

## *unstoppable* EUROPEAN TRUCK RACING

Powered with engines that sometimes enclose more than 12-litres of space and put out power that breaches the 1000bhp mark, these trucks, on their day can outspurt a Porsche 911 in a 0-100km/h dash. Take into consideration their enormous size, the momentum they carry, and you'd know why they're unstoppable!





Truck racing is a very popular form of motorsport in Europe. It involves modified versions of heavy trucks competing fiercely on racing circuits. While the Europeans relish full-size, heavy and burly trailers slugging it out for the top honours, the American version features relatively smaller pickup trucks.

The sport started over twenty years ago and turned out to be a great success though the popularity dwindled away in the 1990's. However, in the last few years truck racing has once again swung up steeply on popularity charts. A reinvigorated spectator interest means that there currently are over 30 teams that compete regularly in various events. Earlier, each event had different rules and independent validation bodies to define the specifications of the trucks. For some events like the European Truck Championship, however, the sporting regulations these days have come under the control of the FIA. This not only ensures that the vehicles conform to the layout and original style of the truck, it also makes the safety standards more stringent, making things safer for the competing drivers.

Obviously, one cannot expect these mammoth machines to compete with featherlight, tailor made racing machines for speed, but the fun here is to see these fat pieces of metal struggle for space on the track. Race speeds are usually restricted to a maximum of around 160km/h, for safety reasons, with the minimum weight limit for the trucks competing in the European



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Truck Championship being 5500kgs. Races start from a rolling start and commonly last from 8 to 12 laps. Though these races are supposed to be a non contact sport, sometimes, due to the proximity of the racing trucks, minor collisions do occur. With the heavy weight, wide tyres, great stability and strength of the trucks, however, there hardly are any injuries.

The makes of trucks currently represented in truck racing cover most of the common marques over the last 20 years. The regulations allow for trucks to compete in various classes, so trucks with smaller engines, less sophisticated engines, management systems, suspension, and braking systems can compete effectively. Manufacturers include global biggies in commercial vehicle industry like MAN AG, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Scania AB, ERF, Foden, Iveco, Seddon Atkinson, Sisu Auto, Renault Trucks, Scammell and ZIL.

Quite a manic form of motorsport this, but no less entertaining than an F1 race for those who understand and follow the sport. Caravan, tractor and lawn mower racing are some of the stranger forms of motorsport. One can list truck racing too, as one of the unusual varieties. But hurtling these commercial machines crazily around corners for kicks makes one thing quite clear - the humans' craving for speed, control and the rush of the adrenaline is exactly what this entire feature is all about - unstoppable.