

RACE 12 — BLACKLIST ZERO Detroit Blacklist Underground | Event #12 of 12 — The Final Location: Full Detroit circuit — Woodward to Jefferson to Belle Isle Bridge to Packard to Michigan Ave, single continuous loop Conditions: May, 11:00 PM | Clear sky, 22°C, dry, city-wide course, multiple road types Winner: The Triad — Ace (Nismo 270) + Mai & Shammy (DB11), first and second crossing together

—

The final race had no name when it was announced.

The Blacklist's adjudication team had distributed the course card six days before the event, and at the top of the card where the event name should have been, there was simply: Event 12. Final. Some people called it the Long Loop after they saw the course. Some called it the City Race. Some called the adjudication team and asked what it was officially called, and the adjudication team said: "It doesn't have one yet. Winner names it."

The course was 24.7 kilometres. A single continuous loop through Detroit that began on Woodward Avenue, ran south to the Jefferson riverfront, crossed the Belle Isle Bridge, completed one full island loop, returned across the bridge, ran north through the industrial margin toward the Packard Plant district, cut west on the Michigan Avenue corridor through Corktown, and returned south to Woodward for the finish. It used every surface type the series had encountered: the highway-wide Woodward drag, the riverfront straight, the island's perimeter circuit, the rough industrial approach, the tight neighbourhood grid of Corktown. Every environment. Every lesson.

One lap. No repeat.

Twelve cars had registered for the final. The entire Blacklist field — everyone who had run at least one prior event — was eligible, and everyone eligible had come. Viktor Drach. Reyes. Kade Mors. Sable, returning after her absence. Kade's GT-R newly rebuilt after an incident in a non-Blacklist event that he had not discussed and that showed in the front quarter panel's bodywork as a repaired section that didn't quite match the original orange. The Lotus Emira. The local WRX STI from Corktown. And five others who had run single events across the series and whose records were partial but whose presence in the final was a function of the Blacklist's open entry policy.

And Ace. And the DB11.

They had gathered before the event. Not in the staging area — before that, hours before that, in a space that was none of the above: a parking structure off Grand River, third floor, the kind of location where the acoustics made conversation feel both contained and important. The three of them. Ace on the hood of the Nismo. Shammy sitting on the concrete barrier at the edge with her back to the city below, too long for the space, dangling her feet over a drop she'd checked the distance of and found acceptable. Mai standing with a printed course card, which she had annotated in a handwriting that was precise in the way her analytical systems were precise.

"Twenty-four point seven kilometres," Mai said. "One lap. This is not a race about speed at any single point. It's a race about the total."

"We know every section," Shammy said. Not pride. A statement.

"We've run Woodward," Mai said, ticking off the list. "Jefferson riverfront. Belle Isle. The industrial district. The Packard approach. Michigan Avenue in the wet, which is harder than the dry and we've done it." She looked at the card. "The connection sections — Woodward to Jefferson, the Belle Isle Bridge transit, the industrial corridor north of Michigan — those are unknown. They're connective

tissue the series hasn't run before.”

“Bridge transit,” Ace said.

“What about it?”

“It's narrow. And if the field is still compressed by the time we reach it, there will be contact.” She said it without inflection, as information rather than concern.

“Then we need separation before the bridge,” Mai said.

“Yes.”

They sat with the course card for another hour. Not discussing strategy in the conventional sense — not plotting positions or defensive lines or overtaking zones. Discussing the city. The way it was put together. The way its sections connected. What each neighbourhood offered in terms of surface and geometry and ambient variable and what it demanded in return. This was not, Shammy reflected, how most racing teams prepared. Most racing teams prepared by studying the competition. They were studying the city.

“The Packard approach section,” Shammy said. “The road that runs past the north exterior wall — there's a drainage ditch that was patched last autumn. You can feel it if you've been inside that building. It runs about three metres into the road surface.”

“I know it,” Ace said. She'd been inside the building. She'd stood on the exterior approach road for forty minutes during the second event and had not been inside the building since. She still knew the drainage patch. Some things, once mapped, stayed mapped.

“The field won't know it,” Shammy said.

“No,” Ace said.

That was the conversation. Not a plan laid out in sequence, but a set of facts exchanged between three people who had spent twelve events building a shared picture of a city and were now preparing to run the whole picture at once.

