has made a "normal" start too risky. This process can be started before the formation lap or, if that has been commenced, after the start has been delayed. In this circumstance, the safety car will be brought to the front of the grid prior to the one-minute signal if not already in position at the front of the field on the grid. At the one-minute signal, the safety car driver will be directed to turn on the yellow roof-lights, which is the signal to all drivers that the race will start behind the safety car. At the same time, race control will direct all flag posts to display their SC signs and wave their yellow flags.

On the display of a green flag by the Starter, the field will commence the formation lap behind the safety car and the race (and lap count/time) will commence on the next occasion that the leading car crosses the start line whether the safety car remains at the front of the field or has withdrawn from the circuit.

If the race has been started behind the safety car, the field may circulate for one or more laps in file behind the safety car, during which the start will have been indicated, but during which the drivers shall continue to comply with the safety car regulations. The safety car may circulate for a number of laps until conditions are considered suitable for the safety car to be withdrawn.

When race control determines that the conditions which justified the safety car have been resolved it will direct the safety car to turn off its yellow lights and return to pit lane. When the safety car enters the pit lane all yellow flags and SC boards shall be withdrawn around the circuit. The Starter shall restart the race by waving the green flag to the field as the lead car approaches the start line. Each flag post shall display a green flag until the last car has crossed the start line.

3. Role of the Starter.

3.1 Starter's Responsibilities

The Starter is responsible for issuing the command to drivers to start their practice and qualifying sessions, and their race. He also implements many decisions during a race (e.g. directing a defective car to return to the pits) and for signalling the end of each session or race.

The role of a Starter at a commencement of a race includes the count-down procedure and associated display of the minute boards and siren. During the actual start itself, and for at least the ten seconds beforehand, the Starter should be fully focused on the task at hand. An Assistant Starter shall be present to back-up the Starter, and to carry out certain separate functions.

The Starter should also be familiar with the re-start procedure in the case of a red flag or when a safety car period is about to end.

3.2 Starter's Location

The Starter works from a platform located so that he can observe all the cars on the grid, without being in a place of danger because of its location. This platform, usually known as the starter's box, should be in view of each driver on the grid so that they should all be able to observe any signals given by the Starter. For this reason, it should not be directly backed by bright advertising signs or regularly have the sun visible in the eyes of the drivers when they look at the Starter. If the starter is not in full view of the drivers, then relay lights may be displayed to drivers towards the rear of the field. The starter should also be able to see the entire track between the barriers adjacent to the grid. Additionally, he should have a view of the grid marshals located on the signalling wall who hold yellow flags during the start procedure.

It is the responsibility of the Starter and Assistant Starter to ensure that the starter's box is correctly equipped and that an inventory of that equipment has been properly accounted for. This equipment should be stored in such a way that it is not a hazard to persons in the box, and so that each item can be selected accurately and quickly when required.

A check list of the Starter's normal operational requirements is also recommended.

As the Starter is positioned forward of the start line and should have direct communication with race control, it is essential that he follows race control directives in the lead-up to a race start. The view from the starter's box is usually limited with regard to the whole circuit, and on most circuits there is only a view of the Straight. In order to react quickly to situations when they arise, and to be able to anticipate a leader approaching the finish line, race control and the Starter have to rely on clear communication with each other.

3.3 Attention to Safety

The Starter's role is to satisfy himself that all the race cars are in a stationary position on the grid or, for a rolling start, maintaining position relative to each other as they approach the start line ready to start the race.

The actual start may be signalled in one of several ways including extinguishing the red light, displaying a green flag and waving the National Flag.

The Starter should be consistent in the procedures used – with a rolling start the green flag should be displayed when the lead cars reach an identified position relative to the start Line (usually about fifty metres before the line works well) unless the regulations require otherwise. With a standing start, the starter needs to be consistent with the timing from when the cars are stationary on the grid to the showing of the red light, then again consistent with the 3 to 5 seconds before the red light is extinguished. This consistency fosters a safer and fairer environment for all concerned, from on course officials, pit crews and drivers to spectators.

At most circuits, as well as starting the races, the Starter follows the directives of race control, writes up incident reports like any other official, displays car numbers with the appropriate flags that are communicated to him from race control, cooperates with race control during safety car periods and procedures while an incident is being dealt with on-track and the cars are circulating, communicates with race control and displays signal boards. The layout of the circuit and facilities will dictate just where the Starter is located while carrying out these various duties. An Assistant Starter may be engaged to assist with these actions.

