

TECH: WET WEATHER SETUP

TYRE PRESSURES

Of course, the only thing connecting your brilliant wet setup to the ground is the tyres, and inappropriate pressures will cause even the best wet-weather driver to either lack speed, or worse – spin off the track.

The pressures required will vary based on prevailing conditions, race length, track surface, etc, but here is a basic guide for the wet tyres used in Australia:

DUNLOP KT6SLW1

Very wet = 30-35 PSI
Wet = 28-30 PSI
Semi-dry = 25-28 PSI
Drying = 20-25 PSI

MG WZ (MG White)

Very wet = 16-18 PSI
Wet = 14-16 PSI
Semi-dry = 12-14 PSI
Drying = 8-12 PSI

I'll make a point here that SHOULD be obvious, but I've seen many people ignore it. **MOUNT THE TYRES AS THE MANUFACTURER RECOMMENDS!** The engineers that develop kart tyres really do know what they're doing, and they mark the rotation of the tyres because they're designed to rotate that way. It doesn't matter if you think the tread looks funny, it's SUPPOSED TO GO THAT WAY!!!

In order to dispel the many myths I've heard about tyre rotation, I contacted Les May of Dunlop Kartsport, and I have included edited extracts below:

“The rear 6.50-5 tyre, run in the direction of rotation as shown by the arrow on the side wall, channels the majority of water under the tread towards the centre of the tread, expelling it from the radial grooves along the away. This creates a vortex and as a driven tyre, accelerates the excess water away from the tread blocks.

The front tyre, run in the direction of rotation as

shown by the arrow on the side wall, channels the majority of water under the tread from the centre towards the outside and expels it from the 3 radial grooves... it squeezes the water away from between the tyre and the track surface.”

I asked Les about the use of front tyres on the rear of Midget/Rookie karts, which many people run in reverse of the indicated rotation.

“In the case of Midget/Rookies running front tyres all round, yes the theory to run the rear tyres in reverse is quite correct, it provides the same effect as I have detailed for the 6.50-5 rear.”

Let's hope that clarifies any myths or theories you have heard around the pits.

DRIVING TECHNIQUES

Now drivers, you didn't think we were going to get through this whole article and concentrate solely on your pit crew, did you? I'm afraid not, as wet-weather speed is 1% motor, 9% kart, and 90% driver!

The first thing to know when heading out for your first ever wet session is – forget everything you know about the dry race line! There's a good reason for that – the dry race line is generally covered in rubber, the rubber fills the tiny depressions in the asphalt, and causes the water to sit up on top of the track, making the race line very slippery indeed.

The second thing to know is how important it is to encourage the kart to do what you want. Back in the old days, “body english” was an important part of driving the kart, meaning that you would use your body weight to unload the kart. Technology has progressed to the point that body english is no longer important in the dry, but in the wet you're looking to make as much of the grip available as you can!