



## APPENDIX IV

2023 USAC.25 Midget Rookie Program

\*This appendix pertains to .25 Midgets which may be referred to in this section as QM where needed

### **401 Rookie Procedures**

- A. The Rookie Class is to train new drivers to understand basic racing rules and to be able to handle themselves and cars in a safe manner. The Rookie class is not for perfecting racing skills, abilities or techniques. Extended competitive racing in the Rookie Class once the fundamentals are learned is not to be allowed.
- B. The Rookie program is divided into two phases. The initial Red Rookie phase is intended to orient the child with safety, communication and racing procedures so that they understand what is expected of them before they enter the track, while on the track and leaving the track. The training is outlined in Section 3702.
- C. When Red Rookies have displayed their understanding of these basics, they move to phase two of the Rookie training.
- D. The secondary Blue Rookie phase is to obtain experience in racing with others at a faster speed and to gain confidence in the car and their abilities.
- E. The minimum age for a Rookie will be five years for racing and four and one half years for practice and training only. (4 ½ year olds may not practice or train during an event) There is no age differentiation between Red and Blue Rookies, as all ages must pass through each phase.
- F. Each Rookie handler, upon joining a club shall present the drivers birth certificate to the Secretary of the club and the "official age" of the driver shall be entered in the

permanent records of the club. Copies of these records shall be forwarded to the USAC National Office.

- G. At the Clubs discretion, the Club President may issue a log book and Rookie Driver's Card.
- H. Rookies and their parents shall receive from the National office, their picture ID badges. Rulebooks can be acquired on the USAC website.
- I. A driver may be moved to the Honda 120/Animal class at any time directed by the Club President or Rookie Director.

#### **402 Rookie Training**

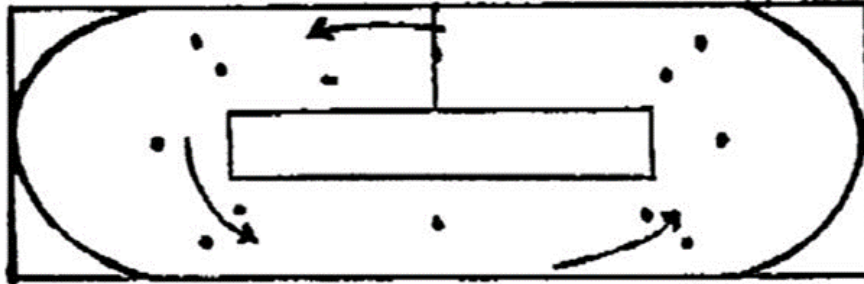
- A. Rookie Training by a competent instructor must be completed by all new drivers. Minor changes can be made to this outline to conform to local conditions. Any driver not trained by the clubs Rookie Trainers must pass a test given by his local Club's Rookie Committee before he enters into the Rookie Class. The Rookie driver must be a USAC member to be covered by club insurance during training periods.
- B. Purpose of Rookie Training Program
  - a. Instruct drivers in the basic procedures of .25 Midget racing.
  - b. Promote driver safety from a driver's viewpoint.
  - c. Offer all drivers an opportunity to improve their driving techniques and skills through non-competitive practice sessions with qualified adult supervision.
  - d. Train new drivers AND handlers in driver safety and track safety.
- C. Instructor's Guide
  - a. Rookie trainees, especially juniors, have limited concentration and stamina. Each phase of instruction should be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes time, followed by a short break and/or an actual on-track practice.
  - b. Rookie trainees should not be allowed onto the racing surface until the instructor has made sure that every precaution has been taken to ensure the Rookie trainee's safety. Each car should be safety checked to be sure that all equipment is installed and working correctly. Extra attention should be paid to the on/off switch, (location, operation) safety belts, brakes, roll cage (proper clearance). New handlers often have little experience with race cars or safety equipment.
  - c. The Rookie Trainee should be completely instructed on how to stop the car safely in the event of trouble or unease with car speed. Rookie Trainees should have a full understanding of all flags and hand signals prior to driving on the track. The meaning of the red, yellow and black flags are VERY important, as well as where you want the Rookie Trainee to stop when shown a red flag. The Rookie Trainee should be shown that the steering wheel is his or her "**BEST FRIEND**", and that they should only take their hands off of it when operating the on/off switch or signaling to leave the track. Gently roll the car over on its side while they are belted in the car to carefully show them that they can't "Hold Up" the car or prevent a rollover. This procedure can make many Rookie Trainees nervous, so assure them that they are safe, and remind them to never take their hands off the wheel. Let the Rookie Trainee know that you are not interested in how fast they can go in the initial training