The event.

Twelve cars on Woodward at 11 PM. The crowd was the largest in the series — the Blacklist's reputation had been building all season, and the final had drawn people who had not attended a single prior event, people who had followed through accounts and word-of-mouth and the particular underground communication network that underground things generate when they develop continuity. The crowd was maybe four hundred people. They stretched the length of the Woodward start area and spilled onto the cross streets.

The green rig was the same green rig that had been used at every prior event, waterproofed and maintained, the LED strip functioning on its twelfth deployment. Someone had attached a paper strip above it that read EVENT 12 in a marker that had run slightly in the prior event's rain. Nobody had removed it.

Green.

Twelve cars launched onto Woodward and the city received them.

The opening straight sorted the field: Viktor's ZL1 went to the front with the certainty of a car doing what it was made for. Reyes sat second, the Z06 running clean. Kade's GT-R found third. Sable took the white 911 to fourth with the calm efficiency of someone returning from absence with nothing to prove and everything to demonstrate. The broader field spread behind them, each driver finding their opening speed, the Woodward corridor running south toward Jefferson under the city lights.

Ace ran sixth. The DB11 ran eighth.

The Jefferson riverfront transition brought the field from the Woodward alignment into the east-west corridor, and the geometry change produced the first major compression: twelve cars turning onto Jefferson in quick succession, the inside of the turn available only to the cars that got there first, the outside adding distance that was not recoverable at race pace. Viktor carried his lead through the turn cleanly. Three cars behind him did not, the corner entry producing a multi-car shuffle that sorted itself without contact but cost two drivers significant position.

The Nismo found the apex of the Jefferson turn with the precision that Ace had run the riverfront event in February — the wind read, the surface known, the line exact. She moved from sixth to fourth in the transition, not by attacking anyone but by finding the geometry that others were losing.

The DB11 moved from eighth to sixth. Shabby's window was open two inches. The river was on their left. She said nothing, which meant the conditions were reading as expected.

Riverfront straight. The fast section where the city opened up along the waterfront and the cars could run. Viktor and Reyes on the pace, Kade working to hold third, Sable managing fourth. Ace was fourth by the approach to the Ambassador Bridge area — she'd passed Kade in the middle of the riverfront straight with the same velocity reserve that had produced the highway event win, deploying it in shorter form on a section that was long enough for it to matter.

Belle Isle Bridge.

The bridge was the narrowest point of the entire course — two lanes of the MacArthur Bridge, each car using one lane, the passage over the river requiring the field to compress from its riverfront spread into a two-wide column. The lead cars went through first and clear. The mid-field compression arrived at the bridge approach with five cars in a group — Kade, Ace, a Giulia, the returning Lotus, and one of the single-event entrants in a tuned Civic Type R that had been running above its apparent station all evening.

Contact.

Not catastrophic. Not the bridge-clearing disaster that anyone who'd looked at the course card had quietly feared. But contact: the Giulia going slightly wide at the bridge entry, its driver choosing the wrong moment to assert a line that didn't exist, the resulting touch against the Lotus dropping them both to the back of the mid-group and leaving a gap into which Ace moved the Nismo with the particular absence of hesitation that was, at this point in the series, simply characteristic.

She crossed the bridge third. Kade crossed fourth. The DB11 came through seventh, Mai having watched the compression from far enough back to choose the clean lane and use it.

The Belle Isle loop. One full perimeter, 4.8 kilometres, and the island's fog was absent tonight — May, clear sky, no fog. The perimeter road ran fast and clean and every driver who had run the island circuit in February knew their way, and every driver who hadn't was learning it at race pace in the dark. Reyes knew it. Ace knew it. Sable did not — she'd been absent for that event — but the 911 ran the island perimeter with the competence of a driver who knew how to learn a circuit at speed, and

she held second through the island loop.

Viktor crossed the Belle Isle exit bridge first. Reyes second. Ace third, the gap to second now approximately four car lengths — she'd gained one place on the island's technical sections and was running the Nismo at a pace that said more was available. Sable fourth. Kade fifth. DB11 sixth.

