



# CLEANING ADDICTION

*From time to time, we find ourselves behind the eight ball, per say, and we simply run out of time. Fortunately, some topics deserve to be revisited. So, this month's column is a reprint from a couple of years ago, but the topic and timing couldn't be better for a "repeat".*

Cleaning is a very important part of maintaining your kart. A lot of racers discount this and do not spend the necessary time to do the job properly. A clean kart is much easier to work on and adjust. Plus, careful washing and detailing helps you to see potential areas of concern before they become major areas of concern, and is part of a good overall maintenance program.

Set aside enough time to do the job you need to do. Don't try to do an hour worth of work in fifteen minutes, you cannot do a good job. I try to pick a time that I can clean and maintain my kart without interruption, this way; my results are what I need and intend to have. Be efficient, be prepared, and observant. This will save a lot of time, and especially when the weather is less than desired, help you to speed the process up without sacrificing the quality of the work.



To begin, tape up the engine to prevent water from entering (this is detailed in the engine washing article) and remove the clutch. It is strongly suggested you remove your My-Chron, (or other instrument) as they are usually water resistant, not waterproof. Tape off the opening in your catch tank as well, water in the catch tank can be drawn up into the engine, and I don't need to tell you what that will do. Hopefully you cleaned your tires before leaving the track. Red clay comes off much easier at the track than even a day later. Some of the tracks I have been to, the clay sets up similar to concrete, and requires a lot of elbow grease to get off. The kart cannot be properly cleaned with the tires on, so if they aren't clean, let's get them done and out of our way.

A mild degreaser diluted makes a good solution to wash your kart with. Simple Green, 409, etc., are all good choices, however, like the label states, make sure you dilute them or your paint may suffer as a result.

Have a small pail of your cleaning solution as well as a couple of spray bottles filled and



ready for use. Once started, stopping to fill up the bottles is a lack of preparation. Rubber gloves, a

washrag, and a good toothbrush are some of my tools of choice. The toothbrush works very well in the hard to reach areas around the rear bearings as well as the front spindles, and the rag makes the larger areas much easier to clean. The rubber gloves go a long way toward your hands not feeling like sandpaper. It is my experience that a few dollars spent on good rubber gloves pays off in many more uses than cheap one-use gloves.

Before starting, I have everything I need to finish the job ready for use. I have my cleaning items, my air hose, and my lubricants all laid out and ready. If tools are needed to access the bear-



ings, or remove the bearing shields, have them ready as well. The sooner you get the kart dry, and apply the lubricant, the less time rust has to set in.

Wash time! Warm or hot water cleans better if you have it. Plus, reaching into a cold bucket in February is no thrill either. Spray the kart down in sections to keep the soap from drying before rinsing. Extremely dirty areas may require a couple attempts to get as clean as we want them. Using the toothbrush, scrub all the tight spots. While you have the toothbrush handy, clean the chain as it is on the rear sprocket, this does a great job. Rinse well, and keep going until you get the whole kart cleaned. Keep in mind; under the motor mount and the rear frame rails are usually an overlooked spot, so make sure you address these areas as well. I don't know about you, but I don't have any desire to get filthy when working on my kart. This is enough motivation for me to make sure I get all those out of the way spots clean. While at it, make sure the underside of the sidepanels are clean as well.

Blowing with compressed air is an excellent way to dry the kart. If compressed air isn't available, a leaf blower has been used successfully. The goal here is to remove the moisture and prevent rust and corrosion from starting. Make sure to get the bearings, brakes and steering components dry. Anything that moves needs to be addressed. Blow into the nerf bar mounting tubes, the front bumper tubes, and the steering post tube. All these areas gather water, and when it rusts up inside, removing these parts becomes very difficult. Plus, parts that rust together and begin to seize limit the intended movement of the components, and can cause the kart not to handle well. Take the time to get the kart nice and dry. Now is a good time to start your engine and dry it as described in one of our previous articles.

Time to lubricate. It is important you take the time to lubricate your chain and bearings and displace any moisture. Spray the chain well, and lube the rear bearings as well. Remove the front hubs, wipe them and the spindle clean, oil the spindle shaft and replace the hub. Spray the tubes mentioned above, and add a bit of lube on all the moving parts. Give the kart a good inspection, and if desired, wiping the kart with WD-40, gives it a nice shine. Now, you can continue with your weekly maintenance program.

