

Super Mario Kart How-to-Place-Out-of-Medals Guide

by deathslinger

Updated to v1.21 on Jan 25, 2005

"How to Place Out of the Medals" (version 1.21)

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0. Version Notes

Version 1.21 (25/01/05):

-updated copyright information

Version 1.2 (16/01/05):

-fixed some typos
-changed postscript; will now accept contributing info and allowing more sites to host this FAQ
-changed formatting of section headers
-postponed adding course-specific details to next update

Version 1.1 (26/11/04):

-completed item list in section 7 (now includes feathers, ghosts and lightning bolts)
-changed some symbols and phrases (e.g. from "?" to "|?|") for clarity
-added course-specific details for most courses in section 8; will complete information for remaining three courses for next update

-made minor updates to sections 2, 4, 6, 9 and the Contents

Version 1.0 (27/10/04 - 17/11/04):

-this was a preliminary version; will add game details at a future date
-will add other specifics if there is enough demand

1. Preamble

Currently, this FAQ demands working knowledge of the game Super Mario Kart (herein referred to as "SMK"), the original SMK game on the SNES console. If there is a demand for it, I will include some basic information for the game; but for now, you'll have to find that elsewhere. No, I don't like the other FAQs currently available at www.GameFAQs.com (they all appear to contain clearly erroneous content), but I currently don't have the time to write a complete FAQ on the game mechanics--maybe at some future point in time, though.

2. Overview

If you haven't encountered this FAQ before and have stumbled upon it without being referred to it, you're probably wondering what the heck it's about. This FAQ will tell you exactly what its name implies: how to place out of the medals on SMK. You may have noticed that you only need to place 4th in order to qualify for the next race, but you need to place 3rd overall in order to qualify for a trophy (gold, silver or bronze). This FAQ will tell you how to finish a Cup without getting a trophy. You may ask why anyone would wish to do such a thing. Well, the music during the trophy presentation ceremony is different, for starters (I personally think it's some of the best music in the game). Otherwise, it's just something else to do; it's another challenge. Placing below 4th overall is surprisingly difficult; you have to do a lot of place manipulation.

Many of the following strategies are quite valid for regular racing and battle mode; however, the emphasis here will be towards placing out of the medals. Feel free to take what you will (in terms of knowledge) from this FAQ to better your driving (in SMK) in general!

3. Guidelines and Facts

1) You must play in Mario Kart GP mode. Only then do you have a full complement of eight racers (including yourself) to manipulate in the standings.

2) Always place 4th. This will give you 5 points total, and you are guaranteed to place no better than 4th overall (unless one CPU racer places 1st every time, one CPU racer places 2nd every time, and the other five CPU racers each come in 3rd place exactly once (or a similar scenario) which is pretty unlikely).

A) CPU racers try to maintain the same position throughout an entire Cup; i.e. whatever position they place in for the first course, they will try to place in

that position for the next four courses.

4. Recommended Pre-race options

1-player or 2-player: Of course, having two players to manipulate the opponents' standings makes things much easier.

50cc, 100cc or 150cc: 150cc is hard enough just to finish properly, without having to worry about where the CPU racers place. Unfortunately, since CPU racers try to maintain the same position throughout the Cup, 50cc is too slow to be practical; the CPU racers have far too much time during which they can catch up to their respective positions. Thus, 100cc is the recommended engine size.

Driver: Since you must always come in 4th place, you must be able to adjust your speed/progress so that you cross the finish line after 3rd place and before 5th place. With that in mind, you want to choose a driver with good acceleration. Do not use Bowser or DK Jr. Good driving will nullify the need for superior handling, so Yoshi and Princess Peach are recommended (they possess the greatest control with regard to acceleration).

Also, you may wish to choose a driver such that the natural 1st/2nd place driver is "bad"; i.e. doesn't catch up easily. I'm not sure if they differ much, however, when used by the CPU.

Cup: You have to take into account the hazards available on each track, not simply the general difficulty. Also, it is more important to have hazards in later tracks, as that is when you need to manipulate the standings the most. Special Cup is recommended, as the last track (Rainbow Road) has no rails, offering many opportunities for seriously setting back specific CPU racers. Ghost Valley 3 works well for the same reason. The fact that Donut Plains 3 is fairly difficult is irrelevant; placings in the first course are not important. If you are uncomfortable with Special Cup, Star Cup would be my second recommendation; however, the difficulty of Mario Circuit 4 makes position manipulation very difficult in the last course of that Cup.