sessions, but want to get them used to the car being in motion and how to handle the car. Don't push speed on them, but whatever speed they drive at, try to have them remain at a consistent speed and not "let up" or "Breathe it" in the corners. For some drivers, it may be helpful to limit the gas pedal travel for the first few training sessions, especially with bringing along an apprehensive driver as well as an overly aggressive one.

- d. The instructor must always remember that he/she is dealing with children and keep all explanations as simple as possible. Small whiteboards with dry erase markers are a valuable tool in explaining situations, as are small diecast cars. Rookie Trainees need to build confidence in both themselves and their cars. Whenever possible, praise can bring results far greater than the instructor's expectations. The instructor must have great patience when the Rookie Trainee has had repeated mistakes or has trouble understanding the subject matter at hand. Additional patience and attention will be needed with younger trainees. To keep a Rookie Trainees attention, you will have to meet them halfway by becoming their friend, but still remain aloof enough to command their respect. Keep the conversation on their level, but don't talk down to them. Find time to know the trainee, find out their fears and appreciate them as being quite real in their minds, while working to alleviate them with rational explanations. Build up their confidence by passing yours on to them.
- e. Parents should be encouraged to attend, participate and listen to all verbal instruction, and to ask questions whenever they are unsure or don't understand any instruction or point. Parents should NEVER be allowed onto the track while their child is driving. This tends to make the Rookie Trainee self conscious and prevents them from fully concentrating on doing their best. Parents cheering can be distracting enough to cause an accident. Further, parents need instruction themselves on how and when to enter the racing surface.

#### D. Helpful Training Tips

- a. Pylons – Rookie Trainees can be helped immensely by the use of pylons. Use pylons in the first training session on track to establish the driving pattern. Twelve pylons are recommended for this lesson. (See Illustration below) One pylon is placed on either side of the track in the straight-aways, approximately 7-8 paces from the wall and in the centers of the straight-aways.
- b. One pylon should be placed in each corner, about a car width up from the infield line towards the center. Place the remaining 8 pylons in 4 "gates" of two pylons, between each corner and straight away. Basically the cones will direct the Rookie Trainee around the racing "groove" in a proper pattern. Instruct the Rookie trainee that they are to drive around the outside of the pylons in the middle of each straight away, in between the "gate" pylons, and as close to the infield line in the corners, inside that pylon. Again, this puts the Rookie Trainee in a good pattern, and helps to eliminate the usual corner pinching that is common with new drivers. It also helps to "walk" the Rookie Trainee around the track in the pattern that you want them to learn.



