



The Mombasa Go-Kart Competitor Handbook

(2005 Edition)



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1. General Track Regulations

To ensure that your stay at Mombasa Go-Kart is enjoyable there are some rules and safety precautions that must be followed.

TRACK REGULATIONS

While riding the Go-Karts the following rules must be obeyed by each person:

1. Ride at your own risk; we reserve the right to refuse admission to anyone.
2. Helmets must be worn at all times and must be properly fastened.
3. Keep both hands on the wheel at all times. Arms, legs & feet are to remain in the kart.
4. Hair longer than shoulder length must be tied up with clips or rubber bands.
5. All loose clothing must be secured. No open-toed footwear is allowed.
6. No smoking in karts and in pit area.
7. Do not exit from karts in pit area until instructed.
8. Drinking and driving is not allowed.

There is to be absolutely:

9. NO BUMPING, NO SPINNING OUT, and NO CUTTING OFF.
10. While on track: Stay in kart at all times.

If for any reason your kart should shut down while out on the course you must
REMAIN IN THE KART and raise your hand !!!!

If these rules are disobeyed the rider will lose Go-Kart privileges and will be excluded from the karts.

PENALTIES

The likelihood of an accident happening increases greatly if drivers do not listen or adhere to instructions, do not pay attention to the flags, or drive in an aggressive manner or beyond their own ability.

Accordingly, we will deal with any of these violations with anything from a warning, to a penalty, to removal from race. Whether or not you agree with the decisions of the staff running the race, as in many other sports, **their call is final.**

2. Watching the Flagman

During the race, follow the instructions given through flags:

Green

Green means the track is safe and the race is in progress, it also signals the **start** to the race. After a neutralisation of a race it is shown to restart the race.

Yellow

Yellow means caution. Whenever this flag is displayed it means to slow down. The yellow flag is used when there is an accident or spin on the track.

- 1) A yellow flag **waved** in a corner is for that area only. Slow down, do not overtake, when past the incident continue racing.
- 2) If **displayed** during a race it means to slow down and line up in a single row. If the incident takes longer, we will bring out the safety car and neutralize the race.

Red

Red-means stop. This flag is displayed when an accident has happened on the track and those involved may need help due to possible injury. We instruct our racers to first raise their hand in the air (signals a driver's intent to slow down or leave the track, to drivers behind them) and then make sure that the spot they pick to stop is safe. There will be a regrouping of the karts on the start-finish line before the race goes. The only other time you'll see a red flag is when conditions are no longer safe for racing. This may be if rain occurs during a race.

Black

Black means to leave the track to the pits. You will see the flagman use the black flag two ways.

- 1) If it is **rolled up and pointed** at a competitor it is a warning. The track crew has observed this competitor doing something that is breaking a rule.
- 2) If the flag is **waved** then the competitor who received it knows to go to the pit. This black flag could be for a rule violation or it could also be an unsafe mechanical problem.

Usually you get the flag for a **penalty**, that means you have to stop at the pit for a certain time (e.g 5 seconds). A track crewmember will have a conversation with the offending driver to make sure they understand what they did wrong.

Blue

Blue means move over. This flag is displayed when a front-runner is lapping a competitor. If a competitor is slow enough to be lapped we display this flag to tell them of the approaching faster traffic so they can allow room for the leader to easily pass. This is done so that slower lapped traffic doesn't weigh into the outcome of the race.

Checkered

Checkered means the race is over. If you were the first one to the flag, the checkered also means you were victorious. You will see the race winners coming around at the end of the race to receive the checkered flag so they can do a victory lap!

3. Competition Driving Rules

1. The Flagman will have full control of the races subject to the rules. No one will be allowed to personally confront the flagman about a call during the race. Participants must first talk to the Race Director before approaching the flagman with a question. Failing to do so will be considered "Unsportsmanlike Conduct".

If a clarification of a call is necessary, you must approach the Race Director. You will be told ONE TIME what the decision is. NO EXPLANATION WILL BE DEBATABLE.

2. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION, LOSS OF POINTS FOR THE DAY.

3. Decisions made to throw or not throw a yellow or black flag are not contestable. **ALL CALLS ARE FINAL, SUBJECT TO THE RACE DIRECTOR'S DECISION.**

4. While on the track, drivers must remain in their karts unless otherwise directed. Drivers leaving their karts may be disqualified from the race. No one other than drivers is allowed on the track.