3.4 Counting Laps

A Starter should know how to manually count laps. Some circuits have a monitor that counts the laps, however remember that this is not a fail-safe system and at times these can break down. Have several blank sheets of paper to write on.

A proven system involves writing the number of laps on a blank piece of paper and crossing them off as the leading car passes. For example, in a ten lap race, list the numbers from 10-1 on a page and cross off each number as the leading car passes the Starter's box. It is suggested that the Starter confirms with race control when the leader has commenced the last lap. Race control should also confirm that back to the Starter, and let the Starter know the identity and location on the track of the lead car.

A computer-generated check-off form is a tidy means of managing this function. For example:

Race 1 Formula Fords.10 laps.

Laps: 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1.

Race 2. HQ Holdens. 8 laps.

Laps: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1.

Race 3. Sports Sedans.10 laps.

Laps 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1.

Another method is to have an electronic stop watch, which can count laps each time the leading car crosses the finish line.

Remember to study the Race program the night before the meet.

2.5 Starter's Mechanical Understanding & other required Abilities

There are many categories of cars competing in motor sport. A Starter should be well in tune with competition cars and have a basic mechanical understanding of the various categories and their differing characteristics.

Possibilities to be considered include:

- i. Some cars do not have cooling system fans and can easily overheat on the grid causing the engine to stall.
- ii. Clutches can overheat, expire and may even explode if the car is held on the grid for too long. The driver may engage first gear when the five second signal is given by the Starter and may be only able to maintain this position for some seconds.

For these reasons, it is vital to respect precisely the 5 second signal and extinguish the red light between 3-5 seconds after it is activated and not delay it for a longer period - continue or abort the procedure, do not drag it out.

A Starter should be able to communicate clearly and accurately with race control and have a good understanding of the flag signals, should know the difference between a stationary start and a rolling start and how handicap races are started. The Starter is also required to have a full understanding of how to write an incident report, and to have a good knowledge of CAMS policy and procedures. Then, at the conclusion of events for the day, the Starter should remove all the starting equipment and sign-boards to their place of safe storage.

4. Consistency of procedure.

Always practice a consistent way of doing Starts. If the red lights are on and there is a stalled car on the grid leave the red lights **on**, switch the yellow lights **on** and direct the Assistant Starter to display the “START DELAYED” sign.

At this point, there are two things that can happen.

- i. The driver of the stalled car can re-start his motor;
- ii. Crash crew and marshals can either tow or push the stalled car off the circuit to a place of safety.

Race control will normally have a full view of the situation and shall issue instructions on how to proceed. In most cases, the start procedure will recommence at the one-minute signal.

If the start has occurred by extinguishing the red lights and a car has stalled, it is essential the Assistant Starter displays the “CAR STALLED” board to the alert the field.

The Starter and the Assistant Starter should always be careful to not make any unnecessary movements during the start procedure in case they are misunderstood by drivers.

At many events, grid marshals with yellow flags stand on the signalling platform. Should a car stall they wave the yellow flags. If it is difficult for the Starter to see along the line of grid marshals, it is recommended that a number of the grid marshals have radios. When a stall occurs the grid marshal nearest the stalled car should wave the yellow flag and make a radio call “STALLED CAR, STALLED CAR, STALLED CAR”. The Starter will then implement one of the alternative procedures available to him.

5. Organisation of the Starter’s Box.

5.1 Preparing Ahead of Time

The Starter’s box should be organised at least thirty minutes before the start of track activity. All the light functions should be checked.

The signal boards should be ready to hand, in the order which they will usually be used - 5 minute, 3 minute, 2 minute, 1 minute, 30 seconds, five seconds. The flags should also be easy to identify and retrieve. Equipment not used during the start should be kept well out of the way.

5.2 Radio Communications

The Starter should ensure that radio checks have been made with race control well in advance of being needed.

An example of radio communication between Starter and race control is:

Starter: "Race control, this is Starter"

Race control: "Race control receiving. Go ahead Starter".

Starter: "Race control I am doing one radio check."

Race Control: "Reading you loud and clear Starter."

Starter: "Thank you Race control. Over".

The Assistant Starter should carry out the same checks.

