



Introduction

Mario Kart Wii marks the latest addition to the much loved and effortlessly fun racing series from Nintendo. In this guide we'll cover some of the basic control issues specific to this new incarnation, run-through each of the power-ups you have at your disposal, detail all of the characters and vehicles on offer, and of course provide an in-depth look at its 32 circuits. You can also read up on how to unlock the myriad of bonuses hidden away within. Enjoy!

In this Mario Kart Wii strategy guide, you'll find:

- **BASICS** // An extensive introduction to Mario Karting on Wii with tips for boosting.
- **POWER UPS** // A breakdown of every power up item in the game.
- **CIRCUIT WALKTHROUGH** // Tips for each circuit track in each cup of the game.
- **BATTLE MODE** // General battle mode strategies.
- **CHARACTERS & KARTS** // Info and stats on every character and kart, including the secret ones.
- **UNLOCKABLES** // Unlocking info for every secret in the game. Extra karts, bikes, characters, and more.

Guide by: Matt Robinson

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Mario Kart Wii Basics

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Control

Mario Kart offers up a multitude of control options for its Wii rendition. All of these forms boast near-identical functionality in terms of what you can pull off, meaning your choice of input should ultimately boil down more to whichever feels the most comfortable to you. However there are still some minor differences to bear in mind with each.

Wii Remote



Holding the Wii-mote horizontally to steer can be tricky for those used to a standard analogue stick, but it offers arguably the simplest and most accessible form of control for newcomers to the series. The main tactic to remember here is to simply avoid the temptation to make huge, exaggerated turning gestures; small steering movements are all that are needed unless taking particularly sharp turns. An optional steering wheel attachment is of course included with the game should you require a more tactile feel.



Performing stunts with this control scheme is pleasantly easy too; a mere case of flicking the Wii-mote up when needed (see "Stunts & Boosting" for more information on how these stunts work exactly). As a pleasing auditory bonus, the Wii-mote's onboard speaker will also play additional sound effects mid-game, such as warning sirens signifying incoming projectiles which can prove invaluable in the more hectic moments.

Plugging in the Nunchuk attachment switches to a more traditional steering system though, this time with using the analogue stick. Still allowing for the simplicity of "waggle" stunts, along with the aforementioned audio feedback, it's a great compromise for the more experienced gamer.

Traditional Controllers

Old-school Mario Karters may find it more satisfying to opt for the Wii's Classic Controller above all else though, or simply plugging in a GameCube pad. Bear in mind that when using either of these more traditional controllers, pulling off stunts will switch to the D-pad though, and you'll be without onboard sound alerts (warning sirens and the like will instead play from the TV speakers, somewhat lost amidst the in-game chaos).

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Control

Stunts & Boosting

General Tips

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Stunts and Boosting

More so than its predecessors, Mario Kart Wii is very much centred on the concept of boosting. This is the process of performing stunts and tricks that reward you with a quick jolt of speed for your trouble. A skilled player will find ways to keep themselves repeatedly boosting for as much of the circuit as they can, constantly pulling off tricks, hitting every speed pad and nailing mid-air stunts regularly.

Forever keep this goal in mind as you race, seeking out each and every opportunity that you can to pull off such manoeuvres, which we'll now detail one by one:

Rocket Start

To kick off a race in style, hold accelerate right after the '2' finishes animating on-screen during the pre-race countdown, giving you an instant speed boost right off the grid. However, failing to nail the timing perfectly will cause a stall, so be careful.



Drafting

Trailing directly behind an opponent will allow you ride in their slipstream, reducing wind resistance and in turn ramping up your speed. You can tell when this is working as blue streaks will appear around your vehicle (pictured). If you can hold this position for a few seconds uninterrupted, you'll perform a 'Draft Boost', which sends you briefly hurtling forward at immense speed. You won't even need to adjust direction either, as this increased velocity will knock aside anyone directly in front of you, including the person you were tailing. Consider it a thank you.

Drifting & Mini-Turbos

Providing you opt for manual drift mode when selecting your character, holding down the hop button while turning corners will engage a power slide, or drift. Holding this drift in place for a few seconds until blue sparks appear prior to release will perform a temporary speed boost known as a Mini-Turbo". Note that the faster you are travelling when performing this drift—combined with pressing into the direction you are turning—will build the charge up faster.

Bear in mind that karts offer a distinct advantage over bikes on this front too, as holding the drift even longer with them will eventually turn the sparks from blue to yellow, signalling an even greater speed boost.

Either way, Mini-Turbos are a valuable part of your Mario Kart arsenal—particularly in the 150cc cups—and you'll want to master this technique as soon as possible. Each and every corner in the game is a potential Mini-Turbo waiting to happen.

Snaking

Chaining a constant stream of the above Mini-Turbos together from left to right is known as "Snaking", and can in theory provide you with a near-unlimited stream of boosts from the beginning of a race to the end. In practice, however, it's an incredibly tricky skill to master, and noticeably harder to pull off in Mario Kart Wii next to previous outings. When coupled with the constant interruptions provided by enemies bumping into you and taking you out with projectiles, snaking becomes a tactic that should be relegated almost solely to solo Time Trial mode then, and is borderline useless in the Grand Prix cups and multiplayer races.