5. **RACE START:** Any start before the green flag is falling is a jumping start and will cause a restart. Any kart causing a restart will be sent to the rear. Any driver pressing the throttle and brake simultaneously before the start will get a penalty.

6. When the yellow flag comes out during the course of the race, kart must slow down immediately. **THERE IS NO OVERTAKING ON THE YELLOW FLAG.**

7. **WHEN TWO OR MORE KARTS ENTER A CORNER SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE LEAD KART HAS THE RIGHT-OF-WAY.** All karts should maintain a constant line through the corners and avoid erratic changes in direction. Any driver leaving the course or cutting the apex of the corner attempting to pass another kart is subject to a penalty.

8. **SIGNALING:** Drivers shall raise one arm over their head to signal drivers following them, when slowing abnormally, applying excessive brakes, pulling off the track, failing to accelerate normally or warning other drivers of an impending hazard. DRIVERS shall raise both arms over their head to signal drivers following that they have no control over their kart after spinning off the track or stopping on the track due to mechanical failure. However, do not raise arms until the kart has safely stopped.

9. When a driver is being overtaken by a faster kart they shall attempt to signal the approaching kart with one arm raised indicating the safest side for passing.

10. If flagman determines any bumping, crowding, chopping, blocking or pushing of participants other than an inadvertent manner, that participant shall be subject to a penalty of 5 seconds.

11. If a driver continuously drives over the rail tires to gain position, the driver will be warned by the rolled black flag. Abuse of the warning will cause a penalty of 5 seconds.

IT'S EACH DRIVERS RESPONSIBILITY TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE RULES

4. Common Race Procedures

Allocation of the Karts

Allocation of the karts depends from race format to race format. Usually the assignment is random. (Out of the hat)

Line-up

The drivers start from the pit in the order the karts are lined up and follow the safety-car slowly to the start grid. **Overtaking is not allowed!**

Race Start

The drivers wait in the start-position until the green flag is falling for the start.

Last Lap

Displayed with the "Last-Lap"-board.

Race Finish

The end of the race is displayed with the chequered flag. The one who sees first the chequered flag is the winner. The drivers complete the lap in a slow speed and leave to the pit. The winner is allowed to add a winners-lap for presentation.

Presentation of the winners

Presentation ceremony and prize giving is usually in the Galana Restaurant

Race Exceptions

Warm Race Restart

The Yellow Flag is displayed (not waved) by all flagmen. All drivers have to drive very slowly. **Overtaking is not allowed!** Drive behind the safety-car.

Restart: Waved green flag. No more limitations.

Remark: A Warm Restart is ordered after an incident, which is blocking the track.

Cold Race Restart

The Red Flag is waved. **All drivers stop on the spot** and wait for instructions.

Restart: New line-up on the start-grid. The Race is reset to zero. The race director decides about the remaining laps to carry out.

Accident

The Yellow Flag is waved to the karts entering the accident zone. Drivers drive slowly through the spot and don't overtake until leaving the accident zone

Over lapping

If a competitor is slow enough to be lapped we display him the blue flag. This flag is to tell him of the approaching faster traffic so he can allow room for the leader to easily pass.

Warning

If a driver is pointed with the rolled-up black flag this means a warning for breaking any rule. If the warning is ignored it follows a penalty or a disqualification.

Penalty

If a driver gets the waved black flag this means to leave the track to the pit. Usually it is for a penalty. If the penalty is ignored it follows a disqualification. For a penalty the driver has to stop for 5 seconds. The call for a penalty is ordered by the Race-Director. If you agree or don't, the call is final.

Disqualification

If a driver is ignoring a waved black flag or breaking rules in an extraordinary way he is disqualified. The disqualification is ordered by the Race-Director. If you agree or don't, the call is final. The start fee is not refunded.

Mechanical Failure

In case of mechanical failure (usually a tyre burst), a replacement kart is ready to start at the pit-lane. Raise the hand; stop the kart in a safe manner on the track (not outside). Wait until you get a sign from a flagman to leave the kart, then run as quick as possible to the pit-lane and continue with the replacement kart. We try to keep all karts in the same technical condition and the karts are allocated by lottery. So it is just bad luck, take it easy.

