Kelvin Kong

PE 12

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Karting Racing

 Karting is probably the world's most popular form of motor sport. It is practiced around the world by hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts at widely differing levels of competition. It is simply a wonderful way of enjoying competitive racing on a small and manageable budget, meeting friends at the track on the weekend and just having a lot of fun. For others, it is a serious stepping stone into a career of racing, maybe leading all the way up to Formula 1. Karting is definitely recognized as the first and most important step in order to become a professional race car driver. Even though a kart differs from a car, all the racing techniques, the awareness of the way the vehicle handles, the discipline, and instincts needed to become a professional racer are developed with karting. It is therefore no surprise that most of today's top Formula 1 or CART racers have started their racing careers with karting.

**History of the Go Karts**

Most karting historians give credit to Californian Art Ingles as the first person to build a racing go kart, originally called a go-cart. It did not take long for this fad to catch on and go-cart tracks started to pop up all across America. By the late 1950s, an American company modified a 2-stroke chainsaw motor and the McCulloch MC-10 became the first motor manufactured specifically for go-cart racing. Today, engines used in kart racing are generally split into two classifications: 2-stroke or 4-stroke motors. The majority of 2-stroke kart racing engines is now manufactured in Italy, the European home to large karting companies like IAME, Barrel, Tony Kart & CRG. Racing engines have become very sophisticated with some capable of 20,000 rpm. On the other hand, the 4-stroke motors used in kart racing and recreational karting have mostly been adapted from the standard lawnmower engine. The 4-stroke kart racing engine provides an affordable alternative to the more powerful 2-stroke motor

What is the difference between a go-kart and a kart?

Same difference. In fact, most people will consider both to mean the same. Others make a distinction that a 'kart' is the serious racing vehicle, while a 'go-kart' is a fun-machine, a toy of sorts. It can be argued either way, but most commonly, the serious racer will refer to his or her vehicle only as 'kart'.

How fast does a kart go?

Depends on the kind of kart and the kind of track and the kind of gear ratio used. On short tracks with short straights, speeds of maybe 80 km/h (50 mph) can be reached even by restricted classes. On long, full-sized race tracks, more than twice that speed is possible. There are karting classes that are slower, and others that are significantly faster, such as Super karts, which can have two engines. These are some very rough numbers indeed, and actual top-speed will depend on many, many factors, not the least of which being the driver.

How does a kart differ from a car?

The main differences are that a kart does not have a suspension and has a stiff rear axle. The stiff rear axle causes inside and outside rear wheels to always turn at the same speed. In curves, however, the inside wheel has to travel less distance and thus should rotate slower. In a rear-driven car, this is made possible via the differential. In a kart, however, the same rotational speed would result in the tires scrubbing, thereby slowing down the kart and also causing bad handling.