5.3 Board Signs

Boards signs for:

- 5 minutes.
- 3 minutes.
- 2 minutes.
- 1 minute.
- 30 second.
- 5 seconds.

are used at most race meetings, and should always be in place.

5.4 Flags

It is vital that all flags to be used by the starter are in place, at the start line or in the Starter's box, depending from where they will be displayed. This includes the National Flag because if there is a LIGHT FAILURE during the start, the Starter should be able to immediately revert to the National Flag to complete the start procedure.

5.5 Number Displays

The numbers from 0-9, three of each should be easily accessible for the Starter to display in conjunction with one of the black flags. It is essential to have these in case of race control calling penalties to be signalled.

5.6 Siren

A siren to indicate the count-down for the commencement of a race should be in place and tested at the start of the day. The siren should be mounted where it can be heard by all people involved in the start procedure – drivers, pit crew, marshals, and spectators.

5.7 Working Lamp

A small lamp for working under is handy, should the natural light become dim.

5.8 Personal Equipment

The following items of personal equipment should be in place:

- Water - a minimum of three bottles. This is to keep the officials well hydrated. This can be provided by the Secretary of the Meeting or where it is available from the circuit. Ask at the Secretary's office for further information.
- Sunburn cream. Even when the weather is overcast a large amount of UV can reflect off the earth surface and can cause sunburn. Protective cream can be provided from the secretary's office or at other places around the circuit. Ask at the Secretary's office for further information.
- A hat, to keep the sun off your head and avoid heat, but not one that could blow off at a crucial moment, or one that would interfere with your radio head-set.
- Safety glasses. During a start, each car's engine and transmission are under considerable stress. In addition the wheels may flick up dirt and dust. In some cases a bolt, screw or nut that has come off the car in a previous race can cause a lot of damage if it is flicked up during a start. Therefore it is highly recommended that safety glasses be worn in the Starter's box.
- Wet weather gear; as the weather can be unpredictable. Check what colour rain coat can be worn at that circuit as some circuits and races do not permit the wearing of certain colour rain coats. Officials' clothing colour should never be confused with flag signals.
- Steel cap boots: There are many varieties available in all colours and styles. Choose the ones that suit you and are comfortable. Safety boots are recommended to avoid injury from objects and machinery while using the pits as an access point to the Starter's box or to gain entry back into the pit or paddock area.
- Gloves and socks: If you suffer from the cold it is recommended that gloves be worn. Similarly good socks are recommended in winter. It is advisable to keep your head, hands and feet warm in the winter. As the Starter you spend all your day outside and you need to prepare for types of weather. It is essential that you consider the above items and act according to the prevailing conditions at each attendance.

6. The Starting Procedure.

The specifics of the Start Procedure are listed in the Race Meeting Standing Regulations in the CAMS Manual.

6.1 Starting Sequence for a Non-Championship Standing Start

- i. The cars have been gridded up to their positions via a grid marshal in the marshalling area before being allowed to go onto the circuit. The marshalling area is usually outside pit lane although it can be in pit lane. On direction from race control to the grid marshals, the field will be shown a one-minute board, then a green flag to indicate the start of the formation lap. In normal circumstances radio silence is to be maintained until after the start. At this stage, all emergency vehicles should be standing by. When the field arrives at the grid each car should move to and stop on its correct grid position without unnecessary delay.
- ii. Once the cars on the grid appear set the Starter should look at the rear of the grid, and wait for the green flag shown by the grid marshal there, indicating that all the cars are now stationary on the grid in their positions and all personnel are clear of the grid. At this time the Assistant Starter should have the "CAR STALLED" board ready to display if it is necessary.
- iii. The field is under starter's orders at the display of the 5 second signal. Once the field is under starter's orders, any car that is not on or approaching the grid, or in pit lane, cannot start in the race.
- iv. When the grid marshal has waved the green flag, the Starter should raise a hand with five fingers splayed or display the five second number board, either of which indicates five seconds until the red light is switched on. . A good tip for counting five seconds is to recite: "5000, 4000, 3000, 2000, 1000". At this time the Starter should be focusing on the two cars at the front of the grid. The Assistant Starter should be focusing on the rest of the field. The Starter should never use a stop watch, although the assistant may do so in controlled circumstances. The Starter should always be looking up at the race cars and counting down mentally.
- v. After five seconds, the Starter should put the hand down and simultaneously turn on the red light and count between three and five seconds before extinguishing the red light. At this stage the Assistant Starter should be at the ready with the "CAR STALLED" Board. This is the very critical stage of the Start where both parties should be totally focused.
- vi. Once the race is underway the Starter should wait until the emergency chase vehicles go past before readying for the next race before commencing his lap counting duties.
- vii. There can be the odd occasion where a mistake is made and quick thinking and action is required. In most cases the light systems are operated manually. It is always advisable to keep your fingers on the red light switch. There are times when it can become rather busy in the Starter's box and a slip of the fingers is always a

