



YOUTH COACHING MANUAL

Guidelines for the training of
youth competitors in Speedway
December 2020



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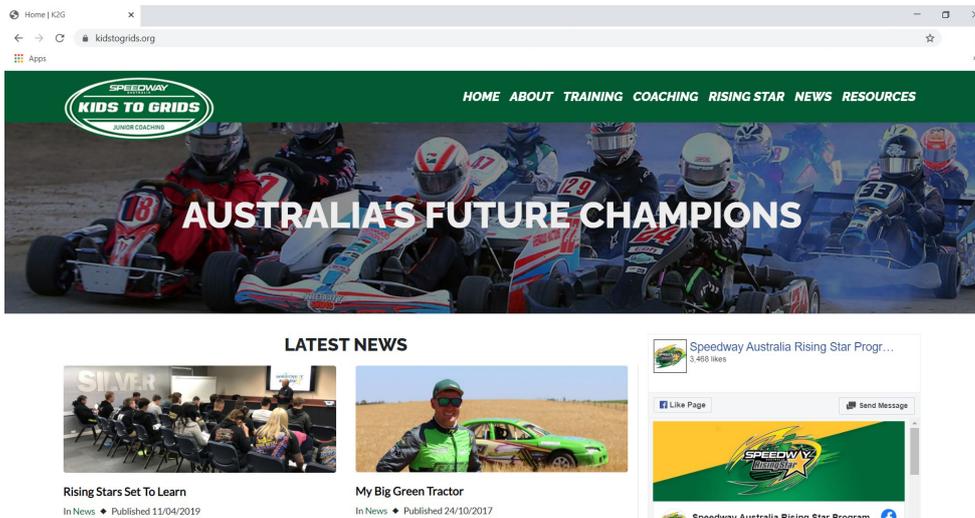
Program Overview

Speedway Australia's Kids to Grids is the sport's new comprehensive youth training and coaching program. The aim of the program is to develop talent in Speedway from a younger age, educating drivers about aspects both on and off the track. Via an online platform, competitors and parents are able to work through a series of videos, followed by Q&A's. Kids to Grids is provided free of charge and can be accessed using any device with internet connectivity.

The course is broken into three levels being; Beginner, Further Development & High Performance. As the name suggests, the first level is aimed at people brand new to the sport or those attending 'have a go' type events. This flows through to the High Performance module focusing on in-depth information for established youth competitors.

The topics covered throughout the program vary depending on the level. Beginner topics include licensing, race gear, flags & race receivers, car control and more. Further development covers the rule book, race craft, plus basic media and marketing skills. Finally, High Performance includes a more advanced look at media & marketing, as well as personal-trainer designed health and fitness videos.

Online training is also complemented with at-track coaching & mentoring. This is provided by trained volunteer coaches, each assigned to a dedicated venue or regional area and each trained to the same standards.



Accessing Kids to Grids

Kids to Grids is available via its own web address (www.kidstogrids.org) as part of the Speedway Australia suite of sites.

Access to the training for youth competitors is simple, with the website directing everyone to the hosted KTG platform via the 'training' page. Once directed to the platform, users will be required to create an account, which will keep track of their progress plus provide certificates of completion for each module.

The KTG website also includes similar access and information for coaches, latest news & updates, plus a downloads page for and downloaded content covered in the training.



The role of a Coach

A Speedway Australia Kids to Grids coach plays a vital role in the future success of young Speedway competitors. A coach's role is to act as a support person to develop a driver's knowledge base and skillset. A competitor's ability to improve over time has a massive effect on their long term interest in competing.

To be an effective coach, there are a few things to consider.

Why do people play sport?

People engage in sport for a wide variety of reasons. Most often it's because they enjoy the sport as a spectator, or their family is already engaged in the sport. There are however many aspects that can affect someone's interest in a sport or activity and enjoyment comes from a range of places. This can include;

- Learning skills
- Improving skills
- Creating friendships
- Feeling of belonging to a group
- The joy of knowing they can achieve something
- Interest in health & fitness
- And much more

Inability to achieve the above aspects can in turn put people off the sport they previously loved and see their passions head in another direction.

