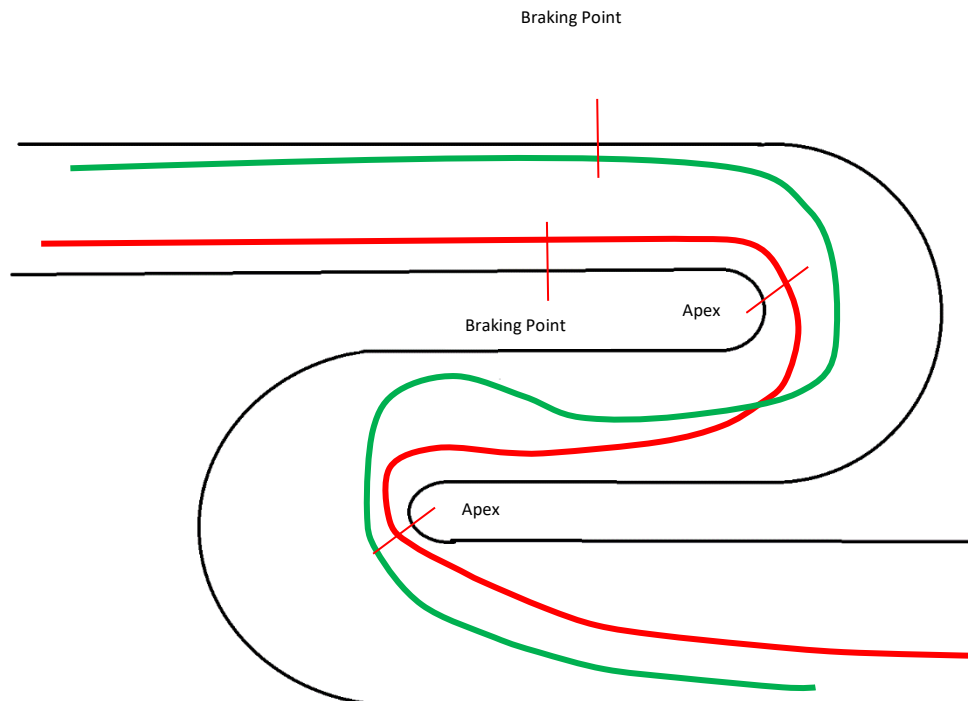


## RACECRAFT – DEFENDING

Defending is also an important skill, and one that you will have to practice. Quite simply, a bit like overtaking, you need to protect your apexes. This is done by preventing your opponent from getting to them first. Normally this means moving to the inside on an approach to a corner, forcing an attacking driver wide, and blocking them off the apex. However, this means that you will be off line. That means that you will be slower through the corner, meaning that you are at risk of being slower through the next section of track. Now we're stuck defending until we get to the end of the race, or we get passed by the driver behind. There is a way of getting out of it though. You can defend by protecting the inside line, but remember, you control the apex. If you've done the work to get slowed down off line and on to the apex, don't rush to get off of it. You are now in the enviable position of being able to dictate how fast everyone else behind you leaves the corner. You can negate any speed advantage an attacking driver has by being measured and controlled away from the corner. Having done this, you need to focus on pulling a gap between you and the drivers behind. Having a gap is the best way of defending. It is rare that a driver wins a race by defending for an extended period of time. It nearly always ends in tears.

Let's look at an example. We've already seen this diagram used in an example of how to attack. Let's see if we can defend it.



We find that we are under attack, so we move to the inside to defend the braking zone. This means that we are vulnerable for an attack as we approach the right hander. To defend, we need to take a little bit more pace into the first corner, and apex slightly early to position ourselves on the inside for the left hander. Now, very importantly, as we turn left, we drop our speed to allow us to take an apex for the best possible exit. This forces the attacking driver to move to our right hand side, blocking them off the apex. We can now apply the throttle to get as smooth and fast an exit as possible. The attacking driver can only react to what we have done, and we are able to dictate how fast they leave the corner. So we have done two things:

- We have stopped the attack.
- We have negated and prevented the attacker gaining a speed advantage on us through this combination of corners.
- We have positioned ourselves in such a way that we can now try to pull out a gap.

A final note on defending. Moving off the racing line to defend is accepted as the way to defend. However, do not get into the habit of moving across the track to defend, then darting back to get on the racing line. A lot of race directors will class this as weaving and will take a very dim view of it. Once you have signalled your intention to defend, stick with it. If you are going to move off line to defend, make sure you are not 'chopping' the nose of another driver. Chances are, they will not be expecting it, it is not good sportsmanship, and will normally send you both straight to the scene of the accident!!