5. Championship Race Procedures

General

The Mombasa Go-Kart Championship 2005 is a series of 8 race days, one per month. The Race series is intended to be fun and competitive. The detailed rules you find in the Galana Restaurant on the racetrack or on the Mombasa Go-Kart website. These rules are designed to ensure that all participants are threatened equally and fairly and that we get the most fun out of the events.

The drivers compete as individuals as well as in teams of 3 drivers.

Points System / Team System

Points awarded throughout the year will determinate the 2005 Champions.

Team points are collected in the Pre-Finals and Driver points in the Final Races.

Races

We don't race in categories, so heavy weights and lightweights, juniors and adults, males and females all compete in the same races. To ensure that everybody has a chance and to prevent that there is a "Michael Schumacher" who is starting always in pole position, every race will be somehow different.

In some races we even have handicap starts, where the fast ones have to start at the end of the grid. Like this, at the end of the year we will really know who the best Go-Kart drivers in Mombasa are.

The Problem of Karts Selection

The Karts were evaluated and selected to ensure that they are in a good state of repair and evenly matched. The selection is intended to be entirely random. But it does not automatically mean out of the hat. This procedure takes just too much time in a program of 6 races during two hours. Due to the nature of kart and group assignments, there is always an opportunity for a less skilled driver to challenge a seasoned driver. Sure, sometimes it may turn out that the fastest driver winds up in the fastest Kart – that's racing! Any attempt to prevent this from happening would undermine the "random" nature of Kart selection.

Anyway, on the next race we will make the assignment more transparent. Karts will be on the grid in random order based on how they come off the track.

Race procedure: Normal Race

27 drivers in 9 teams of each 3 drivers

6.00pm **Qualifying: (3 Laps)**
Each team makes 3 laps qualifying.

7.00pm **Pre-Races: (15 Laps)**
Start-position according to Qualifying
P1: Pre-Race: 9 drivers, one from each team.
P2: Pre-Race: 9 drivers, one from each team.
P3: Pre-Race: 9 drivers, one from each team.

Team points in the races P1..P3:

1st 5points, 2nd 4points, 3rd 3points, 4th 2points, 5th 1point

8.00pm **Final Races: (15 Laps)**
Start-position according to overall Team Points
F3: 7th,8th,9th of P1..P3 . 9 drivers
F2: 4th,5th,6th of P1..P3 . 9 drivers
F1: 1st,2nd,3rd of P1..P3 . 9 drivers

Driver points in the races F1..F3:

F1: 1st 20points, 2nd 19points, 3rd 18points, 4th 17points, 5th 16points
6th 15points, 7th 14points, 8th 13points, 9th 12points

F2: 1st 10points, 2nd 9points, 3rd 8points, 4th 7points, 5th 6points
6th 5points, 7th 4points, 8th 3points, 9th 2points

F3: 1st 1point

6. Track Etiquette

Always drive a straight line, don't zig zag. When you aren't driving a straight line you are blocking, and that is against the rules. If you aren't fast enough to keep the person behind you maybe you should let them go by and learn something from following them. Sometimes some unintentional blocking goes on when we have beginners involved. Often our small drivers steer in the direction they look. If another kart pulls up along side, and the small size racer looks over at them, inadvertently the small size racer steers in the direction that they are looking. This usually results in a collision. Not typically life threatening, but a good way to bend wheel rims.

No bumping or pushing. In racing there is casual contact, but intentional contact is not allowed. It is sometimes hard to tell the two apart. This is one of the challenges that the race director, flagman, and corner workers face. If it is determined that someone is bumping or running into someone else on purpose, they will be black-flagged and get a penalty. This is done for two reasons. Most bumping or pushing is an accident waiting to happen, and certainly not a sportsman like way to compete. It is harder and takes more skill to pass a fellow competitor without first hitting him. The good racers aspire to pass in this matter.

When is it okay to overtake in a corner? Experience and good judgment will help the seasoned driver avoid trouble with another competitor in a corner. For the beginner, we try to convince them that unless they are clearly alongside or ahead of the person they are trying to overtake, they should concede the corner to the other person. Now you'll see drivers race through corners side-by-side. The rules regarding who has the right to the corner exist to avoid a potentially dangerous situation. If a competitor manages to get his front wheels just past the rear wheels of the racer in front, and then they enter the corner in this fashion, the person in front may never know that he has company close behind.