Recovery Boost

If you should fall off a circuit at any point, and cloud-surfing Lakitu flies in to pick you up, you can perform an instant recovery Boost to get back into the action faster than normal. As he lowers you down, simply hold accelerate the second you touch the floor, and off you'll zoom.

Wheelie Boost (Bikes Only)

Tugging back on the Wii-mote at any point while riding a bike will perform an instant wheelie boost, providing bikers with their own distinct advantage on the race track. If using traditional controllers, pressing up on the D-pad performs this same function.

While upping your speed nicely, the wheelie boost does significantly limit your steering, making it hard to avoid oncoming obstacles. Bumping into fellow racers while engaged in a wheelie will in fact stun you, so this trick is best saved for clean, open straights until you get the hang of it.

Thankfully, you can cancel out of the wheelie at any point should you so need to, by tapping hop or instigating a drift.

It's also worth noting the wheelie boost's effectiveness is very much dependant on the speed you're travelling when you pull it off. If moving slowly it may in fact hamper your acceleration and back-fire. Instead, wait until you're blazing along at top speeds before engaging—or have just previously hit a speed pad—at which point the wheelie will help prolong your boost even further.

As you grow in ability, firing off and hopping out of wheelies constantly becomes a truly valuable tactic, and your prime mode of offence against the dastardly four-wheelers.



Ramp Stunts

Nailing a stunt in mid-air will provide a similar speed injection the second you touch down and is likewise worth pulling off at every possible opportunity. Tugging back on the Wii-mote once again—or tapping back on the D-pad on a controller - as you launch off a ramp is all that's required, but bear in mind you need not just stick to the more traditional and signposted ramps of the game to perform such feats; pretty much any kind of hill or drop will allow for such a stunt if timed correctly. You can even gain some extra height by tapping the hop button just prior to launching.

Half-Pipe Stunts

Conversely, vertical half-pipe stunts can only be performed at pre-designated parts of the track; those signposted by blue speed pads adorning the walls. You will receive a minor boost simply by hitting these pads, but also a far larger boost if you can pull off a stunt when launching off the top of them (again, by pulling back on the Wii-mote at the last second). More often than not, half-pipes house power-ups high above them, making them incredibly worthwhile to seek out.

<<	Control	Stunts & Boosting	General Tips	>>
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Miscellaneous General Tips

As well as performing mini-turbos and stunt boosts, Mario Kart's circuits are littered with speed pads that you'll need to make use of - luminous bars decorating the floor that will also send you hurtling forward at immense speeds. Hitting as many of these as possible will cut your track times down drastically, so be sure to consult the Circuit Guide further down for each of their locations.

Both karts and bikes boast their own advantages and disadvantages depending on the circuit in play, but for the most part bikes tend to offer slightly superior performance due solely to the wheelie ability. You may wish to bear this in mind in multiplayer games or when competing in Cups that support both vehicle types.

When up in first place with enemies hot on your tail, avoid travelling in a perfectly straight line. This will stop pursuers riding in your slipstream and performing a draft boost against you.

Half-pipes generally have a subtle path laid out for you to follow if you study the ground for trails and tyre marks. It's typically best to stick to this line if you can spot it.



150cc cups can be brutally tough at times. In fact, the punishing nature of the AI means first and last place positions will regularly switch at quite literally a moment's notice and as such your performance in these races can be almost irrelevant until the final lap. If you're having trouble securing a win as a result of such relentless bullying, try falling back and sticking to the rear of the pack for the majority of the race instead. Save any decent power-ups like the Bullet Bill or the Mega Mushroom for the final lap, then let rip and snatch the win back in the final dying minute. Trust us, it works.

When running through power-up blocks, try to pick up as many as possible. You'll only be able to use one of course, but it'll mean less available for your trailing opponents to grab. Drifting sideways through these power-up lines provides a fine means of doing this.

In multiplayer, try to fool the opponents directly behind you into thinking you're heading for one power-up, then at the last minute swerve to the side and grab another. You can often snatch whichever one they were lining themselves up for, leaving them subsequently weapon-less. Note that the AI likes to do this to you too, so try to counter it by zigzagging a little.

Be sure to nab yourself some ghost data via your wi-fi connection. Mario Kart Wii offers superb online functionality that includes the downloading and viewing of top lap times from around the world. Study techniques, watch for the best racing lines and learn from the game's greatest. This is a sure fire way to circuit mastery.

