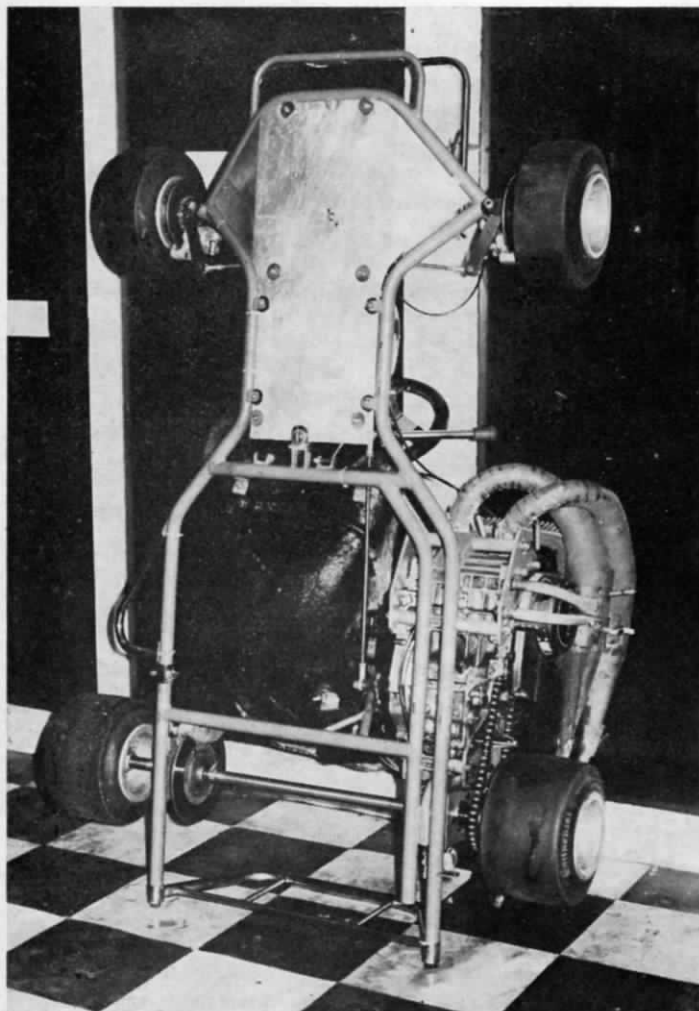


THE STAR KART GETS INTO GEAR AT MORECAMBE



The transfer of an established kart building firm to another would seem to be a relatively simple business and it should be easy to maintain full production flow, but when we recently visited Hesketh Racing at Heysham to view the Blow "take-over", we rapidly discovered this is not the case. To satisfy the homologation needs of Formula Europe, 50 chassis had to be built immediately, and they were then put in cold storage as Hesketh refused to sell them until the inspection process was completed.

The first gearbox frame was then constructed with modifications to the brakes which had previously been suggested to J. J. Blow. The stub axle length was reduced by almost 2 in. to eliminate drag and in four weeks a variety of drivers tested the machine to breaking point, covering 1427 laps of the Heysham circuit (around 600 miles) during which times 27 permutations of king pin inclination, castor, camber and Ackermann angles were tried. The engine posts, which had been considerably strengthened to withstand the brute power of the current Yamahas, were also designed to take the Villiers engine without the use of any spacers as on most makes. Three different rear axle widths were used to find out which gave the best handling with neutral characteristics.

THOROUGH CHECK

The chassis was then completely stripped — even to the removal of the engine posts to make sure that no cracking had occurred in this most vulnerable place. With the expertise and built-in reliability handed down from J. J. Blow, the Heskeths now believed they had a machine fit to market and their faith in its construction seemed justified when they took orders for 15 in the first seven days after it had been announced to their dealer network, including 5 valuable export orders.

The needle roller bearings of the Mistral king pin posts have been replaced with EE3 roller bearings. All stub axles and rear axles are machined on the premises from EN8 and the highly successful Appleby brake, first used on Barlottis, has been adopted as standard and all joints on the frame are nickel bronze welded for strength. The new kart has been renamed the Star Eliminator and it is expected it will be a strong contender in all gearbox classes including the new Superkart class when equipped with fairings, which are currently being investigated.

EXCITING RIDE

A drive round the Heysham Circuit using the Yamaha powered kart of Managing Director, Kelvin Hesketh, was enough to convince me that the handling and braking characteristics are all that are claimed and although I was told that the Hesketh Yamaha installed was off peak after its 600 miles testing session — during which nothing had been checked or replaced on the engine, it still poked out enough power to make one treat it with the greatest respect and wonder at the performance when in full race trim. The kart tested was equipped with Continental tyres all round and the manufacturers say it handles just as well with them as with more expensive makes.

A dealer network has been established and all parts are freely available so anyone racing every weekend should have no difficulty obtaining spares providing their local dealer has had the foresight to hold stocks and to encourage this a generous discount rate is given to stocking dealers.



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Illustrations on page 329. A star is born, the new Star Eliminator. Row 1 — (Left). Dave Hurtleley arc welds stub axles. (Centre). Kelvin Hesketh turning stub axles on a capstan lathe. (Right) Ray Woodhouse nickel bronze welding a frame. Row 2 — (Left). New gearlever steady and brake fluid filler pipe. (Centre). The front brake assembly. (Right). The rear end with effective bumper. Row 3 — (Left). Layout of the brake master cylinders and front wheel brakes. (Right) A complete Yamaha-powered Eliminator. No cables or rods are used in the entire braking system.

Photo: Kart-Pix

KARTING

