



May 2010 Newsletter - Prokarts

A fantastic entry of 47 karts certainly generated a lot of discussion following race day on www.karting.co.uk, facebook and elsewhere. All comments are considered from both drivers and circuit staff alike. Having built up the entries over a period of several years knee jerk responses to “one off” incidents makes little sense to me. Peter and Bill tell me that the first three heats and the final passed off with little incident despite the numbers. The final itself was, apparently, competitive, clean racing with virtually nothing reported to the officials. I am also aware of far larger grids of Prokarts involved in endurance racing where there is little contact and driving standards are high. So it may be that the overly competitive attitude of some drivers during the 4th heat and/or their inexperience was the issue rather than the actual number of karts on the track. Poor driving and a disregard for the rules of racing, by one or two drivers, will cause mayhem in amongst smaller grids in the same way as it did in the 4th heat.

Following the two red flags Peter talked to several drivers, one of whom clearly did not know what the yellow flag meant to him. His answers were frankly ignorant of what motorsport is about. Clearly the ARKS tests and the MSA Blue book are aimed at people like him. The initial incident developed into something more serious simply because several drivers did not react to the yellow flags by immediately slowing down. The circuit marshals did their job well – how ever to be effective all drivers must respond to their use of the flags.

Complaints about gridding up karts may be unfair as the problems centred on two karts which were displaying the same numbers as two other karts in the same race. Do we have to introduce tighter control over kart numbers just like the MSA clubs? The new format of gridding Prokarts in the pitlane should sort that problem out.

Getting back to the incidents at the Dunlop chicane we have taken on board comments regarding the tyres as well as “straight lining” the exit of the chicane. The chicane is one of the features of the circuit and to cut it out reduces the challenge to the better drivers but does allow the lesser drivers to keep up. Is an airport runway the answer i.e. a dead straight track? Peter points out correctly that the circuit is defined by the white lines and competitors should remain within the white lines. However rules that are un-enforceable are not worth having..... so by the next meeting **a new rumble strip will be constructed**. No tyres just a horrible, teeth rattling, axle bending rumble strip that may encourage all drivers to drive the circuit as marked by the white lines. Those that cannot drive around the chicane at speed may have to adjust their speed or visit the dentist afterwards. Feedback as always is welcome.

Is splitting the grid into Elite and Clubman the answer.....NO!

Last weekend we had 47 karts on site of which 13 were entered as Elite drivers. Take out the Elite leaves 32 karts on the circuit i.e. still a big grid. When new drivers enter for the first time they are likely to enter as Clubman further increasing the grid / problem. So I am proposing a simple 50:50% split based on timed qualifying. TQ will be in two sessionsit does not matter which one you

take part in. TW Kart Club then split the entry into 2 equal sized grids with relegation and promotion taking place throughout the day. 5 up and 5 down after each race is my suggestion at this moment in time.

Having taken on board the views of many I recognize that T&W Kart Club is an entry level kart club which does attract novice drivers in all classes. Consequently none of us (including all you drivers) can reasonably expect / demand high standards of driving from everyone on the circuit. Furthermore I accept the point that the circuit staff cannot possibly see and report all contact which exceeds acceptable racing incident. Consequently some bad driving is going unpunished.

Peter, Bill and I are proposing the following –

- i. The Dunlop chicane will be modified to remove the tyres but deter anyone from crossing the white lines.
- ii. The format will change with signing on from 8 am, drivers briefing at 9.00 am (followed immediately by a short discussion with all Prokart drivers).
- iii. Timed qualifying starting at 9.30 am in 10 minute sessions with 2 sessions for Prokarts. T/Q results will determine which Prokart group you are **allocated to for the day** with the entry split into 2 groups. The Clerks will have the discretion and authority to insert any driver onto the back of the grid for Group A if they believe that it is appropriate to do so.
- iv. T/Q and the Race order will be Cadet, Junior Tkm, Junior Max, Senior Max and Tkm followed by Group A Prokarts then Group B Prokarts. Both Prokart groups will take part in 3 longer heats of 15laps plus a 15 lap final.
- v. Finally the use of warning flags and black flags will be reviewed.

This will mean that the Prokarts come off the circuit following timed qualifying.

Endurance Races

Bill Routledge started his involvement with karts in Prokart Endurance racing many years ago. He is keen to establish Endurance racing again in the north of the U.K. The suggestion is to run a 3 hour endurance on a Saturday evening with 30 minutes of practice /TQ to start. The cost will be £120.00 per kart in advance or £140.00 on the night. The first date for your diaries will be **26th June 2010**. Full regulations are on/will be on the T&W Kart Club website soon.

I have never received so many emails and phone calls on any subject since I opened the circuit 14 years ago but all are appreciated. Improvements can only take place if you voice your criticisms and concerns to those who can provide a solution. It was only by luck that someone copied and posted the Facebook content to me that I became aware of the scale of the discussion. The club will continue to grow if you, the customers, keep working with us to improve the package on offer. Let me know your thoughts after the June meeting on ian@kartingnortheast.com

