# MSA Licence Application Pack and ARKS Training Syllabus

Congratulations on taking the first step to starting motor racing. Included in the pack are all the details and information you require to start the exciting sport of Kart Racing.

**The pack includes**

MSA Licence Application Form
A DVD containing the “Starting Karting DVD” plus those for the other disciplines
Also on the DVD: MSA Competitors Yearbook - `Blue Book'
Also on the DVD: MSA Kart Race Handbook - `Gold Book'
Details of Association of Racing Kart Schools in the brochure “Want to Start Karting”
A useful handbook of information about taking your test
Available on the ARKS Website www.arks.co.uk -
Guidance Notes for Taking Your ARKS Driving Test.
ARKS Training Syllabus
Checklist for new drivers and a list of the Flags
Your examiner or instructor should give you a copy of the questionnaire which we kindly ask you to complete and return with your licence application.
Please contact The Motor Sports Association (MSA) if any items are missing from your pack on 01753 765000.

**The Next Step**

Kart racing is an exciting sport which has all the excitement and intricacies of motor racing. It is a challenging but fun sport, requiring skill and often some training.

After watching the Starting Karting DVD video there are three ways to start your karting career. The most logical way is to use one of the Association of Kart Racing Schools (ARKS) to gain professional training on how to drive a racing kart and develop a working knowledge of how to maintain and get the most from a kart before having the expenditure of purchasing karting equipment. It is also possible to go out and buy a racing kart and learn independently how to drive it and look after it. Another method is by approaching a race team (ARKS Schools often have race teams), who will guide a driver through starting karting using a system called race hire.

**Association of Racing Karts Schools (ARKS)**
The members of the Association of Racing Kart Schools are listed on the enclosed brochure within your MSA Starting Karting Pack. These schools are professional training organisations recognised by the MSA to carry out training for novice drivers to the necessary standard to pass the ARKS Test.

The schools will offer a range of training sessions, taking the novice driver from their first exploratory laps up to a full racing speed. During training the ARKS instructor will show the pupil how to drive a kart, racing lines, throttle and brake control, steering and track procedures. Additionally instruction will be given on kart racing as a sport, covering aspects such as the various officials and their role in the sport, safety rules such as flags, racewear, track discipline, plus general information on buying kart racing equipment and maintaining it.

The schools will supply all the necessary racewear as well as the kart equipment, so that no great expenditure is involved. The equipment, because of the controls set down by ARKS and the MSA, will be reliable and safe.

By attending a driving school, the novice driver will be instructed from the start on how to drive a racing kart correctly, safely and quickly from his/her first lap rather than picking up faults which are at a later stage very difficult to rectify. The information gained at a school will help to prevent costly mistakes in the future.

Most schools offer introductory sessions and tuition to pass an ARKS Test. Call members on the enclosed brochure to find out more details.

**Buying your own Equipment**

The second way of starting karting is to go straight into buying your own karting equipment. Equipment can be bought either new or second hand. If buying second hand equipment, it is recommended that this is either purchased from a kart trader, somebody still racing, just retiring or from the classified adverts in one of the Karting magazines or on a U.K. karting website. You should ensure that the kart purchased is suitable to race under the latest class rules. Buying a second hand kart from a non karting environment (such as a general motoring magazine or auction based website) will likely result in an old/or unsuitable kart. Before making a decision, always first visit your local kart club to see which classes are popular. Clubs and circuits are listed in the enclosed brochure, and in the Gold Book.

The latest rules for racewear and kart classes will be found in the MSA Yearbook and the Kart Gold Book. Do not purchase anything until you have consulted these books for the current requirements and visited your local kart circuit to see which classes are most popular in your area.

Once the karting equipment has been purchased, it will be necessary to practice driving techniques and maintenance of the kart by visiting a local kart track on practice days. These are listed in the Gold Book and Start Karting brochure.

**Race Hire**

The final way of starting karting is by using an established race team (or ARKS School) to look after all your racing activities. Any experienced team will be able to coach you on how to drive a racing kart and then look after all the racing arrangements and equipment.

Although potentially an expensive way of kart racing, it is probably the most straightforward, with all your needs catered for and although it might cost you more initially, in the long term it may well save money by helping you avoid common novice mistakes. Look in the karting magazines for teams offering this facility or consult the ARKS members, as a number of the schools also offer this service.

**The ARKS Test**

Before any driver can start kart racing they must hold an MSA kart licence. You may however practice on many kart circuits without a licence; a licence is required only when the decision to start racing has been made. Some clubs may offer Kart Tyro racing, Junior for age 11 -16 (karts up to10 horsepower) and Senior for age 16 upwards (karts up to 15 horsepower) where a Kart Clubman licence can be obtained in advance or on the day of the race without taking the ARKS test but under strict observation. Otherwise the first licence for novice drivers is called a Kart National B (Novice) Licence. Included in this pack is an application form for this licence.