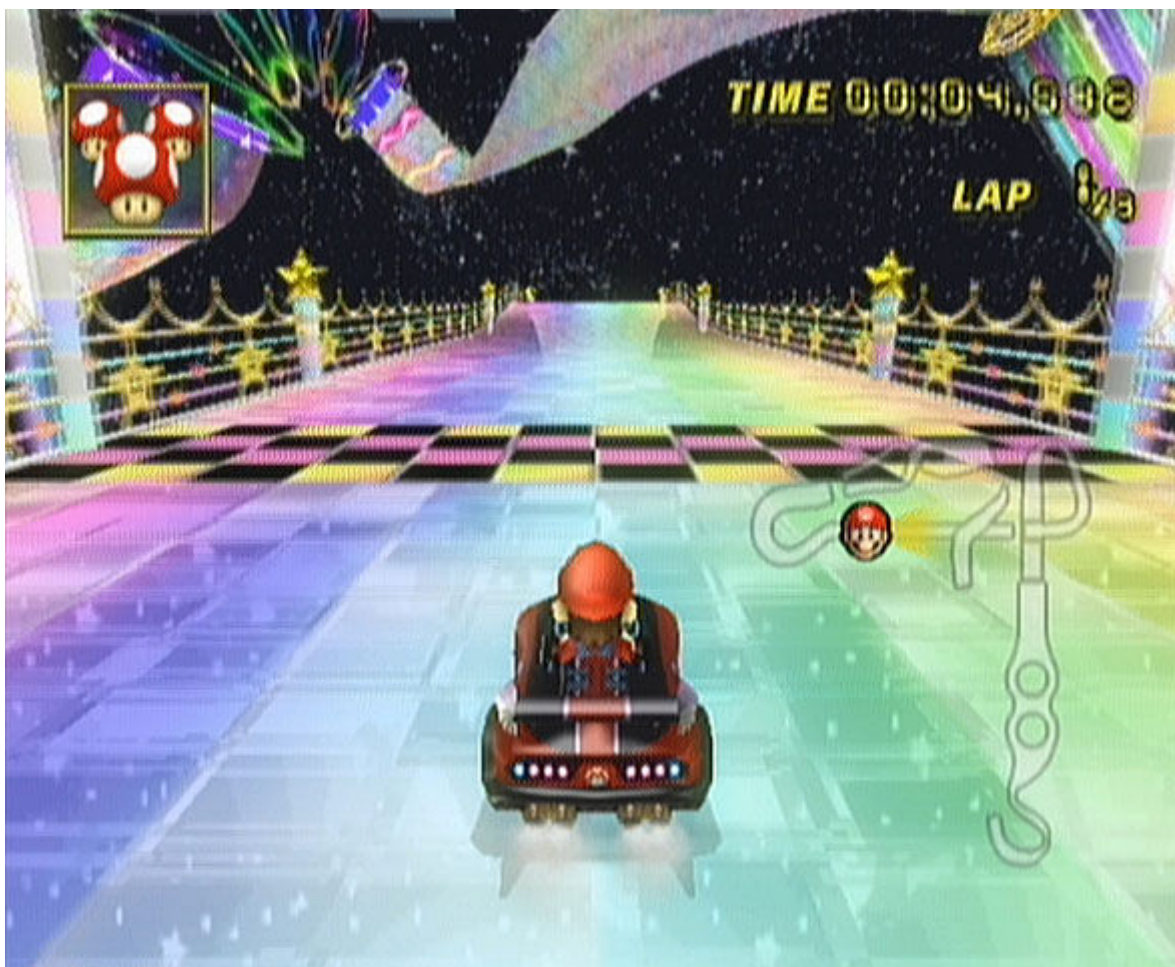
Finally, note that although 50cc and 100cc cups limit your vehicles to karts and bikes respectively, you can in fact unlock the ability to play either vehicle type on all of these cups. See Unlockables later in this guide for more information.

Mario Kart Wii Power Ups

Along with boosting, a pivotal trick to staying ahead in Mario Kart Wii will be your use (and indeed defence) against power-ups. These are picked up by driving into the power-up blocks scattered throughout the tracks, at which point a rotating slot machine will randomly assign one to you when it has stopped spinning (note that you can speed this process up by hitting the power-up button mid-spin).

In the interest of balancing out races, better weapons tend to favour those at the back of the pack however, so be wary when hovering towards the front. If you find yourself in first place and nab yourself a banana skin or a shell power-up, it's often wise to keep hold of it for defence purposes in fact. It'll provide a basic means of protection against the onslaught of projectiles that'll shortly head your way as the race leader.

Pressing left on the D-pad (or back on the analogue in tandem with the item button on a controller) will dangle such power-ups behind you as a shield while you drive, and as long as you keep said button held down, you'll be protected from most basic incoming attacks.



You can even pick up a second power-up when trailing items in this manner - a sneaky means of essentially wielding two power-ups at once.

The various power-ups available in Mario Kart Wii are as follows:

Banana Skin

Can be dropped directly behind or lobbed far in front and will cause anyone who drives over them to spin out. It's a simple, easy to use weapon, and perfect for setting traps in tighter, more confined areas. It comes in both single and triple packs, the latter of which can prove particularly useful if fired off in quick succession while moving diagonally across the width of a track. Note: Banana Skins can be used with the dangling defence technique mentioned above).

