

ONLINE PLAY

The EA team has been working hard to streamline the online experience and make it easier for gamers to do what they love—playing, not waiting to play. Once into the online system you will find the layout of the menus familiar, but that's where the similarities end. This new system is quick to get you to the action.

» LOBBY



Use the lobby to find active games. It's easier now to find races at random, or you can search according to your preferred options. You can search not only for races that haven't started but also for races in progress. This way, you can join a group of racers and play immediately when their current race is completed.



» GAME ROOM



Once you have found a game room, you're guaranteed to race in mere moments. As soon as the minimum number of racers (2-4) is in the game room, the automatic timer begins.

This time can't be stopped, nor can anyone kick you out of the game room.

When the race is complete, you and your group (or opponents) return to the game room. The process begins again, cycling you almost immediately into the next race.

«tip»

Players can come and go from the game room as long as there are free slots available. Invite your online friends to fill your game room for action-packed races!

FINISH EVERY RACE!

To guarantee a quality racing experience in *Need for Speed™ Most Wanted*, you can set up races that are private or allow only racers who have a DNF% (Did Not Finish percentage) below a specified level.

Your DNF increases if you do not complete a race for *any* reason—and this is a bad thing! If your DNF% is too high, you may be prevented from participating in some events. Work hard and diligently to lower your DNF% by completing all races from that point on; gradually the percentage will drop.



Most of the options for the online races are straightforward, but two deserve special discussion: performance matching and collision detection.

Performance matching equalizes the performance attributes of all cars in a race to those of the highest-performing car in the current game. For example, if you are driving a stock Volkswagen GTI and the group host is driving a McLaren, the GTI's performance will be boosted to match the McLaren's. This option creates an even playing field for all players.

Collision detection affects the physical elements of everyone's vehicles. When it's on, cars have an impact on each other; turning it off creates something of a ghost effect—you can drive right through another player's car as if it weren't there. Turning collision detection off is an interesting option

to try when you want to focus on best track time and limit the race variables. You still have the same motivation, because you can see other racers, but you avoid costly collisions.

«note»

With the improvements to the online system, players now spend more time playing than waiting in menu screens for the game to start.

» ONLINE BLACKLIST



The online Blacklist is similar in principle to the story mode Blacklist, but it's always changing, with new talent arriving to challenge the 15 most skilled racers. You must complete at least 20

ranked races to be listed in the online Blacklist.

The online Blacklist has two variations: Weekly, which tracks the best overall racers each week, and All Time, compiled from the continual tally of daily results.

«note»

If you make it onto either the Weekly or All Time Blacklist, pat yourself on the back. You've got some mad skills, playa! Not many people ever get good enough to make it into these rankings.

» LEADERBOARD



The Leaderboard is a more specific version of the Blacklist that tracks the best players in various events (circuit, sprints, and so forth). Use this screen info to follow your progress as you move up or down in

rank, compared to the Top 100. To be ranked on the Leaderboard, you must complete at least 20 ranked races.

This menu tracks your win percentage, top speed, use of Nitro and other factors, all contributing to your position on the Leaderboard.

There is an important distinction between rank and rating; in this section we'll discuss rank, because it is most relevant to the Leaderboard.

Your rank is determined by your values in the various column headers on the Leaderboard screen. For example, the highest-ranked player in the Win% column is the player with the highest percentage of wins. The #1 ranked player in the Top Speed column is the player with the highest top speed. Essentially, you are ranked in comparison with everyone else in each of the categories.



BEHIND THE SCENES

» PERSONAL STATS



The Personal Stats screen stores all of the race-specific information relevant to your online career. Use this info to track your skill rating, win/loss statistics, current rank, games

played, even right down to how many pounds of Nitrous Oxide you've consumed in total.

Your skill rating is listed in the main window of the Personal Stats screen. You want to keep this value moving up instead of down, obviously, but here is how it works:

Skill rating is a mathematical measurement of your racing abilities, created by using the ELO-Kiernan mechanism, similar to the ranking system used in chess. The formula includes how many people were in a race, what their ratings were before the race, and what each racer earned based on the results of the race.

«note»

Your skill rating is not a comparison of you against the rest of the gamer population. It is a mathematical assessment of how you're doing on an individual level.

BASICS

THE RIDES

UPGRADES

CAREER MODE

TRACKS