



Why HOD runs the Cyclone (over the top of turn 5) at Thunderhill

I, David Ray, take full responsibility for this cultural and operational decision as it is a question of taste, personal preference, and, well...safety too.

The Cyclone is how the track was designed and built. Track designer Steve Crawford saw that just cutting a big wide S along the bottom of the Turn 5 hill would lead to a boring, fairly fast curve, with no passing. He made the decision to add a unique turn that would be memorable, a technical challenge for all cars, and would be fun to watch. Thus, the Cyclone was born. It was how the track was designed to be run.

The Cyclone is hard, especially for bigger cars (such as tube-frame GT1 and GT2 cars) and takes patience and above the horizon vision. It is also kinda slow, so the drivers wanting to make hay with power just can't at this turn – it is an equalizer.

It is fun. There is no turn exactly like it in North America, so everyone has to take it on and find their comfort zone and get a feel for the turn. It is a very fun turn to get right, with gravity assisting your momentum as you fly over the top and down the back side.

I do not like the Turn 5 Bypass. It was added in after the track was built and I do not think it flows. I have driven it during the NASA 25 Hour race, both in daylight and at night. It is tricky-fast with the penalty of a rolled car (there have been quite a few) for those that land wrong on the back side or get moved over in traffic, leading to an edge digging in and rolling. While the Bypass is a technical challenge, if you get it wrong it can really upset the car, potentially bottoming it out.

Also, HOD customers tell us they prefer the Cyclone. The last time we decided to drive the Bypass, we had several customers who were very disappointed.

Regarding safety – the Cyclone is safer than the Bypass. We believe that this track is one of the best and safest layouts in the world, and we are happy with the standard 3-mile configuration.

While this is where HOD is headed (driving the Cyclone rather than the Bypass), we are open to the possibility of driving the Turn 5 Bypass in the future.