

RACE 06 — THE FURNACE Detroit Blacklist Underground | Event #6 of 12 Location: Zug Island approach road & Great Lakes Steel district, River Rouge Conditions: March, 2:08 AM | Overcast, 11°C, industrial haze, particulate air quality poor Winner: Kade "Crucible" Mors — Nissan GT-R R35, tuned, matte orange

—

The steel plant never slept.

It didn't have to. The blast furnaces on Zug Island operated on a logic entirely independent of day and night, of weather, of the city's rhythms above and around them. They burned continuously, fed continuously, and they vented their excess heat in columns of white-orange light that climbed above the stack lines and spread at altitude into a permanent low-sky glow that turned the overcast above River Rouge the color of a bruise healing. The air down at road level carried the smell of the process — iron-hot, mineral, with an undertone of sulphur that settled on the back of the throat and stayed.

The access road that ran east from the plant perimeter along the canal had been built for heavy freight traffic and was built accordingly: wide, flat, surfaced with the kind of industrial concrete that prioritized load capacity over smoothness. It was not a pleasant surface. It was an honest one — every imperfection communicated directly to the chassis, every repair seam and stress crack legible at speed through any car with functioning suspension. A driver who could not read their car in real time would lose significant ground on this surface. A driver who could had something like an advantage, though advantage was a relative term when the entire field consisted of people who had chosen to do this for a living.

The route turned back on itself at the canal's northernmost point — an industrial turnaround designed for trucks, now serving as an apex point for the Blacklist's only hairpin event. There and back: 2.8 kilometres down, 180 degrees at the turnaround, 2.8 kilometres back. Total effective distance, 5.6 kilometres, with the turnaround as the event's defining variable. How fast you approached it. How cleanly you rotated through it. Whether you chose to go in brave and come out sideways, or go in measured and come out controlled, and which of those two approaches was faster in real terms was something six drivers were about to test.

Heat came off the steel plant in waves — not dramatic, not flames, but a persistent atmospheric pressure from the direction of the island that sat against the face like a warm palm. It raised ambient temperature along the eastern side of the route by several degrees, enough to affect tire temperature if you ran the east lane, enough to affect air density in the intake if your engine management didn't compensate.

Kade Mors had been running a Nissan GT-R R35 on the Blacklist circuit for four events. He'd placed third twice, second once. Tonight, in matte orange under the furnace-glow of the Zug Island stack light, he had chosen the east lane deliberately — the heat was a variable he'd worked out how to use. The R35's intake temperatures would spike on the east-side approach, but Kade had retuned the engine management specifically for elevated ambient, which meant the spike became a plateau at a level the car could use rather than a thermal event it had to manage defensively.

In the field: Sable's white 911 was back. A Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS, track-specced, piloted by someone new to the circuit who had nonetheless won their regional qualifier with an unsettling margin. A built Mitsubishi Evo X, dated platform, devastating execution, driven by a woman who introduced herself to no one and went by the callsign Soot. And Ace, and the DB11.

The crowd at The Furnace was different from prior events. Smaller — maybe thirty people. Industrial

workers from the neighbouring operations, a handful who'd hiked in through the service access from the main road, two or three in reflective gear who looked like they might have been there professionally until you noticed none of them were doing anything except watching. Everyone in the radius of the plant smelled like iron before they arrived. Nobody commented on this.

The turnaround distance flag went up and the field launched.

The approach was fast and the GT-R went forward like something released rather than accelerated — Kade's tuning producing an engine response that was immediate and aggressive at the lower rev range, which was where the first half of the approach lived before the road widened and allowed full commitment. By the kilometre mark, he was running first with authority. The white 911 sat second, Sable characteristically unhurried, saving the Porsche for the section where its weight and balance would pay out most.

Ace ran third. The Nismo 270 on the industrial concrete was an interesting thing to observe — it absorbed the surface feedback without showing it, the chassis management somewhere beneath consciousness translating the road's texture into information rather than disturbance. The Cayman GT4 RS ran fourth, its driver learning the approach with the methodical confidence of someone who had done this kind of thing enough times in enough different places to not be surprised by anything the road introduced.

The DB11 was fifth. This was, by now, a positioning choice rather than a limit. Mai was reading the approach, reading the turnaround from distance, understanding the geometry of what the 180 demanded of a car of this width and this wheelbase. The DB11 was not a natural hairpin car. It was long, powerful, oriented toward the sustained straight rather than the acute turn. Its driver was not unaware of this.

Shammy had both hands on the door grip and the ceiling handle simultaneously, which she only did when she was bracing for something. "The turnaround surface," she said. "It's loose at the apex. Contamination from freight tire deposits."

