

# National Kart News

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## WINTERIZING YOUR KART

Preparing your kart for a harsh winter will be well worth the effort next spring

For some people the changing colors of the leaves mark the beginning of winter, but for others it's the last race of the season before it finally sinks in. If you live in the northern climates you have to decide to do one of two things - put the kart in storage for a few months or start right away getting ready for next spring.

Unless you've got a snowmobile, winter is the time most of us motorsports freaks dread. Although some look to



the end of the racing season as a time for a little rest and relaxation, we should be careful not to neglect the thing we love the best - our karts. You've been beating your kart up from April to October and a complete freshen-up is much needed.

The first thing you want to do is wash



down your equipment. When you get to tearing it down, it makes it much easier and more fun when everything is fairly clean.

Simply get out the elbow grease, that is; engine cleaner, degreaser and laundry detergent, and start scrubbing it down. Before going crazy with the garden hose though, tie a plastic bag around the engine to keep the moisture out. If your motor also needs a good cleaning, which it surely will, tie a

plastic bag around the carb and the header instead of the whole motor, but still be very careful not to spray water directly into either opening.



Once you've cleaned it up a bit, you can start to take apart the kart and repair and replace any damaged or worn parts. First, remove the tires and prepare them for storage. If they have some life left in them, you'll want to store them and reuse them next spring. Let the air out of the tires and spray them down with ArmorAll which will help keep the rubber pliable, or instead of ArmorAll you can use any of the tire formulas that will help soften the tire.



Once they're sprayed down, place the tires in a plastic bag and store them in a dry, cool place. When storing your tires, they should be stacked by resting each tire on its rim and not on the tread. This will eliminate the possibility of "flat spotting"

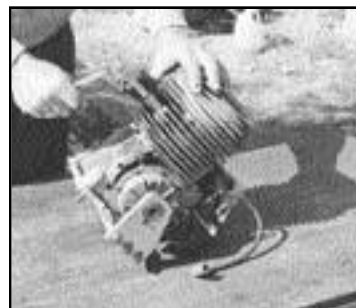


your tires. If your tires are worn down below the dimples you can either keep them for practice tires or remove them from the wheels and discard them.

Now you need to remove the engine from the chassis. Before you do that, some engine builders suggest you run a little fuel with a heavier oil mixture through it before you store it. This will help

lubricate the internal parts and clean the carb of any debris. If you run alcohol through your system this should be done after each and every race to eliminate moisture which alcohol attracts.

If you have a lot of time on your engine, you may want to take advantage of your downtime and send it to an engine builder for refreshing. Both you and your engine builder will be much happier if you do it now and not two weeks before the season begins.



If it still has plenty of life left in it and you're not sending it in, you should remove the head and apply a light coating of oil to the cylinder walls. Use the same oil you normally run in your fuel and apply it with a clean cloth. Do not use your fingers to apply the oil because the body acid could damage the metal over a period of time.

If you're winterizing a 4-cycle motor you will want to squirt a little oil down the intake until the engine stalls. This will help guard against internal rust. Remove the side cover and being careful not to disturb the position of the camshaft in relation to the crankshaft gear, remove any oil residue from the bottom of the crankcase. Now replace the side cover and add fresh oil.

Now remove the carburetor and inspect it. This is a good time to tear it down and rebuild it. Carb rebuild kits are inexpensive and the process is very simple to do. It's also one of the easiest and most important ways to prevent future problems.

Wrap the carb in a clean cloth and store it in a dry place. Then plug both the exhaust and carb openings with a clean and oiled cloth or wrap them in a plastic bag. For four stroke engines, remove or drain the fuel from the bowl by turning it upside down and letting it drain out.



Next on the list is the clutch. Remove the cover and inspect the linings. If you haven't gone through it lately you should remove it from the engine and totally rebuild it. Clutch rebuild kits are also fairly inexpensive and should be done a couple of times a season. If it seems okay, then reassemble it and leave it dry for storage. For a dry clutch, such as those used on the Briggs or US 820's, put a little grease on the end of the crankshaft so the clutch doesn't rust to the shaft.



