

The caterhamracer.com Race Drivers Handbook - November 2021



Welcome to online Caterham racing.

You may have watched some of the racing online, you may have been part of some of the racing already or you may have come across this site by word of mouth, but this handbook offers the best way to get up to speed quickly and understand what the caterhamracer.com service is all about and what you need to do to become a good community member.

We're splitting this Handbook down into sections. Starting right from the beginning for drivers who are coming to Sim racing from scratch or who haven't used Assetto Corsa before. We then move, through to how you can get your VARDS (our virtual equivalent of getting your race licence.) And onto the finer points of how you book yourself onto Championships and races. We end with some really useful tips and tricks to help you get to the front of the grid.

So, pull those belts down tight one last time, and let's go racin'.

Guiding principles

We want to create an environment and service where the act of racing is as true to life as possible.

Decisions are made based on what produces great races and racing and, hopefully, an enjoyable experience.

Anyone using this service to practice, qualify or race is agreeing to the following.

Racing

- You will **never**, at any time while using our servers, **deliberately** crash, ram, hit, nudge or otherwise affect someone else's race or practice session.
- You agree that you will not abuse the trust we place in drivers by turning off car damage.
- Race as if you were paying for repair bills. We rely on you to maintain a realistic approach and make an overtake move only when it is viable and will not rely on any contact in order to independently take the next corner. Your overtake should be completed without forcing another driver to leave the racing surface. We expect all drivers to tend towards the side of patience and caution.
- You are expected to remove yourself from races if your ping becomes high or unstable. Just like a mechanical, it may not be your fault, but continuing to race with a high ping is just unfair for everyone around you.

Administrative

- If you have entered a race event but can't attend, you should withdraw from the event as soon as possible.
- Booking for an event and then failing to turn up will result in strikes against your account and could also result in point penalties in the case of Championship events.

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Section 1 - The Absolute Basics

Minimum requirements

To get racing with us you will need:

- A Windows PC (with a suitable spec. to run the Assetto Corsa game. See link to game below for minimum and recommended settings.)
- A steering wheel and pedal setup.
- A copy of Steam installed on your PC (<https://store.steampowered.com/>)
- A copy of the Assetto Corsa game purchased through Steam.
(https://store.steampowered.com/app/244210/Assetto_Corsa/) You only need the base game to get going (£15.49 at time of writing.)
- A stable and reasonably fast internet connection.

Recommended extras

Other things most drivers are using:

- A copy of 'Content Manager'. This is free to download but there is a voluntary payment process that we encourage our drivers to use if they find this brilliant app useful. The application is another way to control the Assetto Corsa game and is generally considered much better than the in-game menus - which are buggy and slow.
<https://assettocorsa.club/content-manager.html>
- A microphone so you can talk to the other drivers via Discord. (More on Discord later.)

Entirely optional extras

- A ridiculously expensive simulator rig.
- VR Headset.

Section 2 - From Beginner to Pro

Follow these steps, and you'll be well on your way to your first online race.

Get the game running correctly in single player

Once you have the game installed, the first aim should be to ensure you can load the game and run an offline practice session using one of the in-built cars and tracks.

This will ensure that:

- Your game is running OK.
- Your controls are working OK.
- You are starting to learn how the game works - interface and options.

Once you are comfortable with running offline sessions using in-game cars and tracks, it's time to get modding.

Install your first car and track modifications

Assetto Corsa comes with a set of cars and tracks in-built. However, the Caterham 420R and Caterham Academy cars that we use in our races are not part of this list.

Therefore, to play the game with these cars, we need to install a game modification (or mod.)

Essentially, these mod files are just ZIP or RAR folders containing the data to generate a car or track in the game. The most important part is find the correct version of the mod and then add it to the game in the correct folder.

Finding the correct mod files

The best place to go to make sure you are downloading the correct files is the caterhamracer.com website and visit the 'Downloads' sections. You will see that there are different sections for Tracks, Cars and Mods.

The links will take you through to the location where you can download the files you need. Often times this is the RaceDepartment.com website, where you do need to register for a free account to unlock the download.

IMPORTANT: As with any files downloaded from the internet, you should ensure that you scan the download for any virus' before installing them.

Once downloaded, there are two things you can do to place the files in the correct place.