- c.
- d. Reactions to Sudden Hazards – The Rookie trainee should be able to react to sudden hazards appearing in front of the car by the third training session. If the instructor stands in one of the corners or elsewhere, with a pylon hidden from the Rookie Trainee. When the car approaches, the pylon is flipped into the path of the car. (It is recommended that this is practiced without cars first to make sure that you don't hit a car or Rookie trainee with the pylon.) This exercise will help the instructor to judge the reflexes of the driver and indicate to the Rookie Trainee that he/she must be constantly alert while on the track.
- e. NOTE: Sometime prior to this exercise, pylons should be shown to the Rookie Trainee's so that they understand it is made of soft rubber and will not hurt them.
- f. These tips are shown as aids in the instruction of the Rookie Trainee. Other demonstrations and instructions may be devised. However, caution and safety must always be at the forefront. Nothing should be done that will cause the Rookie Trainee to lose confidence. Don't make tests too difficult and even if a driver fails a test the first few times, first point out what was done correctly and offer praise, while gently pointing out the mistakes in a friendly manner.
- E. Flags, Hand Signals and Safety
- a. Flags
- i. Every Rookie Trainee & handler MUST know the meaning and color of each flag. A Rookie Trainee should not be allowed on the track until they have shown they know the meaning of each flag. Let them know that flags and hand signals are the only way handlers and officials can communicate with them while the car is moving on the track.
- RED** Stop Immediately
- YELLOW** Caution, Slow Down, No Passing
- GREEN** Start, Increase Speed, Go
- BLACK** Disqualified, Go To Pits
- WHITE** One Lap to Go, Take One Lap
- CHECKERED** Race is complete
- GREEN & YELLOW** Held Vertically and Parallel, One In Each Hand Denotes "Form-Up" Side By Side For Original Start.

Held Together In One Hand Overhead

**BLACK and YELLOW** Denotes Restart In Single File.

All Cars Slow Down and Exit Track

- b. Hand Signals and their meanings
    - i. Rookie Trainees must be able to recognize these important Hand signals. Give examples of the use of each hand signal:
    - ii. **Finger drawn across throat in slashing motion** - Turn off switch and stop.
    - iii. **Hand held flat in downward motion** - Slow down.
    - iv. **Thumb and index finger in open/close motion** - Give it more throttle.
    - v. **Any flag held in a furred position w/one or more fingers held above it** – Take the number of laps indicated by fingers, then take action required by the flag.
    - vi. **Arms extended to the front in an opening & closing motion** - Move in or out as indicated.
    - vii. **Hand or flag pointing to rear end** - Move to the back of the pack.
  - c. The car and safety
    - i. Safety Equipment and Its Purpose
    - ii. Switch Location and purpose.
    - iii. Brake Operation and purpose.
    - iv. Safety Belt Reasons for use, how tight?
    - v. Helmet What type, why & when worn, how snug?
    - vi. Visor What type, why & when worn.
    - vii. Jacket What type, why they are required.
    - viii. Roll Cage Purpose; height.
    - ix. Gloves Purpose; what type used.
    - x. FireWall Purpose; why it must be extended below the belly pan. Bumpers Purpose; importance of not having any broken parts. Nerf Bars Purpose; importance of not having any broken parts
- F. The car safety dos and don'ts
- a. The car is definitely not a toy. It is not to be played with in the usual sense of the word.
  - b. Obey the flagger. He is in charge out on the track. Do not take signals from the pit area during an event. (Explain why: disqualification, taking eyes away from track can cause accidents, etc.)
  - c. Keep in mind what you are doing...not what you did last week or what you will do tomorrow.
  - d. Do not watch or wave to the spectators, mother or father. Keep your eyes on what is happening on the track in front of you.
  - e. Do not chew gum or candy while driving. If involved in an accident, you could choke.
  - f. Before leaving the pit area for the track, always check your safety equipment to be sure it is in operating condition. Be sure your visor is clean and pulled down. Your helmet must be tight. Be sure your safety belts, neck collar, and gloves are tight. When checking your belts try to pull the lap belt first then the driver's right side shoulder belt then the drivers left side shoulder belt. When tightening your lap belts, snug them up enough that you cannot get your finger under them. No more than one or two fingers under the belts under your shoulder belts.