No "paybacks". Human nature says that if you've been wronged you get even, right? Not. Getting even right there and then seems like a fair enough policy, but the problem is that usually the guy that just rammed you from behind may have had help doing it, or did it completely by accident, or wasn't even the person who did it! After all, the driver fixing to retaliate didn't see what happened in most cases, he just felt it. So the violated driver sets about getting even and the next thing you know someone is run off the track, or the two now engaged in a rolling battle end up on top of each other. This isn't good for obvious safety reasons, but also because we now have good opportunity for someone to get mad, and emotional, and ugly. That's why the race crew makes decisions on who should be disciplined, if anybody.

7. Go-Kart Fundamentals

Go-Karts are still cars, and most of the understanding you have in driving a road car will apply here. Braking or letting off the throttle transfers weight to the front wheels, accelerating transfers it rear. One significant difference is that the driver's weight can be moved around in a Go-Kart, where it would have little effect in a 2ton road car. In a right-hand turn, lean to the outside (rather than the inside, as you feel you should) – this will give the outside wheels more grip, while freeing up the inside rear to spin more easily (remember, the two rear wheels are fixed together).

How to reduce your lap-times:

Seating

Make yourself comfortable in the Go-Kart. Place a cushion behind your back or better on the left side. (We have six corners to the right and only two to the left) Our staff will help you with the cushions. Make sure the pedals can be reached and operated easily.

Driving

There are two components on the track. One is the straight section; the second is the corners or curves. Go-Karts naturally want to go in a straight line, so the more time spent with the front wheels straight the lower the lap time. Keeping the RPMs up is extremely important due to the relatively weak motors (6.5hp) and the nature of the automatic clutch. Whenever the front wheels are not straight you lose RPMs.

Corners

Corners represent the biggest challenge in Go-Karting because they take the most skill to negotiate. The basic theory is the same as cornering a car, slow down approaching the corner; turn in to the apex, once at the apex turn out while accelerating. The mechanics of actually doing this in a Go-Kart are different than in a car because the Go-Kart lacks a differential.

A small bit of vehicle dynamics or physics is needed to help to understand the cornering concept. Because the Go-Kart has a live rear axle (both rear wheels are directly connected), its nature is to go in a straight line. When driving on a straight line the weight on the rear wheels is equal. The only way to make the Go-Kart turn is to reduce the weight on the inside rear wheel. This is done primarily by steering the Go-Kart, which raises the inside rear wheel. This basically allows the inside wheel to "slip" while the outside wheel drives.

Turning the steering wheel in the direction desired is seldom enough to create sufficient weight difference on the rear wheels to make the Go-Kart turn. To initiate turn in, the power to rear wheels must be momentarily interrupted. This is done by braking off, releasing, breathing up on the throttle. How much throttle interruption and the timing of the interruption takes practice.

Leaning your body weight to the outside of the corner at turn also reduces the weight on the inside rear tire, aiding change in direction of the Go-Kart.

The steering wheel should be turned as little and as slowly as possible. Always pull the wheel down as opposed to pushing the wheel up, you will have more control.

Braking

Braking should be done in a straight line when possible.

The brake and the throttle are never supposed to be used simultaneously (it overheats the clutch and the brake). Periodically, the brake can be momentarily and lightly applied to loosen (lighten) the rear wheel feeding in steering. Do this only when independent inputs of brake/steering/throttle won't work. Remember if the flag men see you using brake and throttle Simultaneously you get a warning or even a penalty.

The technique of racing:

Overtaking

There are ideal lines to follow under qualifying (best-lap). However, if you drive these during the race, you will likely lose places to drivers diving own the inside. The best places to pass are the tight, twisty sections. Be cautious in diving prior to a long straight. If you dive down the inside, you loose a lot of momentum and can lose the spot back down the straight.

Overall, overtaking needs to be made safely, without whacking the Go-Karts. The Go-Karts are solid, but they are susceptible to damage when there's a lot of banging. Time your pass, take your time, and take a few laps to learn where the other driver's weakness is. Wait for him to make a small mistake, and capitalize on it.

Conclusion

If you look the best lap times in a race you will see that they are all very close together. What this indicates is one respect that the Go-Karts are close to equal in performance. The track is the same for everyone. The remaining factor is the driver.