Green Shell

An iconic weapon for the Mario series that can similarly be fired both in front and behind. It too comes in single and triple variants, the latter encircling you while they await firing, providing a pleasing barrier of sorts against incoming projectiles and enemies foolish enough to try ramming you. The green shell won't home in on enemies however, so be sure to aim your shots carefully before firing. Note: Green shells can be used with the dangling technique mentioned above.

Red Shell

A more deadly twist on the green shell, its rouge-tinted sibling has the added benefit of heat seeking into enemies and taking them out automatically, although firing it backwards tends to oddly remove this ability. It too comes in triple varieties, which can prove particularly devastating when it comes to clearing house. Note: Red shells can be used with the dangling technique mentioned above.

Blue Shell

The blue is a rare but far more powerful weapon typically endowed to those at the rear of the pack. On firing, it'll fly directly into the air and seek out the racer in first position, exploding on impact and taking them, and indeed all nearby racers out with devastating effect. Great news if you happen to snag one. Bad news if you're on the receiving end.

The warning siren of an incoming blue shell can easily destroy your race if you're out in front, but if you play your cards right it needn't be quite so painful. If you have one stored, firing off an invincibility star will provide an instant defence, but if you aren't so equipped, the following tactic works with practice. The second you hear the incoming warning siren, check your overhead mini-map and note if any pursuing racers are in close proximity. If so, immediately slam on the breaks and reverse backwards. If you can catch your fellow racers within the blast radius when the blue shell explodes, you'll all go up in smoke together, essentially keeping you level.

Star

The classic Mario star power renders you impervious to death for a short while, but also provides a huge speed boost at the same time. Better still, you'll take out anyone that you touch when active. Make it your aim to ram into as many people as possible as a result - the speed increase should make it easy enough to plough through a good bunch in quick succession.

Storing the Star can be a good defensive tactic as well, firing it off when incoming shells and POW blocks are on the verge of impact. The Star's speed boost makes it a viable means of reaching off-road ramps and shortcuts too though. See the Circuit Guide later on for specific locations of these.

Mushroom

The mushroom provides a brief speed boost of its own that is similarly useful for blazing off-road to hidden ramps and general corner cutting. It won't last long by itself, but comes in triple variants, and should you be so lucky, even a golden version. The latter will let you spam its boosting goodness as often as you so desire for a pre-determined amount of time, and is one of the most flat-out useful power-ups found in the game. Use it to blaze across grass, shallow water and any other surfaces that would ordinarily slow you down to a crawl and you can decimate your lap times.

Mega Mushroom

This hilarious bonus makes your racer enormous for a few seconds, ramping up your speed and enabling you to mow down any fellow racers stupid enough to stand in your way.

Blooper

The squid-like Blooper fires ink all over the screens of your enemies, rendering them semi-blind for a short while. More of a minor annoyance than anything, the ink still leaves enough of your screen viewable so it shouldn't cause too much trouble if you're on the receiving end

Fake Item Block

This is a deployable trap acting not too dissimilar to the Banana Skin, only sneakily disguised as a power-up block, the idea being fellow racers think they are snagging weaponry by driving into it, only to find themselves spinning into a world of hurt. It can be dropped behind or lobbed forward, plus you can drag it behind you but be warned, it won't protect you from incoming shells. Still, the Fake Item Block is a fantastic weapon in multiplayer games, particularly when deployed among real power-ups that'll help disguise it.

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Bob-omb

This powerful explosive can also be dropped behind or thrown forward and provides a pleasing means of taking out large groups of enemies at once due to its huge blast radius. If not collided with head-on, it'll need to burn down its fuse for a few seconds prior to exploding, so be sure to aim and time your drops accordingly (switching to rear view can help drastically with this).

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Thunderbolt

The Thunderbolt typically spawns for those at the back of the race, providing them with a somewhat cheap means of gaining some lost ground. When fired off, it'll zap every other racer with a bolt from the sky that'll turn them super small, halving their speed in the process, enabling the firer to crush anyone they drive over and make their way up through the pack.

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Thunder Cloud

A newcomer to the series, the Thunder Cloud is a hot potato of sorts that has both good and bad properties. When engaged, it'll zap you sporadically with charges, increasing your speed nicely in the process, however keeping hold of it for too long will see it eventually zap you a little too hard, shrinking you down much like the Thunderbolt. Merely bumping into a rival will pass the cloud over to them at any point, meaning in theory you reap its benefits for a while before dumping it on someone else at precisely the right moment. In practice that's not particularly feasible, nor worth the risk, so save yourself the sweaty palms and pass it on at the first available opportunity.

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POW Block

Another newcomer to the series, the POW Block hurts all enemies ahead of you, but spares those behind. When fired off, it'll count-down slowly through three stages prior to impact, at which point your enemies will all spin out to much calamity and amusement. If on the receiving end, use its advanced warning to immediately grab some air, as the POW Block only damages those on solid ground. Unfortunately meagre hopping won't be enough.