1. You can manually install the file:
 - a. Open the zip / rar file.
 - b. Locating your game install location.
This is often `c:\SteamLibrary\steamapps\common\assettocorsa\`
 - c. If it is a car, open up the `\content\cars\` folder.
Drag your new car out of the ZIP / RAR file into this folder.
The same is true of tracks, apart from they go into `\content\tracks\`
2. Get Content Manager do the work for you:
 - a. Simply drag and drop the downloaded ZIP/RAR file over the Content Manager window and follow the prompt. (Click the green lines icon in the top right corner of the Content Manager window to manage the installation.)

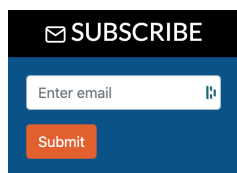
Ensuring the mods have been installed correctly

Now that you have installed the modifications, you can start the game again, select the new car and track combination in a practice session and confirm everything works correctly.

If so, you're making great progress and are well on your way to getting your VARDS.

Make sure we can communicate with you

We try hard to communicate changes and new features/processes to all our drivers. To do that efficiently, please make sure that you keep checking **caterhamracer.com** for updates.

A blue rectangular form with a dark blue header containing a white envelope icon and the word "SUBSCRIBE" in white. Below the header is a white input field with the placeholder text "Enter email" and a small blue icon on the right. At the bottom is an orange "Submit" button.

On the website homepage, you will see the option to enter your email address and subscribe to our mailing list. We send out all important announcements and let you know all the upcoming events once a week, directly into your in-box.



Please also Like, follow and subscribe to the Facebook Page, Twitter Feed and YouTube channel.

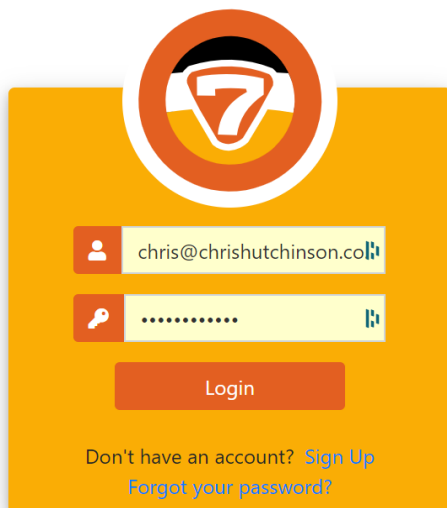
Take your racing online

It's now time to get a little more serious. You've proved you can load the game and play it in single player offline, but how will you cope against real humans? Time to find out.

Create your account on **caterhamracer.com**

You need to create an account on the website as the Server Name and Password are stored members area, along with the booking system for joining events and Championships.

Click on the 'Members' link in the top navigation.

A yellow rectangular login form. At the top is a circular logo with an orange border and a white background containing a stylized red and black '7'. Below the logo are two input fields: the first has a person icon and the text "chris@chrishutchinson.co.uk", the second has a key icon and a series of dots. Below these is an orange "Login" button. At the bottom, there is a link "Don't have an account? Sign Up" and a link "Forgot your password?".

You will see a login box presented.

Click on the 'Sign Up' link that appears at the bottom of the login widget.

Fill out the registration form, ensuring that all required fields are completed.

When you successfully submit the form, an email will be sent through to the email address entered containing a verification link.

As soon as you have verified your link, you will be granted access to the members area.

Fill out your driver profile

On the left of the members page, you will see a small menu, including the 'Update profile' menu link.

In order for you to pass your VARDS, you will need to have correctly filled out your profile, including linking your profile to your Steam Community ID. There is a link next to this item on the profile form that tells you how you can find your Steam Community ID to enter.

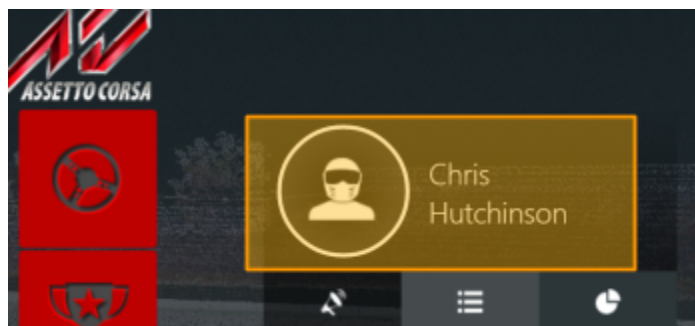
Setting your driver name

To race on the servers, it's a requirement that you race using your real name. It makes a huge difference to the drivers and the viewers of races if they can understand who is who, rather than having to work out who 'BloodThirst69' is.

