

## **GPL Help**

### **Picking Your Team of Eight Drivers**

Your initial selection on the Entry Form will set the tone for your season, so here are my top tips to help you make a good start:

Historically in the Grand Prix League, finishes and completed race miles have been king because without a finish there can be no finishing or improvement points and the more miles a driver does, the more lap points. Thus the key to a good GPL season has always been picking drivers who are consistent, don't crash often and who race well. Allied to this they must also pilot the most reliable cars.

Try not to put all your eggs in one basket. Have a mixture of constructors and engines although - as the adverts say - past performance is no guarantee of future performance and constructors' fortunes can go up as well as down.

Try to spot the bargains; my ranking of Drivers is based mostly on last season's performance adjusted with a bit of feel about the coming season. I'm invariably wrong on a few so try to identify drivers who I've placed (in your opinion!) the wrong Group.

While the scores across the Drivers of both the top and bottom Groups tends to be very close, it is in the middle-order (Groups C, D and E) that we repeatedly see more variance. It is definitely here that the League is won and lost.

Winter testing is open to all sorts of interpretation as there are so many variables. However that's not to say you should ignore it completely. While making sense of a teams' pace without some sort of inside information is frankly a nightmare, we can all read just how many times a car stops out on the circuit. Armed with this information, your initial team may not pack all the quickest cars but you should benefit from the more reliable cars. Unless something is seriously wrong, reliability should increase across the grid as the season progresses.

A poor qualifying position is often the opportunity for big points in the GPL, so look for drivers who tend to qualify badly but race well or further those who simply aren't afraid to overtake. Conversely avoid teams or drivers who flatter to deceive in qualifying and then return fewer points on Sunday.

Consider submitting a Second Team as an insurance policy. It works in just the same way as any other team but costs less to enter. True, you will have to split the prize money but you still potentially get some glory and while halving your chance of humiliation.

### **Pit Stop Strategy**

Hopefully you will have followed the rationale behind the Pit Stop System with the example shown in the Entry Form. If you are struggling, have a look at the GPL Pit Stops page for more details and examples. Remember the GPL Spreadsheet calculates it seamlessly (well mostly) so it's not worth you losing any sleep if you still don't get all the ins-and-outs.

Your initial team selection will likely make or break your season, so choose carefully and outline a likely strategy. If you have gone for a slightly risky selection of rookies or drivers who have been unexpectedly quick in testing you may want to stop a little earlier than everyone else. May be a quick first stint on the Softer tyre would work for you? On the other hand, if you are more confident or have gone for a steady selection, may be you will consider a one-stop strategy and nominate the Harder tyre on your Entry Form? Remember you must run both at compounds some point during the season.

So although getting your Team right from the start is important, the Pit Stop system does allow you to rejuvenate your flagging Team. During the last few seasons we have seen some much-improved Teams with significant positional gains. As well as giving you the freedom to change your strategy depending how your Team fares, another benefit is being able to stop early and make a quick switch should one of your Drivers be suspended or injured. In such an instance you would probably make up the extra penalty in just one race.

### **Managing Your Team through the season**

Having picked your Drivers and nominated your Pit Stop Strategy, there is little else to do but enjoy the Grand Prix and wait for your first Pit Stop! You should though keep an eye on how well your Drivers are performing compared their competitors in the same Group.

There are a couple of milestones in the season when it is important to take stock. The first is at the start of the 'European season' after the first flyaway races. Constructors then traditionally throw lots of development parts at their cars, although this is typically with mixed success. As we get in to the meat of the season with its relentless summer race schedule the pattern of qualifying and racing tends to settle-down. The second milestone comes as the teams head-off for the final flyaway races that end the season. Then they are likely to consolidate with many (particularly the disappointed) switching their attention to next year's cars. While the resources of the top teams tend to make them reliable throughout the year, the middle and lower order teams can often start badly and get better, or occasionally vice versa. It is these trends that it is important to spot so you can cast-out any idlers before they damage your chances.

Remember you can Pit Stop at anytime; all you have to do is download, complete and return a Pit Stop Proposal Form. Using this form you may change one Driver for another in the same Group. You will then keep the points scored by your original Driver while thereafter your new Driver will begin to score for your Team.

However, if you are happy with your Team and continue on your nominated tyres until they start going-off, your will receive a Pit Stop Signal. At this Pit Stop you may wish to keep the same eight drivers, stopping only to change your failing tyres.