potential hazard. If the red light remains on but can be switched off within a second or two, do this and start the race. If the red light cannot be switched off for some reason, you should proceed as follows.

- Leave the RED light in the “ON” position, and switch on the yellow flashing light as well. The Assistant Starter will then display the “START DELAYED” sign.
- The Starter should also communicate the problem to race control and reach an agreement on the actions to be undertaken.
- The drivers will understand that there has been a problem and will wait for further instructions. If this happens, grid marshals should run down the grid and let each driver know what is to happen.
- When appropriate and under direction from race control, repeat the start procedure sequence from at least the one minute signal. This will require another formation lap, re-gridding, five second signal, etc.

6.2 Starting Sequence for a Championship Standing Start

The sequence is the same as for a non-championship standing start except that the field is sent from the marshalling area to the grid on an observation lap. On the grid, they are shown a 3 minute signal, then a 2 minute signal, then the one minute signal then the 30 second signal referred to above. They then proceed on their formation lap after the green flag is displayed and reform on the grid for the start.

6.3 Use of the Chequered Flag

At the end of the race, the Starter shall wave the chequered flag to the winner then the rest of the field.

6.4 False Start

Judges of Start are appointed to observe all cars at the start, and to judge whether cars have contravened the start procedure. After each start, they confer quickly, reach a decision regarding whether any driver made a false start, then report to the clerk of the course who will in turn take appropriate actions, and give instructions to the Starter.

The call from Race Control will sound like this:

Race Control: “Starter from race control”

Starter: “Race control, Starter receiving.”

Race Control: “One minute penalty for car 23, Car two-three (or other time penalty if appropriate).”

Starter: "Understood race control. One minute penalty for car 23, car two-three."

Race control may instruct the Starter to display boards indicating the penalty and car number. These boards are usually displayed to the whole field.

6.5 Signalling Other Penalties

There are times during a race when the Starter is called on by race control to signal a particular driver. For example a bad sportsmanship flag may be displayed to a driver for an infringement. See Appendix 3 for bad sportsmanship flag. Such a call will sound like this:

Race Control: "Starter from race control."

Starter: "Starter receiving."

Race Control: "Starter - bad sportsmanship flag to car 18, car one-eight"

Starter: "Understood race control- bad sportsmanship flag for car 18, car one-eight"

6.6 Relaying Race Control Directions

The Starter and start line officials will be called on to perform a variety of similar tasks by race control. Only two examples have been explained here but one should understand the nuances of racing and the outcome race control intends. The Starter should know what different flags mean and what they should be used for. The standard flag set is provided in Appendix 3.

7. Incidents.

There is a constant potential for incidents in motor racing but in most cases these are avoided because of the discipline which exists within the motor sport environment.

7.1 Incident

In motor racing, we tend to call each unintended or unexpected occurrences an incident which can be described as an event of any description, being major or minor, and having the potential to distract or interfere with drivers and other involved personnel, property, or procedures.

7.2 Starter's Role in response to an incident.

The Starter should be in communication with race control at all times and, if an incident occurs, be ready to follow race control's instructions, including stopping or restarting a race

7.3 Awareness of Race or Session Progress

The Starter and Assistant Starter shall be in contact with race control throughout the meeting, normally by radio. Race control will initiate many actions by telling the Starter and Assistant Starter what actions are to be taken. Some examples are:

- (i) If there is need to stop a race or other session urgently, race control will radio:

“Starter from race control, RED FLAG, RED FLAG, RED FLAG!”

The Starter shall immediately switch the red light ON and the Assistant Starter shall wave the red flag; each flag post will display a red flag. During a practice or qualifying session each car shall return to the pit lane. During a race, each car should return to the back of the starting grid and stop there. They will then either be re-gridded or sent back to their pits depending on how much of the race has been run or how serious the incident is.

