



SPEED SHOP SCHOLAR

Welcome to another edition of the “Speed Shop Scholar.” If you have been a regular reader of this column, you know that from time to time I get a little wound up and share a few observations that just seem to stick in my craw a bit. Well, it’s that time again.

Good sense and judgment sometimes have seemed to get left behind, not only on the track, but sometimes, even before loading the trailer.

The big carrot dangled before kart racers is bigger than ever. Huge purses and payouts bring eager racers out from all over the country, all with their eyes on the prize. Money has transformed many Saturday night racers into money chasers, sometimes all too quickly.

It is also amazing what some parents will do in the quest for success with a young driver. Now, don’t get me wrong, success is something we all desire and work very hard to achieve. However, taking a young driver with just a few races under their belt and throwing them to the wolves in the field of a huge event is the recipe for disaster. I often wonder if these parents, immediately upon leaving the DMV with their newly licensed driver, send them into rush hour traffic. Makes you wonder.

Learning to race does not come by simply purchasing a kart and equipment. The correct line, how to pass, and how to be passed are all critical skills that take laps and weeks to acquire. Being fast takes a little longer sometimes. Don’t jeopardize your driver and your equipment by advancing too many rungs on the ladder at one time. Spend some quality local seat time to build experience and skills.

Some drivers, both young and old, while having some skills, seem to be lacking in others. I have many times seen a driver spin off the racing surface, whether to the infield or the outside of the track. Then, without even looking, pull right into the racing groove. Next to leaving your helmet in the trailer, this is one of the most dangerous and shall I say, stupid, things a

driver can do. On many tracks, speeds are quite high, and one kart, running at a fraction of race speed can wreak havoc, possibly injuring themselves or others. At a minimum, it often completely ruins the race for someone undeserving of such a fate.

Over the last few years, the etiquette, or shall I say, lack of etiquette among racers has really become deplorable. Blocking, bashing, and flat out wrecking someone to advance position or win a race has become way too commonplace.

Big money sometimes brings out the worst in some racers, and the worst part, it has become permissible. Promoters, race directors, and flagmen all too often seem to look the other way when some of these blatant acts occur.

Every one of us have been at many driver’s meetings where it’s proclaimed from the mountaintops that rough driving will not be tolerated. Penalties, ranging from warnings to disqualifications are repeated again and again. In the time between the meeting and the races, something strange often occurs; these words are all forgotten.

Racers, we are an observant bunch. Once it is left to us to self police ourselves, some seem to take advantage and run wild on the track. Earlier this year, one driver chose to take matters into his own hands on the last laps of several marquee events, leaving behind a path of destruction a mile wide as he ran over anyone that was in front of him. Showing a complete lack of class and sportsmanship toward anyone or anything between himself and the prize. The lack of repercussions for these actions convey the image this is tolerable racing. I myself, do not find it acceptable. I also hope you don’t either.

Some others feel that anyone attempting a pass on them deserves a trip to the infield, whether it’s on lap one or lap twenty, they drive the same. These people get seriously upset when they find themselves stuck in the fence because someone got tired of playing games.

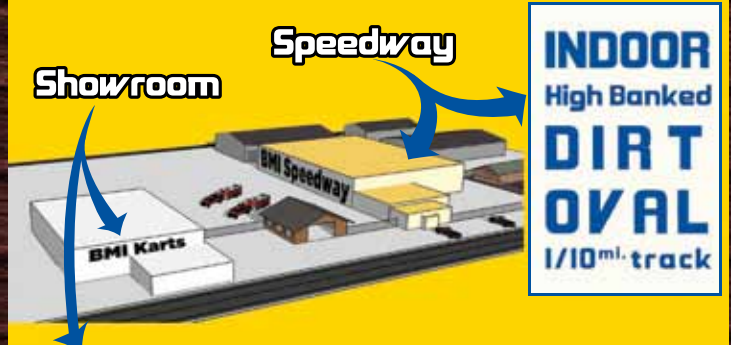
Flagmen and race directors, even though we sometimes think otherwise, cannot see every on-track incident. However, action in the lead pack in the waning laps, usually gets observed closely. When such incidents occur, reversion back to the threats delivered during the driver's meeting should be carried out, and the violator dealt with.

All we can ask of our fellow racers is for them to race us in the same manner in which we race them. We all race to win, but give a bit of respect to others, especially if you want respect in return. If you like to pass people by running them over, or knocking them out of the way, don't get offended when the favor is returned. We also ask that those that run these races straighten us out when we cannot seem to do it by ourselves. Race Clean, See you next month!



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