Industrial approach. North of the riverfront, the character of the city changed — the Packard district's precincts, the rough-surfaced approach roads, the ambient quality of a neighbourhood that had been changing for forty years and had not finished. The cars hit the industrial surface after the clean island perimeter and the field registered the transition differently: cars with independent suspension absorbing it, cars with stiffer track setups producing driver workload that showed in the lines they ran.

The Packard approach drainage patch.

Viktor's ZL1 hit it first. Viktor knew the Packard event — he'd been present for race two, watching rather than competing, an observer with his own reasons. He knew the patch was there. He absorbed it cleanly, no drama, his baseline preparation covering it.

Reyes hit it and tracked wide — not badly, but wide. She'd been absent from the Packard event. The drainage patch was new information delivered at race pace.

Ace came through the patch on a line two metres right of centre that avoided its worst section — she'd known exactly where it was since standing on that road in February, and the map had not changed.

Behind the leaders, the patch produced varying results. The Lotus hit it square and went into a correction. The Giulia hit it and held. The DB11 was seven cars back and Shammy had been watching the brake light patterns ahead since the approach began, reading the patch's location from the deceleration signatures of the cars in front, giving Mai a fifteen-second heads-up that produced the same result as prior knowledge.

The DB11 went through it clean. Sixth became fifth.

Michigan Avenue. Corktown. The final substantial section before the return to Woodward.

The field was: Viktor first, Reyes second, Ace third, Sable fourth, Kade fifth. DB11 seventh — a position lost in the industrial section when the Lotus recovered from its correction and found a line on the rough surface that briefly put it back in front of the Aston Martin. Mai had chosen not to fight it on the industrial surface and accepted the position with the calculation that the Michigan Avenue section would resolve it.

The Michigan Avenue stretch was dry tonight. Not the storm of event eleven — clear May, dry asphalt, no standing water. The DB11 on a dry Michigan Avenue was a different conversation. Mai brought the V12 up to its working register on the long straight and the car moved through the Corktown section with a fluency that the wet event had not quite allowed: Mai running the clean dry line, Shammy's atmospheric read less critical on a dry surface but still present, the two of them in the rhythm they'd built across eleven events.

The DB11 passed the Lotus on Michigan Avenue without ceremony. Sixth again.

Sable was running fourth ahead of the DB11 and the gap was significant — two events of not running the circuit had left Sable in a position that reflected knowledge gaps rather than capability gaps, and she was running precisely the pace that available knowledge supported.

The final section. Woodward approach, south run. Twelve cars converging on the final straight from the Michigan Avenue turn.

Viktor first. The ZL1 had run the final 24 kilometres with the consistency of a car and driver operating at the intersection of capability and preparation, and Viktor was first in the way that certain outcomes simply are: not through drama or narrow survival but through doing the specific thing better than anyone else over a specific distance. He was going to win the Blacklist final. The city had been given the course and Viktor had been given the city and he had run it.

Reyes second. Two wins across the series, second in the final, a result that reflected everything she'd done right and nothing she'd done wrong.

And then: third and fourth, running close — the gap between them collapsing as the Woodward approach straightened and the speed came up.

Ace and Sable. The gap was less than a car length and closing.

The Nismo and the white 911. Two cars that had spent the series being consistent in different ways — Sable's circuit intelligence against Ace's environmental mapping, both of them arriving at the final's last kilometre separated by the gap that twelve events of accumulated difference had produced, which was very small.

Ace moved at 800 metres from the line. The reserve — not the highway event reserve, which had been a sustained ceiling reach, but a different kind: the decision to stop managing and simply run. The Nismo went from pacing to committing and the commitment had a quality to it that the series had seen twice before and which the crowd now recognized, the sound of the Nismo changing register in the way that things change register when they stop holding back.

She passed Sable at 400 metres.

Crossed the finish line third.

And behind her — fourth, within three seconds, the DB11 coming down Woodward with the V12 at full deployment, Mai having passed Kade's GT-R in the Michigan Avenue section and run the Woodward approach at the pace that the series' final kilometre deserved.

Fourth. 2.4 seconds behind Ace.

Team registration, still active from event nine, still on file with the adjudication team.

The timing system recorded both crossings. The adjudication team cross-referenced the team registration. Applied the rule. Confirmed the three-second window.

Team Triad: event twelve team classification winner.