Engaging with youth

All youth are different in the way they receive and process information. Coaches need to consider and be aware of the different characteristics that make up the person they are trying to engage with. Physical/development, social and emotional characteristics differ from person to person and realising this will have an effect on your role as a coach. You need to be aware of what makes up the competitor you are training in order to tweak and tailor a session towards them. Here are a few things to consider;

Physical/Development differences

- Growth; everyone grows at a different rate and this may affect their ability or strength when driving the car.
- Coordination; Younger youth are generally less coordinated than others even a few years older. As youth get older, their hand/foot & eye co-ordination improves, allowing them to learn new skills.

Emotional differences

- Physical and emotional maturity and not always linked. A bigger person can still be more self-conscious about issues unique to them.
- Children lacking emotional maturity may be easily distracted, lack confidence, be easily led by their peers or not handle meeting and engaging with unfamiliar people.
- Some youth may come across awkward and be uncomfortable in new situations so a coach needs to be sensitive to this.

Social differences

- Everyone is brought up in a unique housing and financial situation. Although motorsport isn't a cheap sport, you can't assume that everyone competing comes from the same level of wealth. A family's wealth can affect the level of equipment or race gear a driver has and although uncalled for, it may leave them subject to negative comments from their peers.
- The group of individuals you're coaching may come from a wide range of backgrounds with their families having differing beliefs. It's important to be open to all and be inclusive wherever possible.

How to successfully engage with youth

For you to be a successful coach, your approach to coaching and expectations of everyone must differ depending on their own abilities. You should put more weight on the individual's own progress and not compare them to

the achievement or skills of others. It's okay to increase the challenge of the learning over time, but each new challenge should be reasonably achievable, in order not to put them off.

Here's a few tips to help you stay more engaged with your drivers;

- Look out for those who lose concentration more often or appear frustrated.
- Or, for people who always want to be first to speak or have difficulty listening to others
- Look out for people who have difficulty remembering or following instructions.
- Be aware of potential bullying or exclusion of certain competitors.
- Who express frustration or appear confused.

Handling misbehaviour

At some point, you may come across youth will behavioural issues. These individuals can affect the overall enjoyment and learning of others, so it's important issues are dealt with. Luckily, for all Kids to Grids training sessions, the parents or guardians will be in attendance so they should be there to assist.

Here's a few tips to stay ahead of misbehaviour;

- Get to know all of your drivers as best as possible before, during & after the session. This will help you customise certain aspects to them and avoid any issues before they start.
- Make all competitors aware of the fact they are in a privileged position to be able to compete in Speedway and that it's important to enjoy and respect every aspect of it.
- Involve the parents or guardians in any discussion relating to good behaviour so they are able to act as support people.



Becoming a Coach

Speedway Australia will continually be looking for coaches to be a part of this Kids to Grids program, as we look to expand it throughout the country. There are a few steps in place to becoming a coach as outlined below. This process will likely evolve over time, so check back for further editions of this coaching manual. Anyone over the age of 18 can apply to become a coach and we actively encourage younger people to also get involved.

Steps to becoming a coach

- 1 Visit www.kidstogrids.org/coaching and fill out the online form. This form gives us a better idea about you and your background in the sport, plus outside of it. You will also require a Working With Children check to be eligible to become a coach. Visit the following link to find information on your relevant state or territory; <https://www.acic.gov.au/our-services/national-police-checking-service>
- 2 Subject to the answers of your submission and your WWC check, Speedway Australia will liaise with your local venue to better understand their current youth training strategy. There may already be established coaches in the area, so we will work to find the best forward move for you.
3. Once you've been assigned to your local venue, you will be able to set youth training dates and, via the club/venue, liaise with Speedway Australia for a practice permit. The training day will be listed on the KTG website and your contact details will be added as a coach for your area, allowing new competitors a point of contact in their area.

Coaches Workbook - Rookie Training (four hours)

This Coaches Workbook is intended for rookie drivers who have yet to race at any Speedway event.

Pre-lesson requirements

As the coach leading this training session, there are a few things you need to make sure are in place before any activity can occur in the Speedway facility.

