



KartSport New Zealand

Inquiry

25 November 2006

Centra Hotel

Auckland

This KartSport New Zealand Inquiry was convened to address a series of issues which arose at the 2006 Hamilton Anniversary Meeting 16 & 17 September held at the RV Wholesalers Raceway.

For the purpose of this report the complaint will be presented in italics followed by the panel's views.

Venue: Centra Hotel, Auckland.

Inquiry Panel: Lance Hickey (Chairman)
Brent Murgatroyd
Owen Evans

1. Junior Restricted #31 relegated Heat 6

Stewards advised tower that kart #31 was to be relegated to last place (for rejoining the track.)

Note: Checked with Chief Steward that kart #31 was to finish ahead of #39 who only completed 2 laps and was not part of the hearing/penalty regarding #31.

Heat 6 Junior Restricted: *There were two incidents with regard to Heat 6 in Junior Restricted, the panel heard the second incident first and the first incident second.*

This incident resulted in an appeal by kart #31 which was upheld due to the National Steward choosing not to defend on behalf of KartSport by letting the appeal lapse outside the time constraints.

When questioned on the incident, both Chief Steward & COC stood by their actions, we therefore find it hard to understand why the National Steward chose not to defend on behalf of his Stewards.

The COC submitted FOC # 405281 to the panel for consideration under Rule 4.9. It is clear from the FOC that it was the opinion of the COC that an advantage was gained. The panel was presented with evidence to support there was no advantage gained with the competitor group that kart #31 was racing with.

The COC's view was that in order for no advantage to be gained the entire field needed to pass kart #31 before rejoining the race.

The Chief Steward claimed the panel ruled against kart #31 under the second part of Rule 4.9 regarding the safe re-entry onto the circuit, this was clearly not the intention of FOC.

Rule 4.9 is confusingly worded and is open to different interpretations as was made clear to the inquiry.

- i. This inquiry suggests the rule be split into two separate rules, one to deal with when and where a competitor may rejoin the track, the other to clearly state what is deemed to be an advantage when rejoining.
- ii. When the Stewards panel finds against a competitor and the finding is different to the intention of the FOC, the Notification of Steward's finding section of the FOC should be completed in full with details of the ruling.

2. Heat 6 Junior Restricted: *There were two incidents with regard to Heat 6 in Junior Restricted, the panel heard the second incident first and the first incident second.*

It is clear that if more than one FOC is raised that relate to the same incident then this fact should be noted on each individual FOC. The Stewards Panel would then be aware of this prior to conducting a hearing. It will assist in determining the sequence the complaints are dealt with. This would then prevent the perception held by both competitors in this case, that the sequence they were held in may have affected the outcome of their individual hearings.

3. Junior Restricted #12 relegated Heat 6

No protest was made by other competitor kart #31 involved in the incident. The Official who saw the incident did not feel it warranted a NOI. Clerk of the Course wrote one up anyway. When kart #12 got to the hearing no one wanted to bring a case against #12. #12 asked to leave the room. After approx 10 minutes approx private discussion with Stewards Panel the Official who saw incident changed his mind and brought the charge. (Note this followed #31 hearing). Kart #12 hearing should be null and void based on the private meeting the Official had with the steward's panel.

Chief Steward advised tower that kart #12 to be relegated behind kart #40 (4th place).

The process surrounding this hearing would appear to be have been floored. When questioned, the Chief Steward confirmed that after the hearing had commenced the competitor was asked to leave the room.

The process of asking a competitor to leave a room while further discussions take place between officials creates a perception in the mind of the competitor that the officials may be pre-judging the incident. It seems fair that all aspects of the hearing should be open to the competitor.

The inquiry makes the following suggestions.

- i. The party who requested the COC write up the Form of Complaint (FOC) should be made clear on any FOC – maybe the form needs modifying – as they are clearly key

witnesses should it proceed to a hearing. The FOC should be a complete document by the time it reaches the Stewards Panel and not require further clarification.

- ii. The document (Notes for the Chief Steward conducting a Hearing) or a document outlining the procedures/processes for the holding of a Hearing be placed in the Manual to allow both the competitor and Officials to be familiar with the process to be followed.

4. Junior Restricted – discussion with Chief Steward re making up of grid for the Final (Heat 8):

Chief Steward called the race secretary and advised to go to another channel. Requested that the grid for the final be made up as if the relegation of kart #31 had not been handed down in heat 6. The results of Heat 6 and ultimately the grid for heat 8 were reworked. Discussion prior to this being made public took place with the chief steward and race secretary as to whether this was correct given the appeal pending.