- g. Check your RaceCeiver to make sure that you can hear clearly - Always keep your switch in the “off” position when the car is not in use. - Do not remain in the car during refueling operations.
  - h. Drivers should be cautioned to keep elbows and hands inside the car at all times.
- G. When leaving the pit area and coming out onto the track
- a. Look for other cars already on the track; do not break into the flow of traffic and stay above white line.
  - b. If flagger is on duty, await their signal before coming out onto the track. - Do not drop into the flow of traffic already on the track. Let the pack go by before dropping down to run your pattern.
  - c. Do not “play” with other drivers on the track. “Fooling around” can cause accidents.
  - d. Tell your handler, should they attempt to refuel you on the track that they can refuel only in the pits, and only with the driver out of the car.
  - e. If someone is standing in the on chute or pit lane area – STOP; do not run him or her over.
- H. When leaving the track to enter the pit area
- a. Look quickly behind you for other cars before turning out of the traffic pattern. - Hold your left hand up on the inside to signal to other drivers that you are pulling out and going to the pits.
  - b. After leaving the traffic pattern, move up to the wall and follow it around until you reach the entrance.
  - c. The car handler should be waiting at the pit entrance for his driver. - Upon reaching the pit entrance, drive slowly to pit position, turn off the switch and apply brakes. Be sure to allow room for any other cars that may also want to exit the track.
    - i. Watch out for other drivers, handlers and cars as you go to your pit position
  - d. Safety in the pit area
    - i. Fuel & Extinguishers:
    - ii. Before practice or racing make sure all fire extinguishers are in their proper location. Whenever a car is being refueled, the driver is to leave the car and stand to one side – this applies at all times. Handlers should not smoke while refueling. There will be no refueling on the track or in the “infield”. Refuel in the pit area only.
    - iii. Playing and/or roughhousing: No playing in the pit area or out on the track. Drivers could be hit by cars, etc.
    - iv. Always stay near your car unless you have permission from your handler to leave the area. Always tell your handler where you will be...you could miss an event.
    - v. When watching, the program always remains “behind” the fence. Do not sit on exposed walls at the entrance to the track or pit area.
    - vi. Do not attempt to help push a car off/onto the track. Let the adult handler or owner tend to that chore.
- I. On-Track Training Procedures
- a. Set up pylons/cones as shown in illustration
  - b. Test your Rookie Trainee’s knowledge of the meanings of the flags. Explain the basic hand signals to your students.
  - c. Track Walk. Explain: (Instructor/Driver only).



- i. Staging area line-up, point out driver/handler only line, never drive into staging area, etc.
  - ii. Describe hot chute/pit area parking according to number
  - iii. Begin walking out onto track “on chute”, point out flagging positions for practice/qualifying, point out white “blend line” STAY ABOVE!!
  - iv. Join patterns through gate pylons, point out where the instructor would like the student to drive: around outside of the straightaway pylon, through the next gate, below the turn pylon, etc. During the walk ask the driver where they think they should go next to see if they are getting the idea. If needed, walk 1 or 2 more times around.
  - v. Show the driver how to leave the track. Demonstrate the hand signal and where to drive, high in turns, etc. When leaving the track, have your hand on the switch ready to stop.
  - vi. Show where to park/stop to get ready for qualifying, and where to stop to leave pits – “pit gate”.
- d. Suit up driver: In car talk. After belting in:
- i. Describe the steering wheel as the driver’s best friend, “buddy”. “You never let go of your buddy unless you need to turn the car on or off, or signal to leave the track” (And, of course, to hold a checkered flag.)
  - ii. Tip the car over on the side – ask the driver to hold up the car – show them that they **cannot** hold up the car, **SO DON’T LET GO OF YOUR BUDDY**, your hand could be smashed.
  - iii. Point out gas and brake pedals – demonstrate.
  - iv. Point out the switch and its function – Ask the driver to look you in the eyes and remove your hand from the steering wheel to turn the switch on. Hands back on the wheel. Drill your driver several times until the driver can confidently switch on & off. Example:
    - v. Switch on (no peeking) – hands back on wheel.
    - vi. Switch off (no peeking) – hands back on wheel.
    - vii. Switch on (no peeking) – hands back on wheel.
    - viii. Switch off (no peeking) – hands back on wheel.
    - ix. (No fair if you peek.)
- e. Ask the driver if they are ready to drive! And ask if they have any questions? f. Retest them on flags and hand signals.
- f. Disengage drive axle spline if possible or take the chain off and tell driver you are going to push them around the track without engine running, to see if they remember where to drive.
- g. Push around the track. Ask if they have any questions. See if they are ready to try with engine running. Explain: When the handler starts pushing and taps you on the head, turn switch on, Drive!! PUSH THEM OFF.
- J. Drive pattern through and around pylons. As the driver's speed and pattern improves, begin removing pylons, remove gate pylons in pairs first, leaving straightaway and corner pylons for last. Once all pylons are removed and the driver shows he/she can run a pattern, stop them and praise them for what they have accomplished. “You are doing great; see, you are so good you don’t need the cones anymore.”
- K. Take a break – many kids will be pooped by this point and need time to think about

