

Start Your Engines: All About Motor Racing

Wave the Green Flag

Motor racing is a sport. Drivers race special cars. Motor racing is very popular. Many people watch it on television.

There are many kinds of motor racing. Big cars race. Small cars race. Trucks race. Karts race. Some races are long and some are short.



Stock Cars

Stock Car Racing

Stock car racing is the most popular kind of motor racing in the United States. Stock cars race on oval tracks. They drive hundreds of laps before a winner crosses the finish line.

Stock cars look like cars you might see on the road, but they are very different. Stock cars have only one seat. The seat is for the driver. Stock cars are also much faster than street cars. Some stock cars can drive as fast as 200 miles per hour (**mph**).

Formula One Racing

Formula One (F1) racing is another kind of motor racing. Just like in stock car races, F1 cars race around a track hundreds of times before a winner crosses the finish line. But these cars are even faster than stock cars. They can drive as fast as 220 mph. F1 cars have open **cockpits**, which is the space around the car's driver.

Formula One cars also look different. They have large “wings” on the front and back of the car. These “wings” aren’t actually wings. In fact, they work the opposite of wings. They help keep the car on the ground instead of in the air.



Formula One Race Car

At high speeds, wind pushes down on the wings. This helps keep the car from flipping.

Drag Racing

Drag racing is different from stock car and Formula One racing. Cars race in a straight line, not on an oval track. Any kind of car can race in a drag race.

The fastest drag race is the Top Fuel race. These cars are very fast. They can drive as fast as 330 mph. They use a special kind of fuel. These cars are long and narrow. This helps them drive in a fast, straight line.

Just before a drag race, drivers do a **burnout**. The driver spins the back wheels. The wheels spin so fast that the tires melt on the track. The melted tires help the car start fast when the race begins.

Top Fuel races are very loud. They are louder than a jet plane. People cover their ears as a Top Fuel car drives by. Top Fuel races are also very short. Tracks are only 1,000 feet long. Races are over in four seconds!

The Checkered Flag

Many people like to watch the different kinds of racing. They like to see cars drive fast. They like to watch drivers make turns and cross the finish line. After all, it's people who make the cars go 'round.

Glossary

burnout — when a driver spins a car's tires in place to melt rubber onto the track and make a fast start to a race

cockpit — the space around a driver, including the steering wheel, gearshifts, and dashboard

mph — miles per hour