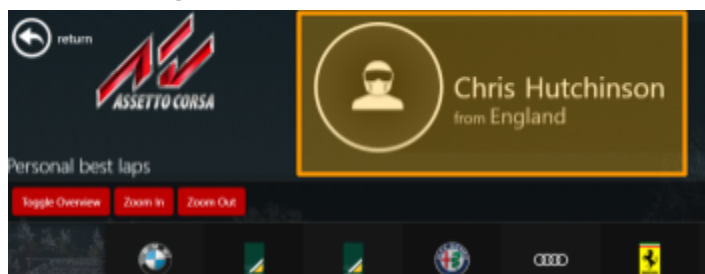
There is the 'in-game' way to change your driver name as well as the 'Content Manager' way.

In game

From the main menu, click on your driver name / profile picture.



Then click it again on the next screen...



1. Change to your real First Name.
2. Change to your real Last Name.
3. Make sure no nickname is entered.
4. Click the 'Save' button on the right.



Content manager

1. Click 'Settings' in the top menu.
2. Select 'Content Manager' in the secondary menu.
3. Select 'DRIVE' in the left menu.
4. Enter your real name in the 'Name' field.
5. Make sure the 'Online name' box is unchecked.



OVERFLOW SERVER

Name: CRacerOverflow

Pass: CaterhamMotorsport

In the members area, depending on the events that are taking place, you will see a block, or blocks, containing the name and password for an online server, similar to shown on the left.

The name and the password will vary over time, so you should always check the members area before trying to connect to the server.

IMPORTANT: **Never** share the server name/password with anyone. All drivers will have access to their own allocated server details in the members area. If you are asked for the password, please direct that person to their members area so they can find the details themselves.

On the homepage of the caterhamracer.com site, it will tell you what content the server is currently running. You will need to make sure that these mods are correctly installed into your game, otherwise you will not be able to join the server.

Note: Always make sure to use the links on the site to find the mods. Oftentimes, there are more than one version of a track out in the wild and using these links ensures you install the one the server is running.

If you do not have the correct content installed, you will see 'Content Mismatch' errors and you won't be able to join the server.

ON THE SERVER NOW...



Caterham 420R, Knockhill

Track: Knockhill (Clockwise)

Car: Caterham 420R (Fixed Setup)

Downloads Required: [Caterham 420R](#),
[Knockhill](#)

Time to connect

You can connect to the Server either by using the standard game. Or you can use Content Manager to join a server. Most people racing will concur that Content Manager makes the whole process painless and is a complete contrast to the in-game method, which is very slow and full of bugs.

Connecting through the main game

1. From the main menu, select the 'Drive' icon on the left.
2. Click the 'Online' menu option that appears at the top of the screen.
You will need to wait for a while as the server list is populated. It is possible that the game crashes at this point, but be patient initially.
3. Enter 'CRacer' into the filter box. (Or another name if the server name has changed since this handbook was written.)
4. Select the correct server so it expands.
5. Enter the server password.
6. Click 'Join'



Connecting through Content Manager

1. Click on 'Drive' in the main menu.
2. Click on 'online' in the secondary menu.
3. Click the Search icon, enter the server name and press enter on your keyboard.
4. Select the correct server from the list.
5. Enter the correct server password.
6. Click the 'Join' button.
7. When you return to this page in future, your search will still be there so you can just click to bring up the filtered server list.



Section 3 - Rules to follow online

Part of the mission of the site is to offer racing that's as real as we can get it. That means that there are some do's and don'ts that you should be aware of when racing at caterhamracer.com

Remember that you are racing real people

First and foremost, please keep in mind that you are racing against real people who are putting time and energy into racing. That's time they could be spending doing something else. **Please don't deliberately crash, ram, hit, nudge or otherwise affect someone else's race or practice session.**

Damage is reduced in game - don't abuse this

We often run with damage off or reduced in game. The primary reason for this is that if someone has spent the previous 2 days practicing and preparing for an event, then to be taken out by an incident in the first corner that's not of their making is absolutely devastating. It also means that the number of people having to DNF is far higher, and we'd rather have people still in the race and battling.