1. **Speedway Australia Practice Permit**

Any youth training event must be run under a Speedway Australia practice permit. Depending on your role within the relevant club or venue, this may not be up to you to organise. However, as a coach you need to confirm that this permit is in place before the session starts.

2. **Licensing**

It's also crucial that you check every person taking part in this session holds either a Day Licence or Full Licence for the relevant class. If a competitor doesn't have this, Day Licences are available for purchase via the following link, or the Speedway Australia app;

www.licences.speedwayaustralia.net.au/nasr/applyDayLicence/

3. **Health & safety**

The Speedway Australia practice permit will include an overview of health & safety requirements that must be met. These include things like first aid personnel, fire extinguishers, emergency contact procedures and more. Please make yourself aware of these requirements prior to a training event.

4. **Kids to Grids beginner module**

It's important to instruct the drivers and parents to complete the beginner level of the online Kids to Grids training. This will give them a great overview of the most basic aspects of racing in Speedway. They will also receive a certificate of completion, so make sure to sign this either digitally or physically before the training.

What you'll need to conduct the Rookie Session;

- Indoor area with chairs
- Whiteboard
- Set of flags
- Officials raceceiver headset
- Access to the track lights

Session plan

The rookie session plan is designed to give you an idea of how to run a coaching session. As mentioned previously, this is a working document as Kids to Grids evolves, so feedback will be sought from both coaches and parents over time. This plan is also designed for a wide range of youth classes, so it's important to focus the session on what's relevant to the class of the day.

The timing of each session is a guide only and must be fluid to allow for any unique discussion to flourish. However, it's important to prioritize engagement of the competitors by keeping sessions to a reasonable length and also taking plenty of breaks. Breaks allow them to interact with parents and refocus on learning.

1 **First classroom session - 30 minutes**

- Indoor session, ideally with a whiteboard available.
- Start by explaining your own experience in Speedway. Keep it brief with the highlights, any embarrassing moments, what you love about the sport - be human. Talk about how you've learned things over several years.
- Next, go around the room and ask the competitors a few questions about themselves. One by one, ask them about their goals in Speedway, their favourite drivers, their favourite

classes etc. This is more about making the youth comfortable to talk back and forth, then it is about what they're saying.

- Then again go around the room and ask what experience they all have in racing. Have they raced in another form of motorsport? Have they grown up around the sport? Have they had a backyard go-kart of some sort? This will give you an idea of where they are in their development so far.
- Following this, go through an overview of the flags, lights and how the race receiver works. They should already know this from their KTG training, but it's important to reinforce it. Show the flags one by one and let the group answer what each flag is.
- Similar to the above, go through a quick brief of their racing apparel, why it's important to always wear the best quality safety gear and to keep it clean and in good condition.
- Finishing of this session by mentioning the fact they're lucky to be racing a car and not everyone has that opportunity. Appreciate the moment and enjoy learning more.

2 Outdoor session - 30 minutes

- It's now time to go outside to their cars.
- Start by talking about the generic safety features of the car. Seat, belts, window net etc. Again, much of this will have been covered in their KTG training, so it's only a refresher.
- Next, get the drivers to sit in their own cars one by one. Test they can fully use the brakes/throttle, clutch (if relevant), use the steering wheel properly, reach any kill switches etc. Check everything is secure - belts, window net, steering wheel etc.
- Show them how to keep/get the car going in the event they spin out. Putting the clutch in, changing gear etc - relevant to the class.
- Run through important things they will need to know if they are involved in a crash. Undoing the window net, undoing seat belts, kill switch etc. Highlight that they should only get out of the car if they believe there is a fire or a risk of one.
- Finally, run through them exiting the car and check they can do this in a safe and timely manner. Feel free to make it a friendly competition between the competitors to reinforce the importance of knowing how to get out the car quickly when required.

3 Have a break - 10 minutes

- Encourage drivers to have some water/snacks, engage with parents etc.
- Use this time to prepare for the next lesson or talk with parents.

