

# FUL TROT

Daniel de Kort, a former asst. managing director of a local bank in charge of treasury turned petrol head, now runs the non-profit SDDK Motorsports which, among others, seeks to promote Curacao motorsports to a more sustainable level. Daniel is a former go kart racer with a couple of podium finishes and a professional mountain motor pro stock car owner and driver. Unbeknownst to most, he's the local Curacao International Raceway track record holder, a FIA-accredited race photographer, a classic car owner and restorer, and a reluctant motorsports event organizer. Daniel will be contributing to Curaçao Sports Weekly with a wide variety of topics regarding motorsports.



## Drifting

Curaçao is familiar with a wide variety of motorsports, but the newest form is undoubtedly drifting. Is it a derivative of 'fever' in the public roads – which is illegal, by the way – or did a local petrol head get inspired by the Drift King?

Keiichi Tsuchiya, a Japanese race car driver who honed his skills by street racing on mountain roads near Fuji, became an underground legend when a video of his drifting skills was produced in 1987. The wave of publicity created paved the road for one of the first drift events to be organized, called D1 Grand Prix. Actually, it was Kunimitsu Takahashi's drift techniques that inspired Tsuchiya to take up drifting. The former, a famous motorcyclist turned driver, developed the first drift techniques in the 1970s in Japan.



Foto's: Familie de Kort

Drift cars on the old go kart track at Koraal Tabak.

For those unfamiliar with drifting, it's a driving technique where the driver intentionally oversteers, with loss of traction in only the rear wheels, while maintaining control and driving the car through the entirety of the corner. There are many ways of getting into it. Some start by using the rear brakes to lock up the rear tires and apply power. Others use the Scandinavian flick (weight transfer while reducing speed), followed by increasing speed. In any case, drifting is not to be confused with the four-wheel drift, used primarily in the world of rallying.

Generally speaking, drifting started in Curaçao in the late 1990s, when a group of 8 enthusiasts got together to practice their drifting skills on the old go kart track at Koraal Tabak. It quickly became a weekly gathering. The first large organized drift show called Curadrift took place in 2006. It was organized by Gabriel da Camara and took place at the Festival Center near Brievengat. Sixteen cars participated and put on a great show, and the event drew more or less 2,500 spectators.

Actual competition started a couple of years later in 2010 when a group of American drivers, headed by Harry Tervola, took on local drivers at the Festival Center. The event was organized by Steve Hudson. The sport of drifting is usually a competition judged according to speed, angle, showmanship, and line (how well a driver follows the predetermined course). A D1 drift series league was to be established in Curaçao, but for various reasons, unfortunately, it could never get properly established. The idea was to hold multiple events over the course of the year, culminating with a champion. Drifting still takes place at the Festival Center. Last year, Gabriel da Camara started the Sunday Funday, which has grown into a well-organized monthly event, with a drifting competition, drift shifting, etc. If you are looking to experience some wild racing action, visit the GDC Funday at the Festival Center.



Drift car during the 2019 Hillclimb Curaçao

Many don't know that, following the success of the drift video Pluspy, officials of the Japanese Office of the Prosecutor got wind of Tsuchiya's illegal drifting on public roads and promptly suspended his professional racing license. Best to keep drifting on closed circuits, such as the Festival Center, and not on public roads.