The National Steward was then contacted by mobile phone in the pits and the race secretary asked for him to get involved in the decision as to how the final grid should be made up. It was pointed out by the race secretary that if the decision the chief steward had made was followed the appeal would in effect have been won at this point because the panel were admitting the relegation was incorrect.

The National Steward phoned the race secretary back and advised that the grid for the final (heat 8) should be made up with the relegation as per the hearing.

It seems that there are issues here regarding who has authority to contact who and also about communicating any outcomes of hearings back to race control.

The inquiry suggests there is a need for general training amongst event officials about the lines of authority at a meeting. This could be reinforced at an Officials Briefing including the event organisers prior to Drivers Briefings. However, when the Chief Steward is frequently tied up in hearings there needs to be an alternative source of advice/information.

There also appears to be significant problems with radio communications at Hamilton and apparently elsewhere. KartSport NZ needs to address this issue.

5. Formula Junior #82 – outside assistance Heat 4

Outside assistance was given for laps 1, 2, 3. Driver then rejoined the field and continued to race. After noting that the outside assistance seemed to be not noticed by race officials the race secretary advised clerk of course. No action was taken

It appears that the outside assistance was not noticed by the stewards even though it went on for several laps. Stewards should position themselves so that the entire track can be seen by them collectively. Other event officials (starter, race control, pit

controllers etc) should be encouraged to communicate with the stewards when they notice such incidents.

Again this also appeared to revolve around education and communication issues.

6. Junior Yamaha #32 – Jumped the Start Heat 2

On the Saturday of racing the acceleration line was where the transponder loop was situated. Kart 32 was to have started on grid 18 of 19. As the driver went over the acceleration line he was the 13th transponder to register. This was visually observed by guardians of other driver drivers in the field. The Clerk of the Course requested the race secretary to check the transponder readings which clearly showed the start was incorrect. A report on these readings was then requested and faxed to the Clerk of the Course. Clerk of the Course advised the guardian who requested the data that it was unavailable and not able to be interpreted to be able to come to a decision on the start. No action was seen to be taken or was any questions/discussion with the timing official and clerk of the course.

It would appear that there should be a clear option for Race Control to advise the Stewards when they observe a jumped start.

- i. Electronic information can be deciphered to provide evidence for situations such as jumped starts. This information is clear enough and available quickly enough to be used to assist with ruling on jump starts.
- ii. The current rules surrounding jumped starts is time consuming and doesn't allow for an immediate judge of fact penalty. (eg MSNZ 3 second time penalty)

The inquiry suggests that it would now be prudent to look at rewording this rule and the penalty.

7 & 8. Junior Yamaha #30 protested #82 Heat 4

Junior #30 was given his \$50 back and no action was taken against #82.

Junior Yamaha #91 protested #77 Heat 7

Junior #91 was given his \$50 back and no action was taken against #77

Returning of protest fees.

The fee is designed to discourage frivolous protests. The inquiries opinion is that it should not be at the discretion of officials to return fees where the rules don't allow it. This would only encourage more protesting.

9. Open #8 change chassis with Open #45 Heat 3

The Chief Steward contacts the race secretary and advised that Open #8 driver would be racing Open #45 for the rest of racing. This was contrary to the rule book regarding one chassis and was pointed out to the Chief Steward. The Chief Steward requested that this not be taken into account. The race secretary then asked if kart #8 was technically unsafe to drive. Following

further discussion the race secretary went and found the National Technical Steward and asked him to get involved and take off his “convenor” hat and make a decision. The Chief Steward was informed that a change of chassis would not be taking place at a permitted meeting.

The Race Secretary is criticised for going direct to the National Technical Officer for a rule (E6.4 – change of Kart) that only the Chief Steward can rule on. The Chief Steward had already allowed the kart swap but not for the correct reason.

There appears to be an issue here where the correct person has been bypassed. This may well be just another communication issued caused by the Chief Steward being unavailable due to being tied up most of the day in the protest room. This would be a fairly common situation at the bigger meetings. Perhaps rule E6.4 needs modifying to allow technical Officials to make rulings on technical issues. (ie the condition of a kart is their field)

Summary

- i. There seems to be situations created by rules in the manual that are open to more than one valid interpretation, this area needs to be addressed by KartSport.
- ii. Education as to the completion of FOC's with all of the relevant information and findings of the panel.
- iii. KartSport needs to work towards better communications between KartSport Officials, Event Officials and organizers.

The sport of karting is an amateur sport with volunteer Officials, the sport has one manual which the competitors are made responsible to by the Officials it is therefore not unreasonable for competitors to expect the same from KartSports Officials.

Lance Hickey
(Inquiry Chairman)