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Bullet Bill

Bill is the Mario Karting equivalent to deus ex machine - there purely as a means to put those at the rear back into the race with a fighting chance. It'll turn the caster into a giant-sized bullet, ripping through enemies at ludicrous speeds, and even steering its way automatically through the course all the way up to the front of the pack. The player still has some minor swerving ability this entire time—making it possible to take out pesky karters doing their best to hide from its might—but ultimately Bill will do most of the work for you here and you can merely sit back in demonic glee. It only spawns for those in last place, so don't expect to see a whole lot of him if blessed with one iota of skill.

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Mario Kart Wii Circuit Walkthrough

<<	Mushroom Cup	Flower Cup	Shell Cup	Banana Cup	>>
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Mushroom Cup

Luigi Circuit

A simple, straight-forward beginners course kicks the game off on an easy tip. The long straight that runs parallel to the finish line has an off-road ramp on the left-hand side with a power-up on it, but you'll need a boost from a Mushroom or a Star in order to reach it. Try to use the speed pads on the final wide bend for a huge jolt that'll see you through to the finish line in style. Plenty of straights also make this circuit ripe for abusing the Wheelie Boost when riding a bike.

Moo Moo Meadows

Watch for the underground tremors on this course, as they'll slow you down to a crawl if driven over. Note that the cows will also randomly wander into the road on the second and third laps, causing further obstruction. Be sure to pull a stunt off the ramp leading over the grassy hills in the penultimate straight for a nice speed boost and some mid-air power-ups, simultaneously taking care not to land directly on the grass beneath if you want the perfect racing line.



Mushroom Gorge

One of the game's prettier courses offers a unique change of pace, with bouncy mushrooms that act somewhat like huge go-karting trampolines. For the fastest route, take the right forks when you hit both sets of mushrooms, making sure you pull stunts off the final bounce of each set. Resist the urge to use Mushrooms, Stars and other boosting techniques at any other point when bouncing around on these things though or you're more than likely go hurtling off into the abyss below due to excess speed.

Toad's Factory

The trick to this course is mastering use of the various conveyer belts peppered throughout the factory. Travelling on the forward pointing ones will provide an increase in your revs, just note how they change directions from lap to lap. Be careful to avoid the crates and stomping machines of course, then follow a zigzag motion on the home straight in order to hit all three speed pads in quick succession and you should make it through with the gold. Alternatively, a triple Mushroom boost down this muddy centre will work even better.

<<	Mushroom Cup	Flower Cup	Shell Cup	Banana Cup	>>
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Flower Cup

Mario Circuit

There's little to bear in mind regarding this course, other than to make sure you avoid the Chain Chomp snapping at passers-by. To avoid his nasty attacks, be sure you stay in the left hand lane at all times and you'll remain safely out of reach. Alternatively, if you have a suitable boosting power-up, there's an off-road ramp to the right of him that'll let you cut a huge chunk of the corner off and blaze straight down the tunnel behind him. The long home straight is also a perfect place to chain off a Wheelie boost or two if on a bike.

Coconut Mall

Coconut Mall offers a ton of differing and meandering routes, but following these instructions carefully should net you the fastest time possible. Be particularly mindful of the various escalators on this course though, always making sure to ride the ones travelling up (they'll alternate between laps). After the first such escalator, you should swing a hard left for a series of speed pads, unless that is you happen to be endowed with a Mushroom or Star boost. If so, swing a hard right instead and cut through the open shop (named Delfino Dream) for a superior shortcut. Note the shop's carpet will slow you down if you're boost-less.

If on the lower level, be sure to hit the fountain in the main mall head-on as it'll launch you high into the air, nabbing some power-ups in the process. Avoid the similar looking fountain in the outside courtyard however, and swing another hard left instead, for a hidden speed pad and an associated power-up.

It's best to take the metal stairway when faced with yet another split path on the upper level, which'll lead you off a massive jump catered with loads of additional power-ups. Hugging the left as you launch here will see you hit a second ramp the second you land as well.

Nailing the final run of three speed pads is tricky due to the Miis backing their cars up, but if you're sneaky you can clip the edges of these pads and avoid the cars entirely for a turbo-charged blaze to the finish line.



DK's Snowboard Cross

Your biggest threat on this circuit is the pink, sludgy snow that'll slow you down to a crawl if touched. After you're launched out of the huge cannon, note the blue half-pipe pads dotted along the wall though - you can chain boosts off these for a nice chunk of the course. Similarly, when you reach the skating Shy Guys, do the same thing, paying particular attention to the diagonal tracks in the snow which give away the perfect racing line to take. Alternatively, if you have a speed boosting power-up of any sort, simply blaze down the centre of this half-pipe, overtaking pretty much everyone in the process while they mess around trying to avoid the pink sludge.



Wario's Gold Mine

Thin roads with no railings result in plenty of deaths in this fun but frantic death dealer of a circuit, so use wheelies and drifts sparingly and briefly. Purple bats will slow you down on entering the mine, so swerve out of the way to avoid them. There's a superb shortcut tucked away in the Indiana Jones-style mine kart section, which should always be taken - the karts will seemingly disappear off to the left at one point, while the course points you to the right via large signposted arrows. Ignore the arrows and follow the mine karts instead (pictured above), jumping over a ledge and into a hidden tunnel with three speed pads and a big old jump at the end.