The application form is easily completed with standard items such as name, date of birth and address details. Before applying for the licence, drivers over 18 must take a medical examination to the guidelines laid out on the reverse side of the application form. Drivers under 18 years require no medical, but a medical declaration must be completed by your parent or guardian. The final part of the application form is a school stamp and signature from an ARKS member or a signature from an MSA Club Examiner; this is achieved on an ARKS Test.

ARKS Tests are run by ARKS member Schools, who are listed on the enclosed brochure in this pack, and MSA Club Examiners, listed in Appendix 9 of the Gold Book. When the novice driver is getting close to being ready for an ARKS Test, they should contact an ARKS School or one of the MSA Club Examiners to find out when they are running their next test day. These are usually run once or twice a month by schools and kart clubs (whom the examiners represent). The minimum age for taking the ARKS test is 7 years and 9 months. Tests can not be administered by close relatives.

The ARKS test was devised by the ARKS members in conjunction with the MSA. It typically lasts a couple of hours, often spread over a practice day, and tests the knowledge and driving ability of a novice kart driver. To pass the test, a novice driver must be able to drive safely and to a racing standard and have a thorough knowledge of the sport of karting. Complete knowledge is required of the safety rules, such as the flag signals used, the role of the officials and how to respond to their instruction, and the general rules of the sport.

The ARKS Test starts by watching the MSA "Starting Karting" DVD video, covering all aspects of participating in the sport of karting and driving racing karts. Alongside this is a briefing, discussing safety, kart driving and track discipline and it all takes about half an hour. The licence applicant will then have the driving

assessment and oral/written assessment which can be taken in either order.

The driving assessment starts with the kart being introduced to the novice driver to ensure that they are fully familiar with its controls and danger areas. Typically a familiarisation session will follow, with the driver becoming used to the kart and circuit being used. Then after feedback, a driving assessment follows, where the driver must demonstrate to the ARKS Instructor or MSA Club Examiner that they can drive a racing kart competently and in a safe manner at a level appropriate for racing. During the assessment, the instructor or examiner will complete a driving assessment form which picks out elements of driving performance. The Instructor or Examiner will set a target laptime based on a 'mid-grid' time typical for that class of kart and the relevant track conditions. The best time by the novice must be within 10% of this target to pass the test. This is judged so that a novice should not normally be lapped in a heat at a race meeting. If 13 out of 18 areas of the general section (plus 3 out of 4 for gearbox karts) and all of the Overall Section are passed, the instructor will pass the novice driver on this part of the test.

The oral/written test is a series of multiple choice questions about the sport of kart racing. Each question is followed by 5 answers, only one of which is correct. These can either be read out to the novice driver or left for them to read for themselves. The novice driver passes this section with 100% correct answers on flag signals plus 80% on Safety and General topics.

The instructor or examiner will conclude with a de-briefing session, explaining how the novice driver has performed in the test and areas to work on. They will also discuss how a kart race meeting is run. If the applicant has been successful the application form is stamped with the ARKS member school's stamp and signed by the instructor, or signed by the MSA Club Examiner. It is now ready to be returned with the appropriate fee to the MSA who will issue a Kart National B (Novice) Licence and the driver is then ready to go racing. If only one part of the test is passed, a pass slip will be issued to record this and a re-test of the failed part can be taken later.

In certain instances for drivers under the age of 18, it will be possible to compete in the immediate days after a successful assessment. Assuming all the medical self-assessment questions on the licence application form have been completed satisfactorily, the novice can take the licence application form to their first race meeting in lieu of the licence, and hand it over to the Competition Secretary with the licence fee payable (if any). The MSA Steward has the final decision on whether the novice can race, and the club will send the application to the MSA at the first opportunity. This can only be done once. The novice should fix a photograph to the white Upgrade Card (from the MSA Yearbook), sign it, and hand this in at the same time for their first signature. The MSA will recognise the ARKS Test as one of the signatures, this is not marked on the Upgrade Card.

**The ARKS Test Syllabus**

**General**
The Guidance Notes should be read as a first starting point and the video "Starting Karting" watched. Two areas are assessed in the ARKS test: The Driving Analysis Test and The Written/Oral Test.

**Driving Analysis**
The Driving Analysis is a driving test session which will examine the driver's capabilities to ensure that they is ready to start racing. It is expected that to pass the test the driver must have had practice and/or tuition in racing karts (not solely four-stroke indoor karts). The driver will be tested on racing lines, braking, throttle control, steering, general co-ordination and confidence in a racing kart to produce lap times appropriate for a novice driver.

**Written/Oral Test**
This is a series of twenty multiple choice questions which test the driver's knowledge of the sport. To pass the test it is expected that the driver has watched the "Starting Karting" video in the MSA Starting Karting Pack and has a working knowledge of the parts of the MSA Blue Book applicable to kart racing, and the Kart `Gold Book' supplied in the Starting Karting Pack.

