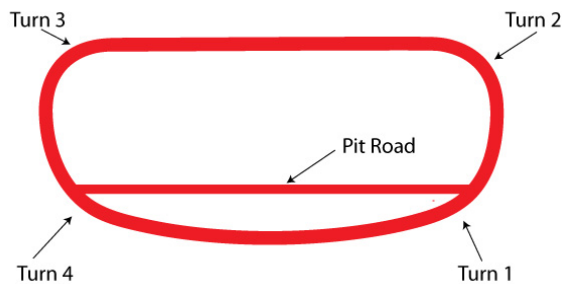


# Crew Chief Notes: Race Tracks and Pit Roads

NASCAR tracks are mostly 'ovals', a generic term used to describe tracks that are elongated and have four turns, all in the same direction. The exceptions are the two road courses ([Infineon Raceway](#) and [Watkins Glen International](#)) that NASCAR visits each season. 'Ovals' include true ovals ([Dover International Speedway](#)), tri-ovals ([Daytona International Speedway](#)), quad-ovals ([Lowe's Motor Speedway](#)), D-shaped tracks ([Richmond International Raceway](#)) and even a triangle ([Pocono Raceway](#)). You can find pictures of each track's shape on the [nascar.com](#) website. NASCAR races always run counter clockwise, which means that the cars are always turning left (again, with the exception of the road courses, where they cars make left- and right-hand turns).

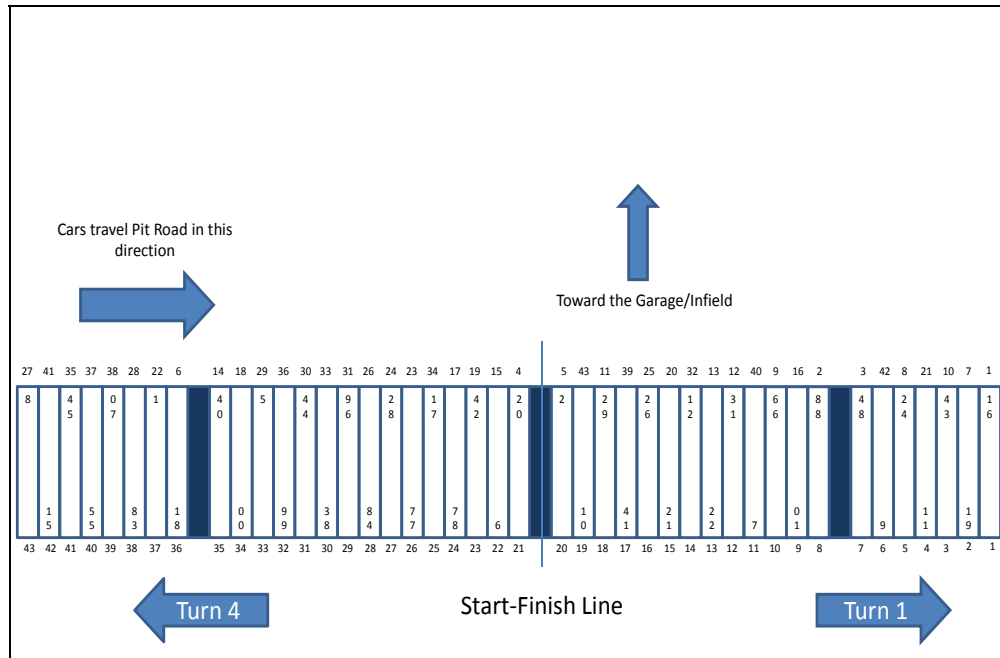
Pit Road is a long road that runs parallel to the long sides of the track on oval tracks. Cars enter Pit Road coming from the direction of turns 3 and 4, and leave Pit Road in the direction of Turns 1 and 2, as shown in the picture to the right. The location of the entrance is different at different tracks. Bristol Motor Speedway is so small (about a half-mile) that it has Pit Roads on both sides of the track.



Pit Road has a series of boxes marked on it called pit stalls. Each car has one pit stall where the car's crew

services the car during pit stops. The diagram below is an example of a pit map. Teams choose their pit stalls in the order in which they start the race. The order in which they start the race is determined by qualifying. Each car gets to make up to two laps with the fastest lap being counted. The car that takes the shortest time to complete a lap starts the race first and so on (although there are some special rules that make things a little more complex when you start getting toward the end of the lineup).

The pit map below is for the May 2008 race at Darlington Raceway and shows how the teams chose their pit boxes. The numbers within each box tell you the number of the car that occupies that box. The numbers along the bottom of the box are the pit box numbers, which are always numbered with box number "1" being the box closest to turn 1, the pit road exit. The numbers along the top are the order in which the car starts the race (which is the order in which the pit stalls are selected). For Darlington, the No. 16 car of Greg Biffle started the race in the first position, and chose the first pit stall. The No. 19 car of Elliott Sadler is started the race in 7<sup>th</sup> position and chose the 2<sup>nd</sup> pit box.



The pit map is schematic – the pit stalls are not drawn to scale. Pit stall sizes vary from track to track, but a good figure is 15 feet wide x 28 feet long. That’s a totally different aspect ratio than what is shown on the pit map; however, if you drew the boxes to scale, you would have a hard time getting the entire pit map on a single piece of paper. The picture below shows you a pit stall at the Milwaukee Mile. Yellow lines indicate the limits lengthwise and the solid white line toward the left of the picture indicates the width. The fluorescent tape is put there by the crew to indicate where the driver should ideally stop.



The dark boxes on the pit map represent open spaces. Although sometimes these are empty spaces reserved for cameras, more often these dark boxes indicate openings in the pit wall where drivers can enter or exit the garage. The photo below, taken at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, shows a pit opening and a pit stall, which is the area between the two white lines. Another pit stall can be seen toward the right of the picture, just in front of the No. 40 car.



Pit Stall

Pit Opening

The pit map also shows the location of the start-finish line. Laps are measured at the start-finish line, whether the driver crosses the line on the track, or on Pit Road.

Pit Road has a speed limit to ensure the safety of the crew members who work on pit road. The pit road speed limit varies from track to track, ranging from 30 mph at [Bristol Motor Speedway](#) to 55 mph at [Daytona International Speedway](#).

Most tracks are made of asphalt. The exceptions are [Bristol Motor Speedway](#) and [Dover International Speedway](#), which are both concrete, and [Martinsville Speedway](#), which has asphalt straightaways and concrete corners.

Tracks are often classified by their type. Short tracks are ovals less than one mile in length; intermediate tracks are greater than one mile, but less than 2 miles in length; superspeedways are greater than 2 miles in length and road courses are the non-oval tracks that require turns in both directions. See *Crew Chief Notes: NASCAR Nextel Cup Series Track List* for a full list of tracks and their characteristics.