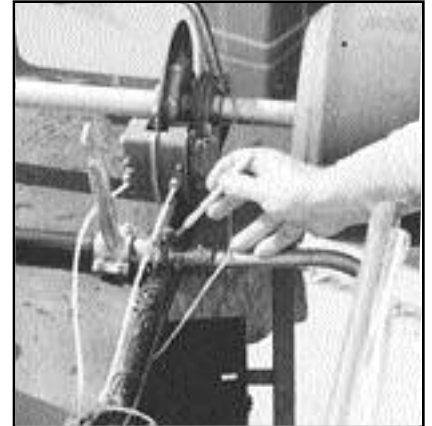
If your kart has been sitting around for a while, make sure there isn't any debris in the cylinder before packing it away. We've heard of mechanics finding the nests of small creatures inside engines at the end of a long winter. Inside the cylinders you could find corn and other munchies piled on top of the piston. You can imagine what would happen if you fire it up next spring before checking it.

With both the carb and exhaust openings plugged and the clutch removed, wrap the motor in a towel and store it in a warm dry place. For a Briggs, you should slowly pull the starting rope until you feel the compression stop or until the clutch drive key groove is at the top. Now drain the fuel from all the lines, tank and fuel pump, and store it away.

Now for the brakes. Remove the pads from the rear calipers and check them for excessive wear. Rear discs will also attract rust and should be coated with WD-40. Today's hydraulic systems don't need to be drained and refilled with fresh fluid unless it is other than the automotive type. If you choose to drain and rebuild the master cylinder, you can leave the system dry only if the seals are well lubricated.



If the chain is damaged at all, throw it away and replace it in the spring. If it's still good, soak it in a can of oil through the winter.



With the chassis now bare, we can check for stress cracks and other aging problems. Check each weld for cracks or breaks. This would also be a good time to remove the seat as well as check the seat struts.

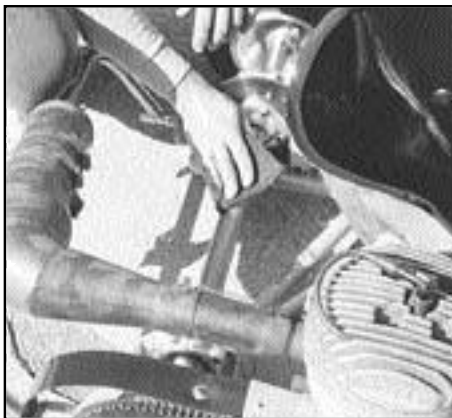


Now look at the front of the kart and check the spindles for wear. If the spindle has too much play, check the bushing and washers and replace them if necessary. Next, move the rear axle and remove the bearings from their housings. Again, check for excessive play. If everything is correctly in place and secure, grease the bearings or spray heavily with a coat of WD-40 and reinstall. Take a steel wool pad and remove any

rust, then apply a coat of WD-40 to the entire axle.

The last few items to take care of are the tach and temp gauges and your starter. The battery in the tach should be taken out to avoid any leakage. It will probably drain out over the winter so it's a good idea to just remove it now and replace it in the spring. This is also a good time to send the gauge back to its manufacturer to get it recalibrated. The cost of recalibration should be around \$40 and is well worth the time and money.

Last but not least is the starter. Disconnect the cable from the battery and store it in a dry area. Make sure the battery is kept off the ground on a 2x4 so it isn't directly on the concrete,



which will quickly drain it of any remaining power. (Remember, if your battery is dead, you need to discard it safely. Not all trash collectors will pick up old batteries and it's against the law in most states to dump it in an unauthorized site. In many states it is a law that retailers must accept all used lead acid batteries deposited by customers at their store. Check with your local auto parts store for the best way to get rid of your battery. Some places will even pay you for them.

Now before you snuggle in for the winter, take a look at your tool box. Tools are probably the most expensive and hard to replace items in your garage so why not take care of them too? It's a good idea to remove each shelf and grease the rollers every fall. Then take each tool and individually clean it, dry it and rub it down with a lightly oiled cloth. Then clean out that junk drawer that has collected every nut, bolt and bent cotter key imaginable and marvel at all that new found space you thought you didn't have.

Finally you're ready to hang the chassis on the wall, put the engine in a safe place and hibernate until the early spring. You'll rest much easier now that you've taken care of your most prized possession. 