

Racing at Road America

The 2008 Schedule

There's activity on the track at Road America almost every day from late April to early October. The racing weekends are:

- May 16-18: SVRA Spring Vintage Weekend
- May 17: FREE Family Tailgate Party
- June 5-8: AMA Suzuki Superbike Doubleheader
- June 19-22: Chicago Region SCCA June Sprints
- July 4-6: Championship Cup Series (cycles)
- July 17-20: Kohler International Challenge with Brian Redman (Vintage)
- August 7-10: Generac 500/American Le Mans Series (Race Saturday) & SPEED World Challenge (Race Sunday)
- September 19-21: VSCDA Elkhart Lake Vintage Festival
- October 25: Mid-American Stock Cars & Road America Walk/Run

How to Get There

Assuming you are coming from the Milwaukee area the easiest way to get to Road America is to follow I43 to Highway 57 north. Stay on 57 until you get to County Road J. Take J west to Highway 67. Go north on 67 to get to the main gate or stay on J and go west to Gates 3 and 4. New for 2008 – the main gate is now where gate 2 was in the past. The old main gate (gate 1) has been closed. On most race weekends there will be little traffic entering the track from gates 3 and 4. You can buy tickets at any of the gates that are open. Road America is about 50 miles north of the Milwaukee/Ozaukee county line.

Tickets

You can buy single day tickets and weekend passes at the track on race weekends. The best deal is a season ticket. With these tickets you can go to the track for any public event. Season ticket costs start out around \$250 (usually in December) and go up from there as the racing season approaches.

What to Bring

- Comfortable shoes - Road America is a big place and to see it you will need to do some walking. When it's a hot day the asphalt in the paddock will get very hot. Shoes with thick soles are a good idea.
- Sun tan lotion - Don't get burned like I did one day at Road America.
- Ear plugs - Race cars make a lot of noise, after several hours at the track the sound can get to you. You can get ear plugs at some of the shops at the track or at places like Walgreens before you go. Remember to bring enough for the kids.
- Lawn chairs - There are grandstands at Road America but some of the best places to watch don't have them.
- A camera or camcorder. You can get some great close up pictures of the cars in the paddock. To get good pictures of the cars on the track you will need a long lens. If you

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are really interested in photography you can get a special ticket to some of the races that allow you the same access as the professional photographers. Last I heard these tickets were around \$350 for a weekend.

- A stop watch. It's fun to time some of the cars to see how fast (or slow) they are going.
- If you have a portable radio scanner bring it along. You can listen to the corner workers during the races. There's no place at Road America where you can see the whole track so listening to the corner workers can tell you what's going on around the track. The following frequencies are in use at Road America: 150.890, 151.625, 151.895, 154.570, 154.600, 464.175, 464.325, 464.375, 464.525, 469.325 and 469.375. The primary frequency used by the corner workers is 464.525.
- Roller blades, skate boards and non-motorized scooters are not permitted on Road America property.

The Best Days

If you just want to watch the races then Saturday and Sunday are obviously the best days to go. If you want to walk around in the paddock and get a good look at the cars and maybe even talk to some of the racers and mechanics then Thursday and Friday are the best days. Everyone is much more relaxed and willing to talk on Thursday and Friday. The crowds are also much smaller on these days.

Where to Park

There are lots of places to park at Road America. My favorite place to park is along the front straight near the start finish line. It is near the paddock and there are even a few places to park in the shade. If you enter at the main gate (old gate 2) make a left turn once you get in and proceed around the track. As you go around the track you will go up a hill. At the top of this hill turn into the field on your right. If you park in this field you can get to the track by either the tunnel just north of the media center or the pedestrian bridge just to the north of the family fun zone. If you go through the tunnel you will come out at about the middle of the paddock. If you go over the pedestrian bridge you come out in the paddock near the Gear Works concession stand. I usually start my day at the track with an egger at Gear Works.

There are lots of other places to park around the track. On most weekends you can park one place, watch for awhile and then move to another parking place to watch a different part of the track. Don't try this on ALMS weekend. Finding one good parking place is difficult enough.

Best Views

- Along the fence between turns 4 and 5 - a great place to see and hear "speed".
- On the hill above turn 5 - if it's a hot day and you need some shade this is a good place. Besides turn 5 you can see turn 14 and part of the front straight. To get this location you have to climb a long set of stairs or come over the Toyota bridge from the back of the track.
- On the hill above turn 7 - you can see the exit of turn 6, turns 7 and 8 and the entrance to the carousel. There's a good concession stand here with Saz's Barbeque.

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- Grandstands at Canada Corner (turn 12) - if you go to the far end of the grandstands you can see the straight leading to turn 12, the turn itself and also turn 13. There's also some shade. To get to this location you have to go down a long set of stairs. This is my favorite place for taking photographs. There's always lots of action and you are above the fence so it doesn't get in the way.

[Follow this link](#) for a great map of the track. This map has been updated with the 2008 changes.

Where to Eat

Anywhere, the food served at the track is very good. There are a number of concession stands located around the track. Many of them are run by service or church organizations. The stand on the hill above turn 14 has great breakfast sandwiches (called egggers) and omelets. The stand on the hill above turn 7 has good barbeque. Many of the concession stands have specialties and you can always get a brat. I like to stop at St. Johns in the paddock and get a root beer float for an afternoon snack. Concession stands outside of the paddock sell beer, those inside the paddock don't. Don't forget to drink enough liquids through the day. It's easy to get dehydrated when you spend the whole day at the track.

Everything at the track stops for a lunch break. If you want to avoid the crowds eat lunch before or after the break. If you are in line and there's a corner worker or a safety worker in line behind you let them go ahead of you. You can tell the corner workers because they are dressed all in white. The safety workers are most often dressed in orange fire suits. Everything stops for lunch at the track so that the workers can eat and get some rest.

Walking Around in the Paddock

Be careful - Unlike almost everywhere else cars have the right away. Race cars don't have horns to warn you, but they normally are loud and some drivers use the exhaust noise to warn you they are coming. When you see a driver point he's telling you where he's going not where he wants you to go. If you have small children and want to show them the cars in the paddock be sure to take them by the hand and pay attention to what's going on around you. If things continue as they have been in the past your admission ticket gives you full access to the paddock.

The Track

Road America is 4 miles long with 14 turns. Several of the numbered turns aren't really turns but are corner worker positions. There are three long straights. Most cars will reach their highest speed at the end of the straight before turn 5. There are numerous elevation changes on the track. The highest point on the track is at turn 1 (1050 feet) and the lowest point is at turn 12 (900 feet). There are large hills on the front straight just after turn 14 and between turns 5 and 6.

On some race weekends you can pay to drive your car on the track at lunch time. Track touring is usually available during any of the spectator auto races during the year. It will be less crowded on Thursday and Friday. Often on Saturday and Sunday the entire track (all 4 miles) is covered with cars. If you are interested in doing this you should sign up as soon as you get to the track. The number of cars allowed on the track is limited.