what they have accomplished. This is a good stopping point: For lessons during the week after school – this may be the end of the first lesson. For lessons on weekends – (with more than one student) you could switch to the next driver and go through the drills with them.

- L. Possibly Second Session: Experienced driver required.
  - a. Suit up and review switch drill, flags, and hand signals.
  - b. Have the student drive along to see if he/she remembers what was learned in the first session. If positive, then proceed to the passing game. If negative, place corner and straightaway pylons to help reinforce last session. Usually the pattern will come back to the driver quickly.
  - c. Test reactions to sudden hazards in order to see if the driver is ready to have another car on the track with them. Remember to remind drivers that the cones are made of soft rubber; do not let them know you will be throwing one out in front of them.
  - d. The Passing Game: At this point an experienced driver is necessary. Have both cars stop in the turn, single file, and describe how you want the rear car to pass the front car, on the inside coming out of the turn. (The handlers can demonstrate by pretending they are cars and passing each other). Emphasize that they cannot pass on the outside, and how that would cause an accident if tried.
  - e. Start the passing game by instructing the experienced driver to be the first to pass, and to slow down once they have passed the student. The student will likely be slow and tentative, and this will make it easier for the two cars to drive single file. Once the experienced driver has passed the student, have them slow down so the student may pass. Continue this exercise until the student is passing with confidence. In many cases this will be a good time to stop – Ask if they would like a break. Having achieved confidence with another car on the track, many students will realize they want to continue training. Some students, especially the very young, may not want to continue. Emphasize that they are the “boss” in the car and they don’t have to drive if they don’t want to.
- M. Third Session: Experienced driver required.
  - a. Review all that has been learned so far to reinforce the ideas of pattern, passing, flags, and hand signals (on track also). Stop the cars at start/finish line.
  - b. Describe the form-up flags, green and yellow vertically, side by side, for a double file start, the two flags together in one hand vertically for single file restart. Describe “forming-up” by placing the student on the pole and indicating where on the track you want them to drive, low in turns and straights, leaving room on the outside for the #2 car. Emphasize that the pole car controls the pace and needs to watch where they are going, not the other car! Tell them to be steady on the speed, don’t speed up and slow down.
  - c. Describe the form-up flags again to reinforce.
  - d. Describe the switch position signals and what to do, i.e., pole car moves forward, outside car falls in behind to switch positions, outside car becomes pole car.
  - e. Qualify the student and have them exit the track. If they make a mistake, give them another chance to qualify, reinforce what they have learned. If successful, tell them that the training is complete. They may need to come back one more time for full review and graduation. Or if you feel they are



ready to race.

N. Fourth Session

- a. Review and practice all previous sessions: Form-up, switching positions, exiting procedures, qualifying, etc.
- b. Have a 10-15-lap race with other experienced drivers. (Always let your student be the one to carry the checkered flag at the finish of the race.)
- c. Graduation and presentation of certificate.
- d. For the driver's first race it is fun to tie a red rag to the cage (rookie flag) have the trainer and club officers sign it and at the end of the day take it off the car and let the driver know they are a full fledge racer.