The driver should have particular knowledge of Yearbook sections G2.1 – 5.3, 7.1 – 7.8, 10.1 – 11.3.3 Officials, H38 Insurance, J3.1 Scrutineering, K10 - 11 Crash Helmets, Q15.1 Flag Signals, U Karting and the appropriate sections of the 'Gold Book' (MSA Kart Race Yearbook, class information plus Appendices)

**Kart Racing**

Kart racing as a sport was first introduced to this country by a group of US airmen driving home-made karts fitted with lawn mower engines. It has developed from these early basic machines into an international motor sport discipline which, as well as being the breeding ground for future Formula One stars, is a hugely competitive sport entertaining many thousands of drivers throughout the world every weekend of the year.

In the United Kingdom, the sport is governed by The Motor Sports Association (MSA). The rules for the sport are contained in the MSA's Blue Book which is published annually. These rules are controlled by the MSA Kart Sporting Committee which meets throughout each year to consider improvements to the regulations of the sport.

Kart clubs run race meetings each weekend of the year throughout the country. Each club generally has a race meeting on a particular Sunday each month. The MSA and the Karting Associations have developed the Karting `Gold Book' containing rules specific to karting, in particular the class rules. It is to the Blue Book and Kart Gold Book that all kart race meetings are run.

**A Typical Kart Meeting**

To participate in a kart race meeting, once a driver has received an MSA Licence, they must be a member of an MSA Kart Club. It is usual to join the club which will be raced at most by the driver which normally includes being entered into the club championship. Keep your membership card with your licence.

A list of kart race meetings held in a year is contained in the MSA Fixture List on the MSA website www.msauk.org or individual club websites. A driver chooses a meeting to enter and sends in an entry form, which can be obtained from the kart club (website), with personal details and the details of their karting equipment and racing class. To begin with you will tick the 'Novice' box, and ensure your kart has black number plates. The entry form needs to be sent with payment for the entry fee (typically £50) to the Kart Club's competition secretary at least two weeks before the meeting. Usually if the entry has been accepted the driver will receive nothing back from the kart club, unless they include a stamped, addressed envelope. Some clubs will email the acceptance. There is usually a practice day the day before the race day. Remember to sign on and pay before going on track, attend any briefings and fully familiarise yourself with the track rules.

On the day of the meeting, after arrival at about 8am, the driver should first report to the Kart Club race control and sign on. This involves signing an indemnity and the novice driver will also hand over his/her licence record card for upgrading signature purposes. The record card is found bound into the Blue Book, and the driver must put his or her photograph on before handing in for a signature. If the driver is under 18 years of age, and the parent or guardian is not present, they must have given written permission to the responsible guardian, and the letter of consent must be handed in at signing-on. The parent or guardian must accompany the minor to all briefings or investigations by the Clerk of the Course or Stewards. The driver will also be handed a scrutineering card on which to record the serial numbers of his/her karting equipment. It is very important to get these correct before handing it in. Timing is done by transponder, and you will have to buy one (or possibly hire from the club) for the race meetings.

Scrutineering is then attended where the driver's kart and race equipment will be checked for safety. A driver's briefing will be given by the Clerk of the Course (motor sports' referee). The Clerk of the Course will explain what is expected of the drivers during the day and particular safety items relevant to that circuit. All of this will normally have been completed by 9.30 am, when a minimum of three laps of practice in class order will follow. The race programme will indicate these timings, the order of practice and racing. Each driver will then compete in heats where, in most cases, starting positions will be pre-determined but all novice drivers start at the back. Some clubs may have a timed qualifying session, followed by one or more heats, and one or more finals and in this case the grid positions for all drivers, including novices, are set by the qualifying session time.

The finishing positions in the heats will determine starting positions for the Finals, the main races of the day and for which trophies are presented. The finals take place after the heats and a short break of about 30 minutes, during which the

officials have a break and the grid positions are calculated.

At any time during the day, scrutineering may check for legality, usually involving a weight check after races and possibly an equipment inspection. The day ends with the trophy presentation to the most successful drivers. Club championship points may be given just for the position in the final, or it may include points from the heats. The club's Championship Regulations, which you should always read in conjunction with the SRs (Supplementary Regulations), will explain the system.

**Useful Reference Books and karting publications**

"Karting Explained", available from Amazon and other suppliers. Other titles available.

**Magazines**

'Karting Magazine' www.kartingmagazine.com
Vroom UK www.vroom.it
'Motorsport News' Published by Haymarket Publishing.
'Autosport' Published by Haymarket Publishing.

**Associations**

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| ABkC | Association of British Kart Clubs | www.abkc.org.uk | Tel 01926 812177 |
| ARKS | Association of Racing Kart Schools | www.arks.co.uk | Tel 01926 812177 |
| BKIA | British Kart Industry Association | www.bkia.co.uk | Tel 07799 478270 |
| BSA | British Superkart Association | www.superkart.org.uk | Tel 01603 743563 |
| MSA | Motor Sports Association | www.msauk.org | Tel 01753 765050 |
| NKRA | National Kart Racing Association | www.planetkarting.co.uk | Tel 01305 774074 |
| | Northern Karting Federation | www.northernkartingfederation.co.uk | Tel 01229463748 |