

# **Pacenotes for the uninitiated**

by Coral Taylor

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## **IDIOTS or TRUST**

The Driver/Co-Driver relationship is a special one that's based upon professional respect, total trust and total commitment.

So when Ed Ordynski asked in Queensland last year "What sort of idiot would you have to be to be a co-driver?" the answer was obvious -someone with total trust in his/her driver!

So I ask: "What sort of idiot would you have to be to be a driver who will `hold it-flat! over the blind crest at 200 km/h on the say-so of the person sitting in the left hand seat?"

Obviously someone with total trust in his/her co-driver!

## **PACENOTED RALLIES & INEXPERIENCE**

The Australian Rally Championship Super Series is about to get underway, and we are very fortunate to have a series-of fully pacenoted events. In effect this means we have the opportunity in this country to produce many driver/co-driver pairings that will work together and develop the necessary teamwork skills within the car that can lead to success.

In New Zealand, for example, the only "pacenoted" event is their round of the World Championship, plus this year, a "training" rally to help prepare crews for the "noted" WRC event.

## **THE SYSTEM**

If you are using pacenotes for the first time my suggestion is to initially use the official notes offered by each event's organisers.

Using notes is one thing. Writing the notes in the first place is quite another, and the writing of good notes can only come from experience.

So if you start by using someone else's notes, at least you will begin to get a "feel" for how it works.

Pacenotes are very individual to each crew, and eventually; you and your driver together will determine the system you wish to use. Probably the most common form of notes used in Australia is the "One to Six" system which Neal and I use. Ed Ordynski uses a "One to Ten" system and Michael Guest uses the more British "descriptive" system, which rather than grading a corner by 'a number will use words such as fast, fiat; easy and hairpin to describe each bend. In many ways our "One to Six" system also combines a descriptive system in that we include many other words: e.g. crest, bump, opens, tightens, don't cut, etc. etc.

So, you need to decide which system you want to use, however; I think most of the notes supplied by ARC organisers last year were the "One to Six" system. Pacenote systems constantly evolve - even after four years of competition, together, Neal and I are still adding or slightly changing the way we do things. I'm always on the lookout for a good idea to be picked up and incorporated into our existing system.

Talk to lots of people - and pick out the good bits!

# RECONNAISSANCE

For reconnaissance the priorities are:

- be organised,
- be methodical, and
- be thorough.

Our ARC rallies only allow for a one day recce and, this means there is no spare time at all. It's usually a long hard day, and the day will be much more successful if you've done all your preparation beforehand:

Prepare a "recce schedule". Sometimes this is partly done for you by virtue of the time windows allocated to each stage. But make sure you've worked out the most economical (in time and distance) way, of making the three passes of each stage,

Often you recce the stages out of actual running order, so you cannot totally follow the road book, although it is one of your main reference guides. For example, Often there will be a stage which requires three passes all in one hit, to most economically use your time. Therefore you will need to work out how you will get from the end of stage back around to the start again.

Sometimes organisers will supply this information in the form of a route chart for your convenience, others may not. Some events supply maps which will be good enough for this, however, I always take my own maps, just to make sure, and the first job in recce preparation is to plot the course of the rally, and then sit back and visually get a feel for how best to tackle the day: Often the event layout will make it obvious that a few stages are best done together as one group:

It's no good doing this on the run – you won't have enough time to sit on the side of the road trying to decide whether to do stage five or stage seven next, and then work out how to get there. Always remember that our conduct during recce has a huge bearing on, the future of our sport. The locals sometimes lose their sense of humour after 60 recce cars pass by their gate three times in one day. Recce isn't practice; and the roads are not closed. It's a must to treat the recce with a great deal of respect.

## FEED THE DRIVER!

One final point on pre-recce, preparation. Pack a lunch and some drinks as you'd be surprised how much of your day can be lost queuing in takeaways because your driver is starving hungry and can't possibly manage another stage before eating!

And fuel up the night before, leave early, and be at the start of the first stage on time.

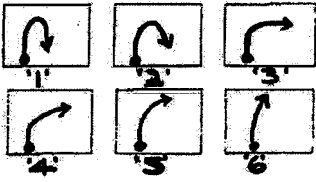
## USING SUPPLIED NOTES

Assuming you are using the supplied notes, don't hesitate to add your own individual pieces of information or to change them a little. Mind you, don't overcomplicate things, remember to keep it simple. There's a lot of information to feed to your driver - a constant stream of words for you - and the driver needs to take this all in, whilst concentrating on driving at the same time.

You're basically trying to feed the driver a clear and concise picture of what's coming up ahead, almost like a video running before his eyes.

## ONE TO SIX

The 'one to six' system works on grading the severity of a bend from one to six. In a nutshell, liken it to the numbers on the clockface, A 'one' is a very, very tight corner --a tight hairpin a 'three' (like the clock, it's a 90 degree corner), and a 'six' is a very slight bend in the road.



## IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING (or the trees!)

The most important ingredient of reading notes to your driver is the timing of the delivery. You must always know exactly where you are on the road, relative to where you are on the notes. It's no good reading on too far ahead and obviously it's no good telling him it's a "Right Two" when you are already ON the "Right Two" - or more to the point, if you're this late in calling you won't be ON the "Right Two", you'll be in the trees!

The rule of thumb is to call the corners one ahead at a time. For example:

RIGHT 4 then LEFT 4 into RIGHT 3

As you are approaching the entry to the Right 4. It is at this moment you would be calling "then left 4". And as you are entering the Left 4 you would be calling "into right 3".

However, there are often times when calls happen very quickly and need to be called more than one at a time. For example:

RIGHT 4 then LEFT 4 RIGHT 3

As you are approaching the entry to the Right 4, it is at this moment you would be calling "then left 4 right 3".

The calls that are grouped together and underlined are always treated as one call. In the above example, if you waited until, you were on the left 4 before calling the right 3, it would be far too late - you're already there.

In the case of a fast section of road that comes down to a very tight corner, obviously your driver needs to know about the tight corner well enough in advance. For example:

RIGHT 6 into LEFT 5 then RIGHT 6 into LEFT 6 into LEFT 2

Once entering the LEFT 5 the call would be "then right 6 into left 6 into left 2".

With an emphasis on the left 2! If the call for the left 2 was given once on the left 6 most likely there would not be sufficient time to slow down enough to take the very tight left 2.

## INTO OR THEN

On our notes, an "into" is interpreted as one corner which flows INTO the next - where the attitude of the car from the proceeding corner has some bearing on setting the car up for the following corner.

Whereas "then" is a brief break between the corners. Something like a pause between the action. Once the corner finishes, there will be a short straight before you need to worry about the next corner. For longer straights we use a distance, like 100m 200m, etc.

## CONCENTRATION

Keeping your place on the notes comes down to concentration: it's one of the key attributes of a good co-driver (after the ability not to suffer motion sickness!): Concentrate on concentrating!

## SAMPLE LEGEND

A sample legend is listed below. The symbols used vary between systems. Some people use "and" instead of "into" and similarly with dots and arrows.

You will need to study the legend carefully of the notes you use. These are listed below just as a sample:

Abv: Meaning	Example	Meaning
R: Right	R4:	Right 4
L: Left	LA:	Left 4
K: Keep	KR4:	Keep right 4
T: Turn	TR4:	Turn right 4
•: Into	R4•L4:	Right 4 into Left 4
→: Then	R4→ L4:	Right 4 then Left 4
<: Opens	R4<:	Right 4 opens
>: Tightens .	R4>:	Right 4 tightens
C: Flat crest	C•R6:	Flat crest into right 6
/c: Over crest	R4/c:	Right 4 over crest
N: Narrow	R4N:	Right 4 narrow
z: Slippery if wet	R4z:	Right 4, slippery if wet
Lg: Long	Lg R4:	Long right 4
100: 100 metres	R4 100 L4:	Right 4 100m Left 4

## PACENOTING EQUIPMENT

**Note pads:** an individual choice. Commonly an A4 size pad; although 1 use a stenographers pad - but lots of people laugh! Pencils: much easier than pan or felt tip - you can change notes easily with a rubber. I use a 0.9mm pencil with 2B leads, but I've seen some of the WRC crews actually use a much thicker pencil - up to 5mm. Again an individual choice, The fell tip pens can be a disaster, especially when They get wet and the notes run into one big black blob ..... I speak from experience.

**Maps:** maps covering the rally area, and a street directory of the city you start from is a great idea too. There's always a need for the service crew to find "Fred's Garage" somewhere in a strange town, not to mention the way out of town during recce if you don't happen to be starting from Rally HQ and therefore can't use the roadbook straight up.

Some sort of **briefcase** that makes it easy to organise all the paperwork in the car during recce. You'll be bouncing from pacenote books to the roadbook and back to the maps, and then you'll need a new lead for the pencil: (I've actually considered designing a car office!) Some of those sticky, brightly coloured page tags are great for marking the start of stages in your note books - easy to quickly open at a given stage

## **IMPORTANT NOTE: Don't fudge it!**

If you fall off the notes, alert your driver immediately that you are "off notes": This can't be stressed enough. Never continue calling notes if you only `think' you are in the right place - it's a recipe for disaster.

Make it known you are off notes and allow your driver to drive accordingly. The total trust I spoke about between driver and co-driver extends particularly to this point.

A driver can only place his trust in you if he knows that the information you give him will be 100% correct and he'd much rather drive a little slower for a while, whilst you get your place again. It's a much cheaper and effective option than major panel damage when the Right 6 really turned out to be a Right 3!

It's a good idea to have as many 'permanent markers' as possible in your notes, eg: signposts or landmarks that make it easy to confirm your place.

## **HAVE FUN**

Pacenoting is a learning curve, and there's much to learn. I could probably fill the whole of ARN on the topic: This is just a brief introduction.

Start out with lots of patience and one thing is guaranteed - you'll love it!

- Coral Taylor