<<	Mushroom Cup	Flower Cup	Shell Cup	Banana Cup	>>
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Shell Cup

GCN Peach Beach

Avoiding the water will be your top priority here, as even the shallow stuff slows you down. Taking a hard left onto the docks near the start leads you to a hidden ramp with some power-ups, just be sure to hit it dead centre so that you don't drown in the deep sea upon landing. On the home straight, there's a longer detour you can take to the left of the large fountain (visible on the overhead map) which leads to a stash of additional power-ups, but considering this road is already littered with the darn things it's a huge waste of time and best avoided. Note that the duckbilled enemies on the beach will home in on you if you get too close, so swerve wide, or shoot them down with shells.

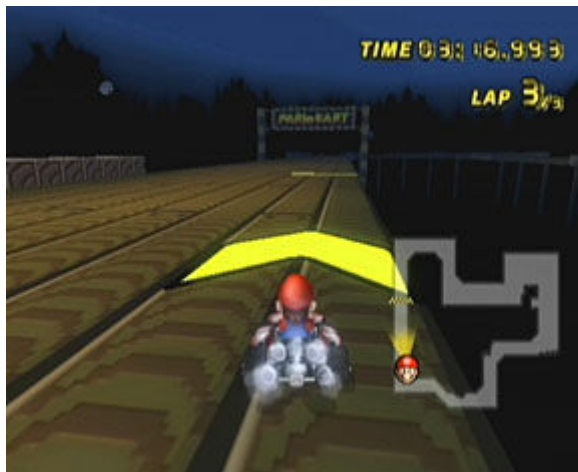
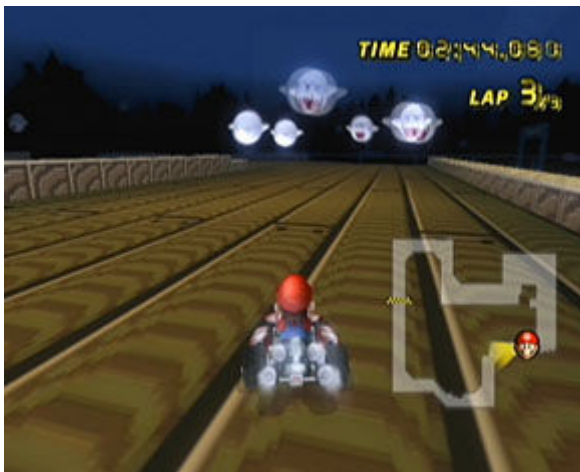


DS Yoshi Falls

It's best to stick to the outside lane for the entirety of this super short course, due primarily to the stream of speed pads dotted along the floor. The wide corners allow for some major drifting too, opening up the chance for some spectacular boosting chains. The long home straight is also perfect for wheelies if you're biking it.

SNES Ghost Valley 2

Beware that hitting the sides on this one - or knocking them with shells - will break them away completely, leaving you without barriers on subsequent laps (oddly enough, this doesn't seem to happen when playing online or in Time Trial mode). Be sure to take a tight right turn leading onto the home straight for a cool speed boost / jump pad combination, although hopping over the jump pad manually will net you an extra power-up if you happen to need one.



N64 Mario Raceway

Drifting and pulling off mini turbo boosts can be tricky on this circuit due to the thin roads and tight corners, but mastering them is essential to winning on 150cc difficulty. Raceway is a straightforward course beyond that though, with only one minor shortcut ramp of note on a grassy field about halfway through. You'll need a mushroom in order to hit it with enough speed to make it worthwhile.

<<	Mushroom Cup	Flower Cup	Shell Cup	Banana Cup	>>
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Banana Cup

N64 Sherbet Land

If you want to be particularly ballsy in this winter wonderland, you can hop over the cracks in the ice during the early bends and shave a few millimetres off the corners while you drift. After the initial twists and turns, you'll notice a thin path to the right of a boulder with two power-ups that's somewhat easy to miss. Taking this path will lead to a speed ramp that'll give you a nice boost across the wide open flats. Once in the caves, be sure to head far right for a second speed pad, before cutting hard left for the fastest racing line. Rinse and repeat.

GBA Shy Guy Beach

Be mindful of any incoming mortar shells from the Shy Guy ship here, particularly with their huge blast radius. Bombs will land randomly throughout the track as you race, where they'll glow briefly before exploding, giving you ample warning to swerve if need be. There is a brief shortcut on this circuit to note - at the top left corner of the mini-map you'll see a small island jutting out. Blaze across the shallow water to this island and you can shave off the entire corner, although as per usual, you'll need a boost of some kind to make it worthwhile. When you see two green patches of grass before the finish line, you can knock some further time off by taking a tight left past the first patch. One final tip for the road: keep your speed up on the tiny islands by hopping over the shallow water interspersed between them manually. Simple but effective.



