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Go Kart Frames – Choosing the Right One for You

By Michael Walker

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Karting enthusiasts emblazon the image of the perfect chassis in their minds: lightweight, yet powerfully durable material capable of launching a kart forward without the slightest wear or tear. Rare material that comes with the likes of professionally built popular race-cars like the illustrious McLaren. What about karts that could rip through side turns at speeding bullet speeds without raising a wheel a centimeter above the ground, gliding swiftly like a falco such as the futuristic cars in I, Robot? And along with perfect frames comes perfect tires, tires "grooven" to perfection providing the finest traction and downright freakish controls when running the curve.

Let's discuss the intricacies and place a perspective on frames for your go-kart. The chassis as it is called in professional and enthusiast circles, is by far the most important piece of this machine. The construction is paramount in maintaining a solid go-kart. What constitutes a frame? Think of a frame simply as parts holding a component together. In the case of these speedsters, the frame is welded together by torsion bars. Stiff frames are a result of shorter bars crossed together, and more flexible frames are associated with longer bars.

Stiff frames that do not provide flexibility were the backbone of earlier go-karts and broke down easily. First off, simpler go-karts do not have the specifications needed (most important, suspension and tire traction) to ease the punishment frames go through while turning, accelerating, and stopping. Running on 2 or 4 cycle engines does not help compensate the health of a frame. A lack of traction on your tires will cause uneven weight transfer and stability on your frame, ripping one or both sides loose at the same time. In essence, the frame is responsible for determining how well your vehicle moves zipping on asphalt, concrete, or dirt – dictating your performance on wide turns and shorter turns.

A sturdy, well-built frame is the key to manoeuvring well on the track, especially when turning. Wait, isn't a frame supposed to be resistant to the rigors and demands of punishing your go-kart as it explodes forward? Of course – but the most important criteria for an excellent frame is to negotiate turns well. Frames are directly responsible for how well go-karts turn left and right. Weaker go-karts with cheap components are known to slide and drift along turns – in some instances, flipping to its side entirely with careless driving. "Side bite" is referred to keeping a go-kart planted to the track without

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sliding. Without the proper frame, go-karts will manoeuvre out of control, even shutting off in some cases due to over pressure to the engine.

The design of the go-kart chassis has everything to do with how well it moves on turns and maintaining side bite. If the width of the rear rails (go-kart frames constitute front rails and rear rails) is narrow, with measurements ranging from 24=A8 to 25=A8 – from "kingpin" to "kingpin", the ends of the rail – it will have less side bite. Wider rails barely ever exceed 30=A8 on standard go-karts. The dynamics of the front and rear rails can be effectively pictured using this example: suppose you had two bottles – a two-gallon jug and a 16 oz. Water bottle. Giving it a swift, hard poke to its side – which container has the best chance of tipping to its side? If you guessed the water bottle, you guessed right! Wider rails provide stability and "foundation" while turning, reducing the side bite overall.

Choosing the right frame for your go-kart can largely depend on the surface you are riding on. Whether

it is asphalt, concrete, or dirt – different types of frames behave differently according to surface. For example, dirt track frames should consist of a short front rail and a longer back rail. Dirt tracks place a lot of stress and challenge on the front rail and stiff back rails zipping through dirt can cut power to the engine while cutting a turn. The best frame for riding dirt tracks are ones with narrow fronts and longer backs, vice versa to asphalt and concrete.

The A-1 performance of a frame largely depends on tire traction as well. Low traction tires (tires that do not "stick" well to the ground) are not grooved enough to withstand the rigors of the surface, rattling the stiff frame to oblivion. It also causes uneven weight transfer throughout the go-kart, and that is a no-no for maintaining optimum control of your money maker. Consider this scenario: you have two pairs of roller skates. One has wheels half-an-inch in width and the other has 3-inch-wide wheels. Which pair would provide better balance as you roller skate? If you love mathematics, treat traction as a formula with the equation: traction =3D stability. Go ahead, transform yourself into a karting aficionado with this valuable piece of knowledge!

A major issue among karting enthusiasts is the durability and longevity of flexible frames. Exposure to punishing breaks and turns, along with the gruelling hits to track walls every now and then, can distort the frame which cannot be "popped" back to its original condition. Experts recommend replacing frames every year. There are many maintenance techniques you could practice on your kart to keep flexibility intact like running your kart through a course backwards. Racing a kart using the finish line as your starting point and your starting point as the finish line will have a "reverse effect" on the frame, shaping it opposite of what it would be shaped if you were racing the course normally. It's like turning back the hands of time on your speedster!

The question over choosing the right go-kart chassis boils down to flexibility. High traction tires and a stiff frame is a recipe for disaster, causing your machine to turn stiffly and generate strenuous effort on the curves. Low traction tires will cause uneven weight transfer and break apart your frame like bread crumbs. Options for frames mainly depend on what type of go-kart you're riding, as each go-kart and their engine work best under certain scenarios. Stiff frames are a staple of 2-cycle and 4-cycle engines and flexible frames are found with higher horsepower engines. Remember, the more rigorous the circuit, the more flexible a chassis should be!

Michael Walker is a freelance author providing information about a variety of go-kart topics including

<http://www.go-kart-kits>

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<http://www.go-kart-kits.com/go-kart-frames.html>

and

<http://www.go-kart-kits.com/go-cart-parts.html>

His articles prove to be both a useful and entertaining

resource of valuable information for the karting enthusiast.

Brighten Up Your Shelves With Picture Frames

By Johann Erickson

Would you like to add a personal touch to your home or office, but not sure how? Picture frames may be your answer. Picture frames are a fun and simple way to add color, character and style.

Decorating with picture frames is fun and simple. To add a splash of color to a shelf or mantle choose a series of similar frames in coordinating colors, such as three shades of green. To set a theme in the bedroom stick with one basic color and two or three styles of frames, such as silver or pewter antique-style frames. Or to make a dramatic statement on a wall choose one bold color, such as black or deep red, and identical picture frames, such as simple squares. No matter what look you're trying to achieve, group picture frames together for impact.

Once you've decided on a style, it's easy to find the perfect picture frames. Department stores and home decorating stores are a good place to start. But don't forget about antique stores, flea markets, yard sales and thrift stores. These are all great places to find unique picture frames. Look for unique picture frames with beveled glass, unusual shapes, or matching sets.

Picture frames also make wonderful gifts and keepsakes. Decorate picture frames with silver charms, crystal beads, or grandma's antique costume jewelry to make a special keepsake. Create a family display of picture frames by adding a detail to each picture frame that reflects each family member's personality or hobby. For example, add a golf detail to dad's picture frame, a fishing detail to grandpa's picture frame, and a gardening detail to mom's picture frame. Scrapbooking supply stores are perfect places to find unique items to add to picture frames. Just imagine the items on a frame, or inside on the matting, instead of on a scrapbook page. There's no limit to the details you can add to a picture frame.

Whether you're creating a keepsake or brightening up a shelf, picture frames are one of the most fun and versatile decorating accessories available.

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