

EQUIPMENT – HELMETS

HELMETS

TeamSport will provide you with a helmet to use during your lessons.

However, it is important to understand how a helmet should fit you safely and in the scenario that you want to purchase your own, what are the things you need to look for and check.

FIT, WHAT THE HELEMT IS MADE FROM, COLOUR, WEIGHT AND SAFETY SPECIFICATIONS

There are a few factors to consider when choosing a helmet. The fit, what the helmet is made from, colour, weight, and most importantly, the safety specifications.

THE FIT

The fit of a helmet is very important. You don't want it so tight that it gives you a headache, nor so loose that it wobbles round on your head when you're racing. A lot of people who first try a helmet on think it is too tight.

It will feel tight putting the helmet on as the padding will need to be fit round the base of your head. Don't worry, get the helmet on and carry out a couple of simple movement tests;

- Shake your head from side to side,
- Move your head backwards and forwards.

If the helmet does not move significantly, and feels comfortable, it is probably the right size. You should also have 'hamster cheeks', meaning that the helmet padding is supporting and holding your head all the way around.

Lastly, check the strap. When it is fully done up, it should be under tension. This prevents the helmet from rolling off your head in the event of a significant impact. If the strap is not under tension, then the helmet is too big.

WHAT THE HELMET IS MADE FROM, COLOUR & WEIGHT

Looking at the different component parts of a helmet, you are presented with some choices.

What The Helmet Is Made From

There are different materials that will impact the weight, cost and importantly, the safety specification of the helmet.

Helmets are made of a thin, hard, outershell. The outershell is made from either **polycarbonate plastic, fiberglass or Kevlar/carbon**. These plastics offer a protection barrier around the softer, foam lining of the helmet; the main purpose of the hard shell is to prevent penetration of the helmet by a pointed object that might other puncture the skull,

and to give structural integrity to the impact absorbent material that dissipates energy and prevents brain injury in the event of an impact.

All helmets are safety tested, so you may find that a polycarbonate helmet may have the same safety rating as a fibreglass or Kevlar helmet that cost a lot more. The difference here will be in the weight and finish of the helmet.

Straps in crash helmets can have several different fastening systems. Most modern crash helmets have a seat belt style buckle, or a ratchet fastener, which are easy to fasten, but slightly more difficult to adjust. The traditional fastening method is with a double-D ring, which you will find in motor racing specific helmets, and high-end helmets. These are very secure and offer infinite adjustment.

Visors will also differ according to the specification of the helmet. Motor racing helmets will generally be thicker than motorcycle helmet visors as they are designed for different conditions. Most helmets will come with clear visors. There is a temptation to swap your clear visor for a tinted, smoked or iridium visor. Just be aware that these visors are designed for different light conditions and can have an impact on your vision, especially in lower light situations, which are very common in indoor tracks.

The Colour and Safety

There is a great array of different helmet designs on the market.

Safety specifications are the most important things to consider when selecting a helmet.

For indoor karting, and some outdoor karting, helmets need to be full face and be road legal. This means that they comply with the ECE 22.05 standard, which is the European minimum standard for motorcycle helmets.

Helmets will have a sticker on the shell and a tag on the helmet strap that carries the certification. For outdoor championships or events run under Motorsport UK, the SNELL or FIA helmet standards are required. If you are going racing outdoors, then it's best to check what specification helmet the organisers require.

Your helmet is the most important piece of safety equipment you will buy. Don't be tempted to buy second hand, as you do not know if the helmet has been mistreated, and don't go for cheap Ebay replicas, as they may not be genuine.

TeamSport carry a wide range of helmets and accessories, so when the time comes to invest in your own helmet, ask at your local track. The Crew will be more than happy to assist you.