DS Delfino Square

This port of the classic handheld circuit only really has one technique to remember. At the fork in the alleyway, try to swing right, that way when you turn back onto the main straight a few seconds later, you can drift sideways straight through the power-ups, potentially taking out three or four in one go (thus robbing them from your lagging enemies). These tight back alleys are ripe for laying traps too incidentally, due to their narrowness.

GCN Waluigi Stadium

Blessed with spectacular jumps and ample opportunity for air stunts, Waluigi's Stadium should play out with a near constant stream of boosts from beginning to end. Be sure to line yourself up in the dead centre on the huge ramps in order to snag the power-ups in the middle of the fire hoops. Also be sure to pull mid-air stunts off all the tiny little bumps and jumps peppered throughout the course, manually hopping off the top of their apex for a sprinkle of extra height. The long straight plagued with Piranha Plants provides ample half-pipe jumps along the side that are easy to miss, so launch yourself up high and blaze past 'em for some high-speed fun and plenty more power-ups.

<<	Leaf Cup	Lightning Cup	Star Cup	Special Cup	>>
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Leaf Cup

DS Desert Hills

Leaf Cup provides some of the more simplistic and one-dimensional circuits found in the game, without too much room for pointers and strategies. Still, Desert Hills does at least offer one brief off-road shortcut to the left side of the pyramid after the first bend (pictured). You'll need a mushroom to make it through with enough speed.



GBA Bowser Castle 3

A punishingly tough course, particularly at higher difficulties, with little of note that can help beyond raw skill... and luck. Avoiding the crushing Thwomps will be tough, as will keeping your speed up amidst the tight bends and lava pitfalls. The best (and indeed only) real opportunity for overtaking and some serious speed boosting is at the series of jump pads that fire off in quick succession. Make sure to nail mid-air stunts on each and every one and you should make up any lost ground.

N64 DK's Jungle Parkway

The zig-zagging nature of this circuit provides one of the few tracks in the game in which Snaking becomes a viable tactic. After the massive jump that sends you flying off far away across the water, you'll have a nice wide turn for a fully charged mini-turbo drift to get you started (you'll be going so fast at this point, it should charge almost instantly). The narrow rope bridge towards the end provides a perfect place to lay some banana traps too.

GCN Mario Circuit

The old Gamecube beauty offers plenty o' long straights for pulling off Wheelies on a bike, along with the odd wide corner for some fully charged Mini-Turbo boosts for the karters. You can even get some mid-air stunts going on that bumpy road near the end. Be sure to stay dead centre on the two main straights adorned with Piranha Plants however, or they'll promptly chomp your head off. Beyond that, this one's somewhat self explanatory though, and just like that, another cup's in the bag.

<<	Leaf Cup	Lightning Cup	Star Cup	Special Cup	>>
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Lightning Cup

SNES Mario Circuit 3

Long-time Karters will know this one well, including its brief off-road shortcut through a hole in the wall along the penultimate straight. Take the final bend super tight for a speed pad too, particularly useful in over-taking rivals at the very last minute.



DS Peach Gardens

The trickiest part of this surprisingly long course is avoiding the randomly patrolling Chain Chomps in the maze section. Your best bet is to survey their location from a distance as you head over the approaching bridge, thus planning your subsequent route each time in advance. Incidentally, power-ups will follow the Chomps around if you can get behind any. There are some off-road jumps in the latter half of the course, but if you have any mushrooms it's arguably better to use them to boost through the flowerbeds dotted around this stage.

GCN DK Mountain

The only tip of note to bear in mind here is that you can actually drive on the green foliage sprinkled along the sides of the road without it slowing down your vehicle in the slightest, meaning the paths are far wider than they may at first appear. As with the previous DK stage, the narrow rope bridge is perfect for laying traps too.

N64 Bowser's Castle

The biggest threat in this old beauty is the return of those stone-faced Thwomps. Watch for their shadows to see where they're moving and keep your wits about you, and prepare to swerve at a moment's notice. Despite the humongously long straights, be conservative with the Wheelies on this one too, as they'll make dodging said Thwomps far trickier. The luminous jump pad towards the end has firewalls erupting beneath it that alternate from left and right, so pay attention on approach and plot your route carefully before making the big jump.

<<	Leaf Cup	Lightning Cup	Star Cup	Special Cup	>>
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Star Cup

Daisy Circuit

Just prior to the two big roundabouts near the start of this circuit there's a neat little shortcut heading up some stairs through a house on the right. As always, you'll need a mushroom to make it worthwhile. A simplistic track other than that.

Koopa Cape

The pivotal tactic here is to stay on the water rapids that course though 90% of the track at all times, for a massive, constant speed boost. In fact, it's best to avoid the power-ups, the side jumps and all other distractions entirely and stick to that water like glue, mini-turboing around the corners as much as you can in the process. If the rotating electrodes in the underground pipe touch you, you'll be shrunk temporarily, so time your approach wisely to avoid them.

