

# Lively debate over kart engines

## KART RACING

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Since the start of karting as a motorsport, children have been accepted as competitors as well as their parents.

In the early 90s, the national controlling body of sprint karting, the Australian Karting Association (AKA) altered the then existing Rookie class for ages seven to 12 years to cater only for ages 10 to 12.

At the same time, it introduced the Midget class, catering for seven to 10-year-olds.

The reason was the big difference in driving ability between a seven-

year-old newcomer compared to a "seasoned" 12-year-old. The preamble in the AKA rule book for both these classes reads as follows:

"Spirit and Intent. The purpose of this class is to teach young people to drive karts of restricted performance at limited cost."

Both classes have been successful for karting, with many current senior drivers having started karting as Midgets.

The allowable powerplants for the Midget class are the Comer S80 engine from Italy and the Yamaha KT100J (in a performance-restricted format) from Japan.

They offer similar performance on track but are quite different in their design and application.

The Comer S80 engine has a rope

pull-start, centrifugal clutch, fan-forced cooling and an integrated muffler.

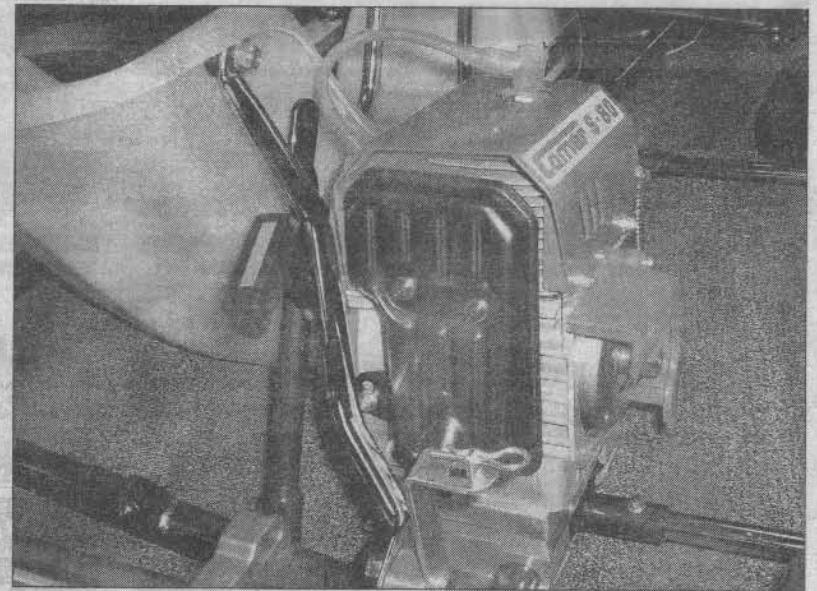
The Yamaha engine requires a separate control muffler and, until recently, was only allowed to run in a direct-drive format, making push-starting mandatory.

Why would anyone bother with the Yamaha when the Comer was so much more convenient?

Well, here's the rub. The Comer can only be used in the Midget class, requiring parents to sell it and then buy a Yamaha KT100J engine as their aspiring Ambrose enters the Rookie class.

At the moment, with the rise in karting numbers, the consensus is that the Comer engine is the way to go.

However, with the association



A new Comer engine in a kart ready for competition.

encouraging the use of clutches for all classes, this will now provide the Yamaha engine with a much greater level of convenience.

Combined with the fact that this engine can be used by senior drivers, it makes for an attractive option. Decisions, decisions.