"How loose?"

"Not gravel. Fine particulate. Enough to reduce grip by what I estimate is twelve to fifteen percent if you take the conventional line."

"Conventional line meaning inside."

"Yes."

"Then we take the outside."

"Wider arc, more speed maintained," Shammy said. "If the surface holds on the outer edge."

"Does it?"

A pause that contained the kind of consideration that Shammy's atmospheric reading involved — something that was half analysis and half perception that had no clean category. "Yes," she said. "Outer edge is clean."

The turnaround.

Kade hit it first and he hit it fast — too fast for what the surface offered at the conventional inside line,

but he'd scouted it on foot before the event and he knew where the friction lived. He rotated the R35 with a combination of trail brake and throttle modulation that was precise enough to look casual, and he came out of the 180 pointing back toward the start line with maybe 30% of his approach speed retained rather than the 15% that a less practiced driver would have held. He was pulling away before the car had fully straightened.

Sable came through second and the 911 took the turnaround in a different mode — narrow car, rear engine, the weight distribution working in an entirely different way, the Porsche rotating almost eagerly around the apex in the way 911s do when you've spent enough time learning to use their particular physics. Sable came out of the turnaround cleanly and with confidence, and she was running second with the approach to the finish line ahead of her.

Ace arrived at the turnaround third and felt the contaminated surface through the Nismo's front end before the car reached the conventional inside apex. It was subtle — a reduction in resistance through the steering that happened earlier than it should have for a clean surface. She moved her line a metre outside the conventional and found the grip there, and the Nismo rotated through the apex with everything it had maintained and came out pointed at the return route, third.

The Cayman went through fourth. Its driver hit the loose particulate, felt it, didn't overcorrect, came out fourth and cleanly.

The DB11 arrived at the turnaround fifth, and Mai took the outside line with the confidence of someone who had been given specific, verified information about where the surface held. The Aston Martin's long wheelbase made the 180 a committed event — there was no margin for hesitation at the radius the outside line required. Mai gave it nothing except the exact input the arc demanded, Shamy's grip on the door handle tightening momentarily as the car moved through the turn and then releasing as they came out the other side pointed south, engine in its working range, the return stretch ahead.

The return leg.

Kade held first on the return and extended it — the R35's tuning on the east-side heat was doing exactly what he'd prepared it to do, the engine performing at the top of its intake curve in a way that gave him sustained power delivery on the return that was fractionally better than the approach. First, and widening.

Sable ran second. The 911's rear-engine advantage on the approach became a push condition on the return — a known property of the platform, managed by experience rather than surprised by it. She held second with professional composure.

Ace ran third, and she was closing on Sable in the final kilometre — the Nismo finding its straight-line speed on the return and using it, the gap from three car lengths to two to one as the finish approach narrowed. The crowd at the line heard the Nismo before they saw it, a distinct frequency among the approaches.

But there was not enough road left. Sable crossed second. Ace crossed third.

The DB11 came home fifth after the Cayman made a late move on the return that used the Aston's width against it on a narrow section — a pass that Mai acknowledged with a driver's honesty rather than frustration, because the Cayman was faster in that moment and the pass was clean.

Kade "Crucible" Mors accepted the winner's cash with a handshake and drove the matte-orange GT-R back out the service road, exhaust note trailing into the iron-smell night until the plant's ambient

sound absorbed it entirely.

Ace sat with the Nismo at idle, the furnace-glow of Zug Island sitting orange in her windscreen. Third place. Clean result on a difficult surface. The turnaround had cost her the second she needed and there was nothing to correct in that — the line had been right. The car had been right.

Some nights the math was just the math.

The DB11 came alongside. Shammy's window down, the hot industrial air moving between them.

"The outside line held," Shammy said.

"Yes," Mai agreed.

"We came fifth."

"Yes."

Shammy looked out at the plant. The furnace columns against the clouds. The permanent orange against the dark. "Mors had this prepared," she said. "The intake tuning for the ambient heat. This was not improvised."

"No," Mai said. "He built this race to his car and his course."

A silence.

"We need to start doing the same thing," Shammy said.

It was not a criticism. It was a direction. Mai took it the same way she took most of Shammy's observations — as data delivered by a system she trusted, to be acted upon before the next event rather than disputed during the current one.

The DB11 pulled out of the industrial access road and back into a Detroit that smelled like nothing in particular after the mineral weight of The Furnace. Clean air, in context, was a relative thing.

Six events down. Six to go.

The Blacklist's second half was beginning. —

© 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:chapter6>

Last update: 16/03/2026 17:39