Individual winner: Viktor Drach. Series-classified winner by team event rule: Triad.

The Blacklist's adjudication team issued the final series standings at 12:47 AM, standing in the headlights of their own car at the Woodward finish with a laminated sheet and a portable PA speaker that had seen twelve events of outdoor use and sounded like it. The team classification winner held the right to name the event under the Blacklist's original rule.

Ace stood at the finish line when the adjudication team asked her for the name.

She thought about it for a long moment. The city around them. What the twelve events had been. What the three of them had come through. What the Packard Plant looked like from the inside and what the Belle Isle fog felt like before dawn and what it meant to cross a finish line third while the car behind you crossed fourth within three seconds because you had been three of one thing across twelve events and one city and an entire Detroit winter into spring.

“Blacklist Zero,” she said.

The PA speaker repeated it. The crowd on Woodward received it.

Viktor Drach heard it and, later, when someone asked him what he thought of the name, he said: “Makes sense.” Which, from Viktor, was approximately equivalent to a speech.

Reyes wrote it in the margin of her course card and folded the card and put it in her jacket pocket. She kept things that mattered.

Kade said: “Zero as in from scratch. Or zero as in start.” He considered this. “Both, probably.”

Sable said nothing. She got back in the white 911 and drove away, and whether she had an opinion on the name was a question that joined the long list of things about Sable that remained, by design, unknown.

The crowd dispersed into the Detroit night, filtering south on Woodward and east on Jefferson and across the bridges and into the neighbourhoods and up the expressway ramps, taking the event with them the way crowds take things — incompletely, selectively, each version of it shaped by where they'd been standing and what they'd been able to see and what story they'd already been telling themselves before the green light dropped.

At the finish line, after the crowd had thinned to a handful:

Shammy sat on the DB11's hood again. Carefully. Her feet touching the ground this time, which meant the car was sitting in the right spot relative to the kerb. She was looking at Woodward Avenue extending north into the city, the same road they'd started on twelve events ago in January snow, now in May warmth, now dry, now with the kind of air that meant a season had actually turned.

Mai stood beside her, one hand resting on the car's roof, reviewing the course card one final time in the manner of someone who reviews completed things not to find errors but to close them properly.

Ace sat on the kerb with the Nismo parked behind her, engine off, the car making the small contracting sounds of cooling metal. She had the cash envelope in her hands and was not looking at it.

“Zero,” Shammy said.

“Yes,” Ace said.

“We won it.”

“We did.”

A silence between them that was not uncomfortable in any way, that was in fact the specific kind of silence that occurs between people who have done something together and don't need to explain what it was.

"The Blacklist is over," Mai said.

"This one," Shammy said.

They both looked at her.

Shammy looked at the road ahead, north up Woodward, into the city, past the city, past the horizon. Her hair barely moved in the still night air. The air around her was doing what it did — listening, adjusting, the small atmospheric negotiation that was simply the way she existed in the world.

"There will be another one," she said. "There always is."

This was true. Nobody argued with it. In the history of every city and every circuit and every group of people who found a road and decided it was worth running, there had always been another one. The roads existed before the races and they would exist after, and people like the ones who had run the Blacklist tonight would always find each other on them and ask the question that didn't need language.

The Nismo's engine had gone cool.

The DB11 sat patient and steel-blue under the Woodward streetlights.

The city made its sounds. The river moved somewhere south of them, doing what it had done before any of this and would do after.

"Yes," Ace said. "There will."

She put the cash envelope in her jacket. Stood. Looked at them both.

They drove out of the Woodward corridor and into whatever came next, three vectors, one direction, the Detroit spring doing what springs do in a city that has seen a great deal and refuses, still, to be done with itself.

The road went on.

So did they.

— END OF DETROIT BLACKLIST SERIES — —

© 2025-2026. "World of Ace, Mai and Shammy" and all original characters, settings, story elements, and concepts are the intellectual property of the author. All rights reserved.

Non-commercial fan works are allowed with attribution.

Commercial use, redistribution, or adaptation requires explicit permission from the author.

Contact: editor at publication-x.com

From:

<https://datavault.ws/> - DataVault

Permanent link:

<https://datavault.ws/doku.php/canon:ace14:blaclist:chapter12>

Last update: 16/03/2026 17:40



