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New York Dirt Kart Series!
Underwood soars in Empire State



Plus a whole lot more!!!



STILL ON THE SOAPBOX

Welcome to another installment of the "Grassroots Tech Barn." Over the last couple of months I have climbed onto my soapbox, and I have decided to spend another month up here. This month, I want to address the use, or shall I say the misuse, and lack of, proper safety gear.

The leading contender for "Father of the Year" recently sent his young champ kart driver onto the track knowingly without arm restraints. Once upon the track, the young man was involved in a very spectacular series of flips and rolls. During these rolls, his unrestrained arms were flailing



wildly, narrowly missing being crushed several times as the kart made contact with the ground. Once track personnel reached the scene, the truth was revealed. Dad made the decision to send his young driver into battle without properly addressing his safety.

I don't know the actual reason, however, there is not a possible reason for this type of action other than pure negligence. Time, cost, aggravation, none of these hold water. Arm restraints are required in champ karts for a reason, and this is a perfect example of why. Anyone that has been around champs for a while know that they sometimes have the knack for the spectacular.

Over my many years in karting, I have seen many racers show little regard for their own personal safety, or for their child's. It is very unfortunate we have racers, and even more unfortunate we have parents like this. A young driver counts upon his father or mother to guide and instruct them, and to care for their well being, and may not be aware of the

safety requirements. At the very least, they may not be in a position to question their superiors.

Unfastened, or loosely fastened helmets are a topic I feel very strongly about too. Many years ago, I watched a fellow racer lift his helmet from his head as if it were a hat. If he had been involved in an incident, the hat would have been just as useful. I cannot tell you how many times I have witnessed a very scary looking incident, and then see a helmet rolling down the track. This is the ultimate display of a lack of intelligence. As far as I am concerned, this type of incident should be met with swift removal from the track property as well as possible future sanctions against the driver. If their intelligence level is that low, I don't want to be anywhere near them, much less on the track with them.

The "I am an adult, if I get hurt, it don't apply to you" argument doesn't work here either. We are in a sport that struggles for publicity, the last thing we need is the exposure that comes with an incident that could have been avoided with a little bit of smarts. Hopefully your family does care about your well being, even if you don't.

Racers sometimes tend to try to get by with things. Whether it's an out of date helmet, or other improper gear, some try to slip one past the goalie by borrowing the item in



question from a fellow racer for inspection, then returning to the improper piece. Tracks cannot catch everything, so it's up to us racers to help police matters as such.

Tracks have an obligation in this as well. Some tracks take a very nonchalant attitude toward safety and



rarely, if ever perform safety inspections. While a full inspection may not be possible on a weekly basis, random checks and open eyes go a long way. Keen eyes in the flag-stand and the grid also go a long way toward maintaining safety standards. Taking the time to explain requirements is also a very good practice, especially to new participants.

Penalizing racers that don't know better is certainly not my intention. This is merely meant as a wakeup call to everyone out there to be safety conscious. If you see a situation that you know is unsafe, step up and help protect a fellow racer. I may not know you at all, but the last thing I want is to see you injured when it may have been easily avoided with a little bit of education, awareness, and common sense. Until next month, I am still perched high atop my box. See you then!



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