5. Levels of difficulty

Placing 4th overall

This is easy. Just come in 4th for all five courses. Chances are that someone will come in 1st all the time, another in 2nd, and another in 3rd, so that points will be distributed 45, 30, 15, 5, 0 to 1st through 5th place.

Placing 5th overall

This is more difficult. You must manipulate the standings to that four other racers place higher than you overall. Suppose that in the first course, racer A places 1st, racer B places 2nd and racer C places 3rd. Then an (relatively) easy solution is to make racer B finish after you on two of the remaining courses. Racer A will net 45 points (five 1st place finishings), racer B will net at least 6 points (the first 2nd place finish), racer C will net at least 15 points (3rd, 2nd and 2nd place) and some other racer will net at least 6

points (two 3rd place finishings). This is, however, easier said than done.

Placing 6th overall

Try the following standings scheme:

	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
1st	A	A	A	A	A
2nd	B	C	C	B	B
3rd	C	D	D	E	E
4th	You	You	You	You	You
5th	D	B	B	C	C
6th	E	E	E	D	D
7th	F	F	F	F	F
8th	G	G	G	G	G

Or something similar. You may wish to try to take out racer A, instead, though that may be rather difficult. I haven't actually been able to place 6th overall yet, but I'm sure it's possible. If you manage to, please let me know!

Placing 7th overall

I'm not even sure if this is possible or not. I'll comment more after I've managed to place 6th overall.

6. Driving Strategies

- 1) In general, keep pace with 1st place; this allows you to keep tabs on him, and means you'll never be in a mad rush to catch up to 4th place.
- 2) When racing, always race as fast/well as possible until the end of the last lap. If you're far enough ahead, you can double back on the |?| blocks and pick up two (or more) items per lap, still maintaining pace with 1st place (if not actually in 1st place). Also, you want to be able to attack anyone in the top three positions at any given time.
- 3) Tap the item firing button after driving over a |?| block until the item "slot" slows down. This will shorten the time between driving over the |?| block and being able to use the item; just make sure you don't accidentally use the item prematurely.
- 4) On the last lap, gradually fall back into 4th place. Do not sit at the finish line waiting for 3rd place to go by, as he may be only slightly in front of the next CPU racer, who will then take 4th place (you won't have enough acceleration to squeeze in between them).
- 5) Keep an eye on your rearview mirror, or on the relative positions of racers on the map, especially on the last lap.
- 6) Make sure you pick up enough coins so that you can ram other racers, particularly off edges (e.g. Ghost Valley, Rainbow Road).
- 7) If you know you won't get the other racers to finish in the places you want/need, just finish in 5th place and redo the course (you start closer to the front at the starting line in 5th place than in 8th place).

7. Item Strategies

Essentially, items need to be used offensively as much as possible in order to keep other racers in the positions you want. Ideally, you want to knock a CPU racer into water, off the track or into a wall/corner to maximize the time by which he is delayed. Furthermore, you want to do this often (he will try to catch up, and do a pretty good job), and more effectively, during the later laps.

Coins: Use these immediately. They cannot be used offensively, other than enabling yourself to hit other racers without spinning out.

Shells: These are pretty self-explanatory, aren't they? Try to maximize damage, though, by sending the racer off the course, preferably off the edge, into water, into lava, into a wall, etc. Alternatively, you can lay the shell in a high traffic area, but you have less control over who it hits and where. Bottom line: get really good at aiming green shells.

Stars: Again, self-explanatory. Run into racers. Preferably more than once.

Bananas: Lay these in optimal places, like on narrow bridge crossings, in front of mandatory jumps, etc. Do not throw bananas forward; you have far less control, and you're not using them to try to "catch up" in position.

Mushrooms: Do not use these to catch up in placing. Use these to ram racers off the track. This is even more difficult than aiming green shells. Get good at it. To start, don't worry about following the racer off the track; you should have no trouble catching up to 4th place, anyways, right?
(Note: use of mushrooms in this manner has been made more effective in recent incarnations of SMK (e.g. Mario Kart: Double Dash!!) by causing actual damage to the racer hit instead of just bumping them.)

Lightning Bolts: Try to maximize the damage done to specific racers with this. Running over the miniaturized racer at the end of the miniaturization period will maximize their "down time", as they will be stopped just as the other racers are beginning to accelerate to their normal speed. If you can flatten them and then "nudge" them off the track/into the water, that's even better. The best method, however, is to activate the lightning bolt when your CPU racer of choice is about to make a jump; the lost speed will cause him to fail the jump.