This is, however, open to abuse as it is perfectly possible to hit someone out of your way with limited consequence to your race.

We expect and rely on each of you to drive responsibly and not to abuse this mechanic. We have a judicial process to penalise drivers post event and we monitor driving standards closely.

Own and accept responsibility for your ping

Your 'ping' is a number that lets you know how fast your computer is able to communicate with the server. The faster it is able to do this, the better your connection is and the more accurately your position on track will be represented in game.

If you start to get a large ping number, this means that the server will not know accurately where you are. Other drivers on the server will start to see your car speed up and slow down and otherwise warp and jump around. This makes racing against you impossible and will nearly always end up in an accident.

You are able to see your ping in two ways.

-
1. In the game, you will see a number in the top right of your screen. This number changes colour depending on your ping value. If it's green, you're OK. But if it goes orange or red, then you have issues with your internet connection.
 2. In the pitlane, if you bring up the times screen, you will see the ping number of all drivers on to the right end of the timing table.

Please use the following as a guide:

- Pings in the range of 1-25 generally cause no issues.
- Pings from 26-50 can start to cause issues where your car is not smooth on track and racing closely with you becomes difficult.
- Pings from 51-100 mean that your car will be unstable on track and even racing at a distance from you now carries risk.
- Any ping over 100 is not possible to race.

You need to own and accept your ping as if it were a mechanical problem with your car, which is now leaking fluid all over the racing line. If your ping rate goes high, you should therefore pull off track and if it doesn't recover quickly, head back to the pits.

Just like a mechanical, it may not be your fault, but continuing to race with a high ping is just unfair for everyone around you.

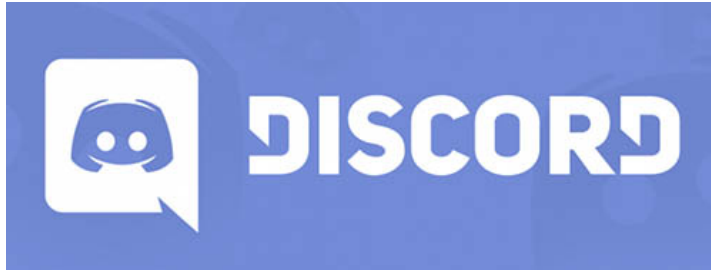
Race as if you were paying for repair bills

One of the things that acutely focuses the mind in real world racing is the consequence of an accident both physically and in the pocket.

We don't have those consequences in the sim world, so it is easy to be too blase about trying audacious and, frankly, ill judged overtakes.

We rely on you to maintain a realistic approach and make a move only when it is viable and tend towards the side of patience and caution.

Join the Discord channels



In the members area, you will see a link to the Discord group. Discord is a piece of software that allows you to communicate with other drivers via text chat and also voice chat. Please make good use of this to become a good community member and also so you can hear important announcements through a race evening.

During practice sessions and non-official races, it's generally ok to chat about whatever you'd like with your fellow drivers. However, **when it comes to official qualifying and races, it is bad practice to chat freely over voice comms.** Any talking should be to help the flow of the race - for example to caution of an incident blocking the road or for a backmarker to let the driver behind know they will keep to the side.

There is a 'General' voice channel that is for general chatter and there is a 'Race' channel which is push-to-talk only and should be used in official sessions.

Also, we have a support text channel that you can use to get help setting up the game and an announcements channel that contains service updates.

Section 4 - Getting your VARDS licence

In the real world, you have to pass your ARDS test to be able to get your racing licence and therefore get to join races.

We have the virtual equivalent of that test on caterhamracer.com that you need to pass before you are able to book onto events and Championships.

The VARDS checklist

Rather than taking a test, we have a checklist that we will be confirming against your profile. If you've read and followed this guide so far, you will be well on your way to passing your VARDS.

Here's the checklist we use:

- Driver has an account on the members area of the website
- Driver has filled out their members profile
- Driver has correctly linked their Steam Community ID to their profile
- Driver has joined the server and completed laps without cuts, spins or crashes
- Driver has set their Real Name when joining the servers
- Driver has successfully completed a race on our servers.

Once you have been verified against all these steps, you have passed your VARDS and will see the booking options appear in the members area.

