

Getting Started in Karting

South Florida Karting Association

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I'm interested in Karting. How Do I Get Started?

A good beginning may be to come to the Martin County Kartway on a race day. Pay the gate fee and walk around the pits. Ask the racers questions, check out their karts, eat some track food and watch the races. All racers were like you at one time; beginners with a lot of questions, or former racers who are coming back to the sport and checking out the changes. Racers love to talk about Karting and their machines. Ask to meet the Race Director. He knows many of the racers and can introduce you to people who would be willing to help you get started.

Directions to the track can be found on our website: <http://www.southfloridakarting.com/>

Race days are listed on the home page. The site contains useful information that will help you become familiar with our organization. There are helpful links on the Forum including videos of races, pictures of karts and racers, class structures, rules and much more. Feel free to explore!

Who races Go-karts?

Racers at Hobe Sound range in age from 5-75. You have to be in good health and weigh between 50 and 250 pounds. Drivers range from 4' to well over 6' tall. Some drivers have no experience racing; some are coming back from car racing or motorcycle racing. Many families race together. Mothers, fathers and their kids all have Karts and race competitively. Karting is the ultimate family sport.

All kids (under 18) who race must be accompanied by an adult. The adult is usually the crew chief, tuner, hauler driver, cook, chief strategist, staff psychologist and sponsor. We find that parents often come for their children and end up getting their own kart and joining in the fun of racing.

If you have really big dreams of a career in racing, you may already know that Karting has produced our best professional racers. Practically every driver from NASCAR to Formula One started in Go-Karts at places just like the Martin County Kartway. If you are a youngster who wants to go fast, a teen with NASCAR dreams, or a more seasoned individual who wants to get back into the fast lane for a little excitement and a rewarding hobby, the Martin County Kartway offers a safety conscious, family oriented place to pursue your need for speed.

Is Karting Dangerous?

All sports have an element of danger. Karting is no exception. It is each racer's responsibility to put safety first, by using high quality safety equipment and preparing their kart according to the rules outlined by the SFKA. As an organization, the SKFA does everything possible in structuring races and classes to minimize the risks to racers and spectators on race day. Every aspect of the karting experience has been, and is continuously scrutinized to maximize driver safety. The rules on the home page of our web site outline our racing structures, performance limits for young racers, safety equipment requirements, and race procedures for every racer and kart.

All Karts and racers are safety teched before every race to insure that everyone's kart and equipment meets SFKA standards and complies with classification rules. By minimizing risk and maximizing good sportsmanship and communication between racers, spectators and officials, karting has evolved into a highly organized sport where racers can prepare their machines and test their metal against likeminded competitors in a safe, fast and fun environment.

How Much Is this Going to Cost?

Karting is, hands down, the most affordable form of competitive motor sports on the planet. Most people start with second hand equipment. There are always karts for sale in the pits, and there are dealers who have used components available to make the entry into karting extremely affordable. There is the internet and there are local vendors who have been helping karters on the Treasure Coast get started for decades. You can find their links on the forum. There are always local vendors at the track on race days. They will be more than happy to help you get started right.

Depending on how much work you want to do yourself, your mechanical background and skill as a scrounge a running, competitive kart; sitting on the track with you in it, dressed and ready for racing could cost as little as \$700 and as much as \$3500, with the upper number being for a dealer built high tech work of art. The average cost lies somewhere in between. Different classes, different motors, tires, and chassis all play a part in the cost of entry into karting. The good news is that 99% of a kart's performance lies between the ears of the driver and his ability to adjust his machine to track conditions. Classes are designed to accentuate the driver's skills. Many racers run and win with beat up old equipment that they have run for years. It is their skill as a driver and their attitude that puts them in the winner's circle, not the cost of their stuff.

While it is fun to see how cheaply you can build a kart, do not scrimp on safety gear. Your helmet should be Snell approved. That means the helmet's design has been tested by the Snell Foundation to meet the most rigorous performance standards of protection. These helmets can be had for under \$100 on line and are required at every track. Not all helmets have Snell 2000 or Snell 2005 approval. Check inside your helmet for the Snell sticker...no sticker...no good for racing. Here is the price breakdown for required safety gear:

- A neck collar \$20 - \$75
- Racing Jacket or Suit (abrasion resistant usually nylon or cordura) \$50-\$350
- Snell 2000 or better helmet \$80-\$600
- Driving Gloves \$20-\$100
- Not required but recommended – Rib Vest/Guard \$50-\$150

Reoccurring racing expenses:

- Gate fee per race \$10 per person
- Entry Fee for Kart- \$25 per race
- Fuel- Methanol at \$7 per gallon. (a gallon usually lasts two race weekends)

A season of complete racing can be accomplished on a very modest budget.

How do I learn to do this?

There is no substitute for seat time. Your first race will be a blur. As you progress, you will become more comfortable in the kart and be able to relax and think. You will learn about the joys of playing with the laws of physics, g-forces, track and chassis geometry, and race strategy. You will eventually pass another racer (whoohooo!); spin out (and live!); and maybe even get a podium finish at some point. How far you go is totally up to you.

You will pick the brains of more experience racers for information. We have state champion level racers as well as veteran drivers with over 50 years of racing experience at the Martin County Kartway. All will be willing to help you progress and get to the next level. The SFKA forum is loaded with information and is a cyber gateway to communicate with our local karting community. Technology has made it easier than ever to learn the basics of good racing.

Feel free to contact the SKFA. We will happily answer any questions you have about Kart Racing at the Martin County Kart Way in Hobe Sound, Florida.

Go Fast/Turn Left!

Contact information can be found at: <http://www.southfloridakarting.com/>