4 First on-track session - 20 minutes

- The first on-track session is designed purely for the drivers to gain laps. Keep the cars spread out and encourage them to explore different parts of the race track. Let them drive largely without thinking too much.
- During their driving, make sure to do a few lights tests to see which drivers respond and how quickly. This isn't about telling anyone off, it's only about checking their knowledge in theory versus real-life scenarios.
- While drivers are completing laps, take the time to make notes on what the group is collectively doing right or wrong so you can build the next classroom session around this.

5 Have a break - 10 minutes

- Encourage drivers to have some water/snacks, engage with parents etc.
- Use this time to prepare for the next lesson or talk with parents.

6 Second classroom session - 20 minutes

- Firstly, go around the room and let each driver individually talk about how they felt in their first on-track session. Ask them what they enjoyed and also find out what they struggled with.
- Following this, also reference the notes you made during the session from what you saw of both their driving techniques and their reactions to the lights.
- You can use the whiteboard to show different driving techniques and point out the locations of the lights to remind them where to look. Some drivers may find it easier to draw what they experienced on the whiteboard, if they're unable to put it into words, so encourage this as well.

7 Second on-track session - 20 minutes

- This session is all about putting into practice what they learnt in the previous classroom session from both you and their peers.
- Allow them to drive, but this time use a mix of the lights and raceceivers to refresh their memories of what they've learnt, during the session.
- Once again, take notes on what they might still be struggling with.

8 Have a break - 10 minutes

- Encourage drivers to have some water/snacks, engage with parents etc.
- Use this time to prepare for the next lesson or talk with parents.

9 Third classroom session - 20 minutes

- By this point, your classroom session can become more indepth and start to offer more tips and tricks than just the basics.
- Just like previous classroom lessons, use what you've witnessed and their feedback to create your talking points.
- You can start to touch on racing lines in this session and speak about the importance of keeping up their momentum each lap.

10 Third on-track session - 20 minutes

- The third on-track session is all about encouraging drivers to work on their momentum lap after lap.
- Let them practice different racing lines and via the raceceiver encourage drivers to increase their speed slightly more each lap.
- Once again, remember to remind the drivers during the session on what they've learned in the classroom, to refresh their minds.

11 Have a break - 10 minutes

- Encourage drivers to have some water/snacks, engage with parents etc.
- Use this time to prepare for the next lesson or talk with parents.

12 Fourth & final on-track session - 20 minutes

- This is the last session of the day and it is designed to prep the drivers for their first race event. The goal of this session is to run through a full simulation of what they will experience on race day.
- Have drivers start at their pit bay/trailer by getting into the car with all their gear on, belts done and ready to go. Then have the competitors drive to the grid and line up in position. This process may vary depending on the class, so adjust to suit and mimic a real life event.
- When everybody is ready, open the gate and allow the drivers to drive out on to the track

and form up in the way they would for a race event. Have them complete a few laps together and if possible have a pace car available to lead them.

- *Before the next step, remind the drivers over the raceceiver that this isn't an actual race and that passing each other isn't the goal. The drivers can increase their speed, but largely stay in the same position.*
- Next, prepare the drivers for a simulated race start. Turn out the lights like any normal race and then go green when they're in position. After they've completed half a lap or a full lap, again put the yellows on when you believe it is safest to do so.
- Repeat this process a few times, having them reform and then face the starter. Give the drivers tips through the raceceiver in terms of how close to be to the car in front of them. This is all about having them ready for their first race and understanding the process.
- End the session by spreading out the cars again and allowing them to complete some fast laps practicing everything they have learnt so far.

13 Wrap up - 20 minutes

- The learning sessions for the day are now complete and it's time to wrap up.
- Have one final Q&A session with the drivers asking them what they think they learnt and what they enjoyed.
- Thank the parents for their support during the day. Encourage parents to complete a 'Parent Report' by visiting www.kidstogrids.org/feedback - their feedback on the overall set up of the training will be valuable.
- Congratulate the drivers for what they've learned and wish them the best for their first race event.
- Hand out certificates of completion to each competitor. Ideally have these ready to go before the training session, using the Kids to Grids certificate template.

14 Post training report

- At the completion of the day, visit www.kidstogrids.org/feedback and fill out a 'Coach Report' on the event. This will provide valuable feedback to us here at Speedway Australia on how to improve the Kids to Grids Rookie Training.

