



DRIVING around Calder Raceway with leading race driver Frank Gardner leaves one or two moments that will be remembered forever.

Frank Gardner wins at Britain's Brands Hatch circuit. Gardner returned to Australia, after 16 years racing overseas, late last year, to run a driving school at Calder.

Frank is a mind-bender

The ex-international toyed with a Renault 12, inducing understeer then alternately flicking the tail out in the same corner, apparently oblivious that a novice had spun just ahead on the same bend.

The cars didn't kiss. Why not? What makes it so memorable is that the puzzle, unsolved in all heads but Gardner's, keeps recurring.

But to listen to him, as tutor of the High Performance Driving School, chatting to budding Renault Newstar drivers preparing for their drive at Phillip Island today is something else again.

The Newstar at the Island is part of a pilot race series for absolute novices in unhotted Renault 12

cars probably driven to work during weekdays.

Men and women who want to mix it on the race track instead of tearing off from traffic lights are given petrol, tyres and some brief instruction from Gardner.

Useful

Then, it's may the best driver (the cars are all the same) win.

Gardner's tips, some useful for unexpected

open road dramas are:

When adjusting a hard-driving position it's no good "sitting up like a country toilet." Push the frame right back into the seat by burying the left foot into the firewall carpet as a brace.

When flying into a corner don't "saw" the wheel, swinging it from left to right like the stars of old racing car movies. It's one way to find out where the traction is, but the trouble is that sawing breaks the traction just when it's needed.

Pick the best line through a corner before the corner, not half-way around it.

Develop an eye rhythm

which checks on the rear view mirror and instruments regularly between making judgments of the road ahead.

Emergency

Always use your common sense during an emergency. Almost every amateur with an engine fire "jams on the brakes," Frank says, which means a race marshal gets an attack of asthma hauling a heavy extinguisher across country.

(What do you do? Roll on, and pull up conveniently in front of the marshal, who then has the strength to operate it and time to save the car.)