Ghosts: Utterly, utterly useless. Use these immediately.

Feathers: Offensively useless. Just use these to take shortcuts, or jump over obstacles you were a little too careless about to avoid, or get rid of them.

8. Specific Course Strategies

Remember: all you have to do on the first course of any Cup (Mario Circuit 1, Choco Island 1, Koopa Beach 1 or Donut Plains 3) is finish in 4th place. This is because in later courses, the CPU racers will tend to try to finish in whatever position they finished in during the first course (even if their starting position was/is different).

Mushroom Cup Courses

Mario Circuit 1: As this is the first course of the cup, you needn't do anything (other than place 4th). Although, really, there's nothing you really can do even if you wanted to; the course is just a simple loop, with no noteworthy hazards.

Donut Plains 1: Try to force the CPU racers into the water (off the bridge), if possible. Otherwise, try to hit them into the rough (the grass) and/or into the walls around the hairpin-esque turns.

Ghost Valley 1: Push the CPU racers off the track. Note where there is a lack of railing and attack the other racers there. Alternatively, demolish some of the railing blocks yourself and attack the other racers on subsequent laps. Unfortunately, this particular course is a little too short for that to be very practical.

Bowser Castle 1: Either knock the CPU racers into the side "pockets" near the beginning of each lap, or try to time the hit so they spin over the yellow jump pads and into the lava. Ignore the Thwomps.

Mario Circuit 2: Set racers back a lap by making them spin across the speed boosts at the jump over the track. They won't have enough speed to clear the jump and will have to travel an extra quarter-lap.

Flower Cup Courses

Choco Island 1: Again, not much to do here. Just place 4th.

Ghost Valley 2: Same tactics as Ghost Valley 1. Here there's more time to demolish the railing blocks if you wish. Send those racers into the abyss!

Donut Plains 2: Knock the racers into the walls at the hairpin turns. Or, the gophers, if you're adept enough.

Bowser Castle 2: Here there are many excellent opportunities for sending racers into the lava by making them spin out over the yellow jump pads.

Mario Circuit 3: Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of death traps available for use on this course. Just do your best.

Star Cup Courses

Koopa Beach 1: This is just a small loop. A pretty loop, but a loop nonetheless. However, as pretty and easy as it may be, because of its extremely short length, it is rather tricky to come in exactly 4th place. I recommend attacking the would-be 4th place finisher to make sure there's a nice generous gap after 3rd place so you can coast past the finish line in 4th place.

Choco Island 2: There isn't too much available to the malicious racer on this course, either. Just keep pummeling whatever racer you need to attack.

Vanilla Lake 1: Send the CPU racers into the walls or the water--both of which are sparse. You're better off attacking after the pack gets through the ice block fields though, as whoever is in front usually clears away the blocks,

allowing those behind to catch up in position.

Bowser Castle 3: Choose paths around the |?| blocks so that you can pick up two different items without slowing down, assuming the first item is a feather, ghost, banana or mushroom (impossible or difficult to use offensively).

Mario Circuit 4: Good luck. Attacking racers at the hairpin turn doesn't seem to be too effective; they seem to recover fairly well (the walls are fairly far away) and the difficulty in performing the manoeuvre is not worth the effort, considering the results.

Special Cup Courses

Donut Plains 3: Send those CPU racers off the bridges into the water. But really, you don't need to do anything here. Just create a nice gap for yourself to finish in 4th place.

Koopa Beach 2:

Ghost Valley 3:

Vanilla Lake 2:

Rainbow Road: This is where being able to ram with a mushroom will help you immensely.

9. Postscript

If you have found this FAQ helpful, informative or interesting at all, please feel free to e-mail me at deathslinger@yahoo.com.

If you have any comments, questions, concerns, requests, criticisms, suggestions, etc., please feel free to e-mail me.

If you would like to contribute information for this FAQ, please feel free to e-mail me. I will credit you accordingly.

If you manage to place sixth, seventh or eighth overall, please let me know. If possible, send me a screenshot; and if you don't object, I will add a link to the screenshot (and/or host it myself) in this FAQ.

Thanks to Nintendo for creating Super Mario Kart and the SNES, and GameFAQs for inspiring and hosting this FAQ.

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