Note that only race control has authority to order the red flag.

- (ii) If the field needs to be brought under control, but the situation is not such that the cars should be stopped, a safety car can be brought into service. In a safety car scenario the race control communications will sound like this:

Race Control: “Safety car, this is race control, safety car on standby.”

Safety Car: “Race control, safety car on standby.”

Race Control: “Safety car, safety car, safety car.

“Starter – display yellow lights and SC board.

“All posts – display yellow flags and SC boards”

Starter: “Race control, lights and SC board displayed”.

Race control will then order the safety car to scramble at the appropriate time, where possible so that it enters the track in front of the lead car.

At the end of a safety car period and when the safety car has returned to the pit lane, race control will call for the Starter to restart the race by use of the green flag. Once the safety car enters the pit lane and the race is about to restart, race control will radio for all yellow flags and SC boards to be withdrawn and the Starter will restart the race by waving the green flag to each car as it approaches the start line.

7.4 Reporting Incidents.

The Starter should report each incident he observes to race control, using normal radio protocol. He may be asked to provide a written report of an

incident to assist race control in dealing with that incident. Incident reports can be filled out during a race, if time allows, or as soon as possible in any case. Early reporting of the facts at the time that they were observed promotes clarity of recollection.

STARTER'S HANDBOOK APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Red Light/s













When the red lights are switched, there is from three to five seconds until the start of the race. The red lights will then be extinguished to signal the actual start of the race.

Appendix 2. Yellow Light/s



Yellow lights as a part of the starting light system are to indicate a problem with the start and are usually quickly followed by a START DELAYED board. If used at the start after red lights are on, the red lights stay on, as above.

Appendix 3. Standard Flag Signals

FLAG	MEANING	FLAG	MEANING
	<u>Chequered Flag</u> End of the race or practice session.		<u>Black & White Diagonal</u> This is shown with a number board to warn the driver that his track conduct is causing concern and he may be Black Flagged on further reports.
	<u>Blue Flag</u> To indicate that a quicker competitor is closing or trying to overtake.		<u>Yellow Flag</u> Danger, slow down sufficiently to ensure that full control of the vehicle can be retained. No overtaking. Be prepared to take evasive action or stop if necessary.
	<u>Red & Yellow Striped Flag</u> Slippery surface ahead.		<u>Red Flag</u> Immediately cease driving at racing speed and proceed slowly, without overtaking and with caution to the pits or start line as indicated by the marshals.
	<u>Green Flag</u> All clear, at the end of the danger area controlled by yellow flags. Also used to single the start of the formation/warm up lap.		<u>Black & Orange Flag</u> Shown with a number board to indicate mechanical problems of which the driver may not be aware. Driver must return to the pits on the next lap.
	<u>White Flag</u> A service or slow moving vehicle is on the circuit. This is used to indicate what section of the track the vehicle is on.		<u>Black Flag</u> Shown with a number board indicating to that driver that he must stop within one lap of receiving the signal and report to the Clerk of the Course. A penalty of exclusion may be enforced.

Appendix 4. Australian Flag



Should there be a failure of the starting lights during the start procedure the National Flag shall be used. This flag is normally as the start signal for historic events and regularity trials.

Appendix 5 - Boards.

CAMS has specification for each of these boards, with black on white being the basic standard, and with black on yellow for those with an urgent message for drivers. Contact CAMS for the current standards and sizes.

START DELAYED Board.

This is to be used when there is an incident at the start line and alerts the drivers that the start is delayed.



CAR STALLED Board.

A very important item, this is to be used if a car has stalled on the grid for any reason. This is to be displayed by the Assistant Starter.



SAFETY CAR Board

The SC board will be used on instruction from race control when there has been an incident during a race which does not require it to be stopped. When the safety car is circulating the SC board, together with a waved yellow flag, shall be displayed continuously at each flag post. This sign has a white background NOT a yellow background



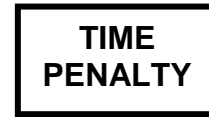
STOP/GO Penalty Board

When displayed with the black flag and car number, directs the driver to stop in pit lane for a period of time.



TIME PENALTY Board

When shown with a car number, this indicates that the driver has been given a time penalty which will be applied to the results.



LAST LAP Board

Advisory board to alert drivers that it is the last lap. Not used at all circuits.

