

On Track Basics

While the last section described how to operate the car, this section will describe the basics of getting on and around the track. When you push your driver off from the hot chute or staging areas make sure to let them know they barely need to use the gas pedal if even at all. Just the engines idle speed should be strong enough to get them onto the track. When driving onto the track the driver needs to pay attention to other cars pulling on at the same time and to other cars that are already on the track.

From staging or the hot chute the driver pulls onto the track by driving down the “on-chute” lane that is behind the flag stand and then stay above the entry line that continues from the on chute to the middle of turns 1 and 2. It is very important to stay above this line before blending in with the other cars. As a matter of fact dropping below the line while coming onto the track is reason for automatic disqualification or black flag to return to the pits.

When a car first pulls onto the track the tires will be colder than their peak operating temperature and not have nearly the same amount of traction as they will after a few laps of warm up. That is why it is important for the driver to take it easy and be cautious for a few laps until the tires come up to temp and start sticking to the track.

Once its time to hit the gas its time for the driver to starting driving the car in their racing “pattern”.

HERE IS THE BIGGEST SPEED SECRET IN ALL OF QUARTER MIDGET RACING:

PATTERN. PATTERN. PATTERN.

The pattern is the line that your driver navigates around the track. Every track has a slightly different pattern but they all have the following in common: go high on the straightaway and low in the corner. When the driver is on the gas at full throttle the difference in their pattern will make a **HUGE** difference in how fast the car makes it around the track. Smooth hands and easy transitions from the corners to the straightaways are very, very important.

By high on the straightaway we mean out to the wall without touching it. By low in the corner we mean down to the bumps in the center of the corner without touching them. It is also important that the driver stays high on the straights for longer than would seem natural. When a driver turns too early towards the corner that is call “pinching” the corner and will usually result in a car that either turns too much or not enough coming out of the corner.

So after a few laps of running absolutely beautiful and perfect pattern laps it will be time for your driver to pull into the hot chute or exit to the off chute of the track. The latter is done only when the off-chute gate is open. Exiting the track is another process that has a specific procedure for the driver to follow. Before exiting, first the driver needs to slow down from full speed, then when on the back straightaway move to the most outside lane and wave your left hand up and down to the left so that it is visible to every other driver on the track. No coast into the pits, slow down with the brake, and turn left towards the hot-chute and pull into a numbered pit stall.

As a handler when your driver is entering the hot-chute make sure you meet them and point to the pit stall you would like them to pull into. Both you AND your driver need to be very aware of the other people and cars around you as to avoid a collision. When your car is in the hot-chute the driver should remain in the car and stay buckled in. If you are done and do not need to go back onto the track then push your car/ driver outside of the hot-chute into the off-shute or staging area before you have them climb out of the car.

An excellent way to practice and review all the on track stuff including the above but also lining up and passing is to practice at home in small scale with matchbox type cars. Many a quarter midget family have spent many hours with a homemade track and matchbox cars. Doing this you can show your driver how to get on the track, how to exit the track, their pattern and so on.