Note: Confirming your VARDS status is a manual process. If you think you've carried out all the steps to complete your VARDS but have not yet seen the booking options appear, please contact us, ideally via the support channel on Discord, and we can review.

Section 5 - Events, Series and Seasons

When we are running events/series/seasons, we will put all details of that season into some 'Final Instructions'. These will be available to download in the members area of the site.

It will contain details of the settings, format, dates, tracks and cars that will be used. You should make sure you read these ahead of booking or taking part.

Booking Onto Events

For official season races, we operate a booking system. You won't be able to book onto events until you have passed your VARDS test. (See section 4.) So, if you can't see the booking options available to you, check that first.

Click on the 'Event Booking' and 'Championship Booking' buttons in the members area.

You will see a list of events/Championships that are available to book onto. Just click the green 'Enter' button to add yourself to the entry list, or the red 'Withdraw' button to remove your entry if plans change.

Note: Booking/withdrawal normally closes at around 12am on the morning of the race. If you have booked onto a race event, then any 'no show' will be marked negatively against a driver's profile and if it is a Championship event, point penalties will be applied.

Pre-qualification

Where more people have booked onto the event than a single grid allows, or where a Championship runs a pre-qualification process to allocate server places, then pre-qualification will be active.

Pre-qualification happens the day before the race event. A driver can compete in pre-qualifying by setting their fastest time anywhere between 05:00 and 22:59:59 on the day before an event.

If you don't enter a lap time in pre-qualification, then you will still be in the entry list, but will be lower down the pre-qualification order than anyone who has set a time.

Note: Booking does not guarantee you a spot on the A server. If there are more entrants than spaces on the A grid, then pre-qualification will determine who has a place on the A grid and who will start on the B grid etc

Section 6 - Fixed Car Liveries

For drivers who have passed their VARDS, and shown some commitment to racing with us, we offer the option to have your own car livery in the game for official, booked, events in our Caterham Models.



You are responsible for supplying your in-game livery in the correct format. If you are unable to create your own livery, you can, instead, opt for one of the other standard skins that are available in the Race Department download that haven't already been allocated.

Please note: New liveries will be integrated into the service during maintenance and this will happen a maximum of once per week.

Section 7 - Helpful Hints

Driver Situational Awareness

It's hard in the simulated world sometimes to understand where other cars are. (It's hard in the real world too, but better placed mirrors and ability to glance around helps.)

Several tools exist in the game to help you make judgements on whether someone is alongside or just off of your rear bumper.

Hellicorsa and Car Radar show an on screen representation of your car and others around you. Both change colour to indicate threat / proximity alerts.

Crew Chief give audio of car positions around you - think NASCAR type spotter to help you out.

Hellicorsa

<https://www.racedepartment.com/downloads/hellicorsa.5199/>

Car Radar

<https://www.racedepartment.com/downloads/car-radar.15743/>

Crew Chief

<http://thecrewchief.org/>

Learning from others

One of the best ways to learn to drive faster is to watch others and learn from what they are doing.

It's not immediately obvious, but in an online game, you can ride onboard with other drivers out on track. This can be a great way to learn lines and techniques.

When in the pitlane, simply click on the name of the driver you'd like to follow in the timing list. You can hide away the timing list window simply by clicking on the icon on the left side of the page again.

If you find that clicking on the names doesn't show you the drivers screen, that's likely because you haven't got into your car as if you were going to leave the pits at least once in the current session. So, simply click the 'Drive' button as if you were going to leave the pits, but immediately 'Return to pits' and you can snoop on others to your heart's content.

Bringing up delta / pedals / essentials

There are some small tools and applications that can really help you to get quicker.

When you're in your car, hover your mouse pointer over to the right of the screen and out will pop a vertical menu. You can scroll this menu up and down using the mousewheel.

Have an experiment with what's there but some key ones are:

- **Essentials** - which is your speed, gear, rev counter, lap times etc.
- **Pedals** - which shows your pedal inputs.
- **Delta** - which shows if you are up or down on your previous best lap - a bit like VBox.

Make use of Discord

Finally, the caterhamracer.com community is fairly knowledgeable and as a hive mind, there's usually a tip, trick or solution to issues. Ask nicely on the Discord #general and #support groups and I'm sure someone will be on hand to help.