**403 Rookie Program Committee**

- A. Each Club of USAC shall have a Rookie Committee staffed by the Race Director, Club President, Technical Director, Safety Director, and Rookie Instructor. If one of the committee members is absent, an alternate should be picked, at a given race day. The committee will monitor the progress of each driver in the Rookie class. If it is the opinion of the committee a driver is capable of graduating into the Honda/Animal class, the committee shall notify the Handler verbally, sign the Rookie Card and duly note it in the logbook. During the three race probationary period, a Rookie may be returned to the Rookie class for obvious reasons. The Rookie Committee shall render all possible aid to the Rookie handler.
- B. Advising on purchase of cars, engines and other equipment to help avoid pitfalls.
- C. Checking legality of engines purchased during the Rookie training, in the event that a Rookie handler has purchased an illegal engine and this fact is discovered by the Rookie Committee, the owner shall be advised that he has one race day to bring the engine up to legal specifications.

**404 Rookie Racing**

- A. The Rookie Class shall be a recognized class by USAC and shall run under the Honda 120/Animal engine rules at all USAC races. The Rookie Class shall be divided into the Red and Blue divisions only, which may be combined if necessary to make a class.
- B. Illegal Honda engine parts shall be confiscated but the suspension shall not be levied against handlers or drivers for the first offense only. 2nd Offense follows the engine suspension, 30 days suspended from Rookie. Rookie Class participants shall be required to install a restrictor plate on their carburetor. Any alteration to Rookie restrictor plates or slides— 1st Offense automatic 30-day suspension. 2nd offense shall be 1-year suspension. SEE Appendix I, Section 132
- C. No more than eight cars may be entered in any Rookie race.
- D. One safety man will be present at each corner for every Rookie race, outside of wall
- E. If a Rookie driver makes an infraction of a racing rule and a call is made, the driver shall be put to the back of the restart lineup, not given a black flag. An explanation shall be given to the driver by the Track Director of what they did wrong and why it should not be done. Rookie drivers will not be eliminated from races for receiving multiple driving infractions (STRIKES).
- F. Infractions such as liberating fluids, dropping safety parts, etc., are not driving infractions and drivers should not be given a second chance before

disqualification. These infractions will result in immediate disqualification.

- G. On the first day of Rookie competition, the driver shall be entered in all races at the back of the lineup of the race for which he has qualified regardless of qualifying position. An orange piece of cloth or ribbon should be affixed to the roll cage to notify other drivers and handlers this is the driver's first race out of training.

#### **405 Graduation of Rookie Drivers**

- A. The Rookie Class is a learning class, so as soon as the Rookie driver is proficient at line ups, racing in traffic, and the other needed skills to race in a competitive class, they shall be moved to the Honda 120/Animal classes.
- B. A Rookie driver must participate in at least three events before graduating to a competitive (Honda 120/Animal) class. One of these three events must be in the Red Rookie class. Should a driver win in three (3) national Red or Blue rookie classes and/or five (5) club or regional races, they must move up to the next.
- C. Clubs should hold a small ceremony to make the advancement of a Rookie driver into the Honda 120/Animal classes.
- D. On the first day of competition in the Honda 120/Animal class, the new driver shall be entered in all races at the back of the pack for which they qualified, regardless of qualifying position.
- E. All graduating Rookie drivers shall be on probation for three events and shall not be allowed to compete in any class above Honda 120/Animal Class until he has participated in three Honda 120/Animal events to acquire the necessary experience involved in handling a car in other classes.
- F. Once a Rookie is graduated to Honda 120/Animal and completes his/her probationary period, they may not be returned to the Rookie class except if there is a lapse in the participation of a driver, they may be moved back to Rookie for a trial period if Rookie Committee feels it necessary.