



LONDON PLAY



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No softies here: London kids show Go Kart grit



Continuous rain failed to put a damper on yesterday's All London Go Kart Build and Race as children from across London proved that they are anything but a 'cotton wool generation'. Nine soggy teams raced first against the clock to build go karts from scratch – and then against one another – with some spectacular crashes and nail-biting finishes adding to the excitement. Leonora Surtees, daughter of the late motorsport legend, John Surtees CBE, waved the starting flag.

Hackney's team Shakespeare Walk (SWAPA) defied predictions to win the day, despite the complete self-destruction of their kart on the finish line during the first heat and a spectacular crash involving Croydon's team CACFO in the second round. But thanks to a bit of trackside hammering and drilling, and one re-run later, against all odds they lined up for the final against borough-mates, team Hackney Play.



It was an elated team SWAPA that crossed the finish line first but given their technical issues it was no surprise that second placed team Hackney Play got the award for best-engineered kart. Chief designer Fern, 14 said: "It's a real accomplishment! The rain made us work quicker and we've had to think of different things,

like what our trainers are like for grip on the wet grass."

Earlier SWAPA team member Pebbles, 11 said: "We've worked really together. I've really enjoyed working with my team. We chose the driver by giving everyone a chance to try and then picking the best one!"

A sunny attitude was evident from Amirah, 10, of Merton's team Acacia – which won the award for best teamwork. She said: "I enjoyed the weather, I think it made the kart glide a bit and help me push it!"

Team SWAPA will be experiencing some serious horse power at Kent's Buckmore Park Kart Circuit (where Formula One stars Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button started out) thanks to the Henry Surtees Foundation, which sponsored the event and donated the winning prize for the third year running. Buckmore Park managing director Leonora Surtees attended on behalf of the Henry Surtees Foundation and was delighted to see the budding engineers and designers at work, some of whom had never handled a drill or banged in a nail prior to the event. She said: "My father [the late motorsport legend, John Surtees CBE] spoke passionately about this event. It's great to see kids from lots of different backgrounds getting involved and having fun; and also thinking that perhaps it might inspire them to do something productive in future, be it in motorsport, carpentry or another discipline."

Following weeks of hot sunshine around 100 children and young people had arrived at Mudchute Farm at 11am that morning looking somewhat bemused by the drizzly conditions and piles of wood and tools awaiting them. But they got stuck in; hammering, sawing, drilling; and to their even greater bemusement, less than four hours later had all produced functioning and unique go karts. A few practice-runs to hone driving, steering and pushing techniques led straight into three heats, each with three karts – featuring some fierce competition, tactical manoeuvres, and a few total wipe outs – but huge grins all round.



A jubilant team SWAPA was handed the coveted 'H' trophy and celebrated by spraying sparkling grape juice from under the cover of gazebos. Newham's team ARC won the award for best-dressed kart with their rainforest inspired creation, complete with python (left).

London Play's deputy director Fiona Sutherland said: "Thanks to the Henry Surtees Foundation for again supporting this fantastic event – and well done to all who took part. Today has really shown us how creative, resilient and resourceful London's children and young people can be if they are given half a chance. So let's make sure they have those chances."

Corporate volunteers from JLL were also not put off by the rain and were crucial to the smooth running of the day. Charlotte Malone, Director at JLL Canary Wharf, commented: "We are pleased to continue to support the London Play Go-Kart event. The work that it does to tackle the exclusion of children from some activities due to financial circumstances is so important, giving them the much-needed opportunity to get involved in something which they wouldn't normally be able to. We had a great time seeing the children getting stuck in!"

For more information, quotes or high-resolution photos of the event please contact Fiona Sutherland via fiona@londonplay.org.uk or on 0203 384 8513.

Notes to editors

1. London Play is a small charity that strives to get more children in London playing out more often. We promote children's right to play, campaign for more and improved out-of-school play services for London's 1.8m children and young people, and support play providers in the capital. We also directly provide more play opportunities for children by supporting groups to develop play streets, building nature play areas and running events.
2. We are grateful to headline sponsor, the **Henry Surtees Foundation** for making this event possible. HSF was set up by the late motor racing champion John Surtees CBE in memory of his son Henry who died in a racing accident in 2009. Among its priorities is to support the advancement of young people in life "by helping them to develop their skills, capacities and capabilities so that they can participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals." www.henrysurteesfoundation.com
3. We are also grateful to corporate sponsors: JLL real estate; CASS Business School, True and Fair Foundation and Knight Frank; as well as to Mudchute Farm for hosting the event.
4. Teams were made up children and young people from adventure playgrounds, play schemes and community projects across London. Adventure playground groups are from Merton's Acacia; Hackney's Shakespeare Walk, Hackney Marsh and Hackney Play Association; Newham's Terence Brown Ark. The Croydon African Caribbean Family Organisation (CACFO) Summer School fielded two teams and there was an all London group.
5. London Play's work is supported by a variety of funders including the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme, City Bridge Trust and the Tudor Trust.

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