

## **GETTING IN A KART SAFELY AND KART CONTROLS**

### **GETTING INTO A KART SAFELY**

To get into the kart, climb aboard by stepping over the sidepods and placing both feet in the centre of the karts seat. Once in, sit on the back of the seat, then lower yourself into the kart, extending your left leg first to cover the brake pedal.

Once your sat in the kart, check to see that you can reach the controls.

Start with your legs. When you are sat in the karts, your legs need to be bent when the pedals are fully pressed. You don't want to be stretching to operate the pedals. If you are stretching, it means that you may not be able to fully control the kart.

Your feet need to be planted on the floor of the kart. This allows you to use your ankle as a pivot point, allowing more sensitivity when using the pedals.

Keep your hands at the 'ten to two' or 'quarter to three' position on the steering wheel. This allows you to get the best leverage on the wheel and share the load equally between both arms. You should not move hands around the rim of the wheel. We don't want to be stretching for the steering wheel either. Make sure that you have slightly bent arms when turning the steering wheel fully from one direction to the other.

The pit Crew will check your position in the kart, but if you're not comfortable, or want any assistance, raise your hand and one of the Crew will come and speak to you.

### **KART CONTROLS**

Essentially, you have three controls. They are:

#### **1. The Steering Wheel:**

This is the big round thing in front of you, when you get into the kart, have a play around with it. Don't be alarmed if you find the steering heavy. It gets lighter when you pick up speed. Now the steering on a kart is very direct and gives the driver great feedback. It is important to be smooth with your steering. If you are sawing away at the wheel, it makes the kart difficult to drive. Small, smooth movements are best. Try and stay relaxed with the steering wheel. This will help to keep your driving smooth. We'll go deeper into how to steer effectively later.

#### **2. Throttle Pedal:**

This is the green pedal and it is operated by your right foot. This pedal is used to deliver power to the rear wheels. The harder you press it, the more power you will get to the rear wheels. If you are aggressive with the throttle pedal, it can make the kart difficult to drive and can result in you losing control. The best way to start out with your driving is to be smooth with the throttle. When you first press it, it can be a nervous moment. Start by

pushing it slowly and gently until the kart starts to move. You don't need to press the pedal all the way to the stop. Just press it until you are travelling at a speed you are comfortable with, then release the pedal. You will find that when you release the pedal, the kart will start to slow down by itself. Keep practising and see how smooth you can accelerate. Practice makes perfect, so keep going. Now it can get quite loud, and the engine vibrates when you rev it up, but don't worry, that is normal.

### 3. Brake Pedal:

This is the red pedal and you operate this with your left foot. You use this one to slow you down. The harder you press it, the more braking you will get. Smooth braking is also important. If you brake too hard, you may 'lock up' the rear wheels. This means that you will be skidding the kart, making it difficult to control. To use the brake effectively, firstly make sure that you have taken your foot completely off the throttle pedal. Press the brake pedal smoothly, but firmly. It is as simple as that. The kart will slow down, and if you keep your foot on the brake, it will stop.

Make sure that you are happy with the controls before you go out on to the track. The pit Crew will check to make sure that you can use the controls before they let you out of the pit lane, and if you are unsure of anything, put your hand up. The instructors are on hand to help.

## BRAKING, TURNING AND ACCELERATING

Wow, so now, we're out on the track. But how do we drive this thing? Simple really. We're going to follow three simple steps:

1. Firstly, we're going to **BRAKE**

Before we get to a corner, we're going to have to slow down. The approach to a corner is called the 'Braking Zone'. We brake before the corner to make sure that we go into the corner at a controllable speed. If we go too fast, we may lose control of the kart. We don't want to do that!

2. Secondly, we're going to **TURN** in

Once we have slowed down, we need to take our foot off the brake pedal and turn the steering wheel. This is called the '*turning in point*'. The kart will change direction. It may feel a little unstable if you are driving quickly. Don't worry. If you keep your feet off the pedals, you will be able to correct it using the steering wheel.

3. Thirdly, we are going to **ACCELERATE**

Once we have changed direction and we can see the exit of the corner, you can start to smoothly accelerate away from the corner as you straighten up the steering wheel.

It's as simple as that. It helps if you talk yourself through the corner. Get used to doing things in this order. Again, practice makes perfect, so keep repeating **BRAKE, TURN, ACCELERATE** as you drive around the track.

Now there are a couple of things to try when you are out on track for the first time:

1. If you are feeling confident, try accelerating a bit harder as you leave a corner. You will pick up a fair bit of speed. It is great fun, but don't forget to brake a bit harder for the next corner.
2. Make sure that you get your braking done before you turn in to a corner. A lot of drivers brake and turn at the same time. This is a big no-no!! We want to take our foot off the brake before we turn in to the corner. Practise this as you don't want to develop any bad habits.
3. Don't jump from one pedal to the other. If you find you are going too quickly, release the throttle pedal and allow the kart to slow down by itself, before jumping for the brake.
4. Be smooth with the throttle pedal. Try not to slide the kart when you are accelerating.
5. Did you have a spin? Try and find out why. There are two main reasons why you might spin a kart. You're either braked too hard whilst turning or accelerated too hard out of a corner. Don't worry if you have had a spin. You've found the limit of the kart!

Spend your first lesson getting used to using the controls. The better you get at using them, the easier the next steps will be. Don't try to go too fast too soon. Don't worry, you'll be driving fast soon, but there is a lot to take in when you first start. Not only will you need to get to grips with the controls, you need to keep an eye on the flag and light signals. Master the basics, and you will progress well.