Maple Treeway

One of the prettiest and more entertaining courses in the game to play, Maple is pretty self-explanatory for the most part. There are some hidden paths leading to speed pads on the far left (and right) directly after the bouncy trampoline though, worth seeking out for a last minute boost across the finish line.



Grumble Volcano

A particularly tricky course, chock-full of traps, multiple routes, and crumbling roads that can easily lead to instant, violent lava death—although you can spot these in advance by rumbling cracks in the ground. When you emerge from the cavern in this course and all hell seemingly breaks loose, your best bet is to take the high road to the right which leads to a speed pad, followed by the left path directly where you land, leading to another. Do your best to avoid the random fireballs all around you, noting that they'll leave flames on the ground for a few extra seconds after impact which will still cause damage if touched.

<<	Leaf Cup	Lightning Cup	Star Cup	Special Cup	>>
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Special Cup

Dry Dry Ruins

Special Cup houses some of the toughest circuits in the game of course, particularly on the faster CC rankings. Take the first hard right at the get-go on this one, then zigzag between the falling pillars as best you can. Once they've fallen on lap one you can use them as ramps on subsequent laps, remembering to pull off mid-air stunts to help keep the revs up. Similarly, stunt your way into the air in the interior half-pipe section in order to plough through the wealth of sand that'll otherwise slow you to a standstill, or you'll fall to the back of the line instantly. In the large chamber, just before you head back outside, there'll be sand seeping through the roof above you. You can zigzag between its streams for a fast line directly through the centre on laps one and two, but by the third and final lap the entire chamber will have filled up, so you'll need to take the long way around the outside. Unless that is, you Mushroom boost over the top of this new sand mountain for a liberating aerial shortcut.

Moonview Highway

Moonview is a chaotic son of a gun that requires your utmost attention to navigate. Cars will squash you if hit head on, so be sure to go with the traffic on the left hand lane, rather than fight against it on the right. You can drive straight up the first wall you see for two power-up cubes, then similarly head up the wall directly in front of you after the first bend too. The latter will lead you to a hidden path if you go all the way to the top, in turn leading to a jump off the end. When you reach the wide open highway later on in this level, pay particular attention to the wealth of boost pads dotted along the ground, and you can pretty much chain boost the entire section in one smooth motion. Be sure to avoid going anywhere near the dreaded exploding bomb cars however; they're not worth the risk.

Bowser's Castle

A spectacular yet treacherous circuit, full to the brim with traps and pitfalls from beginning to end. The hardest section will be the worryingly long straight in which a robot Bowser launches enormous fireballs down the middle as if enjoying a game of Wii Bowling. To avoid his fiery balls, hit the half pipe jumps along the side at a diagonal angle, stunting in mid-air to get a speed boost at every opportunity. Also be sure to watch out for the erupting lava plumes on the home straight of this course; they move around ever so slightly, so plan your route carefully as to not get scorched from below.



Rainbow Road

If you found that tough though, this one'll grind your teeth into dust through sheer frustration. While the sporadic golden walls will stop you from falling off the sides here and there, you'll be without railings for the majority of it you see, so watch your speed and avoid any and all drifts unless some kind of drift god. The croquet style hoops give you a good indication of which racing line to take throughout the majority of the course, that said, each one housing speed pads to keep you burning rubber. There's also a minor shortcut to the hard left after you land the second big jump through space that's worth taking. You can even get your boosting fix at the (somewhat troublesome) figure-of-eight section seen clearly on the mini-map, where streams of half-pipe jumps are peppered along the sides just ripe for some stylish stunting. Be warned however; hitting these at the wrong angle will more than likely see you plummet to instant death. Instead, follow the subtle (and somewhat easy to miss) rainbow paths on the track's surface for the best line of approach that should see you zooming up to the front in no time.

Mario Kart Wii Battle Mode

The two team-based Battle Modes in Mario Kart Wii are split into an old-school balloon-popping mini-game, along with a coin collecting alternative. The number one tactic to bear in mind with Coin Runner in particular is to avoid trailing people—you'll only watch in frustration as they collect every coin in your path. Instead, do your best to pretty much ignore all other players, and constantly seek out un-tapped areas of the map that no-one else is hogging. Don't worry too much about power-ups and taking enemies out, unless you happen to pass by one with a hefty stack of coins whose collection requires serious thinning.

Remember that collectible coins do in fact show up on the mini-map too, and although it can be hectic trying to keep an eye on your map while driving, it's a vital multi-tasking skill which will see you through to many a victory in this mode.



Balloon Battle, however, is a little more focused on player skill and driving ability, than following any specific tactic. Learn the arenas as best you can with that in mind, maintain a healthy supply of power-ups and take the fight to the other team with everything you have. Here are some brief pointers regarding individual arenas:

Arenas

Block Plaza

The key to dominating on this arena is to secure the high ground atop the blocks. With plenty of power-ups to be found and an aerial view of the whole map below, set your team up high where they can track and subsequently ambush the enemy from above.

Delfino Pier

The Pier is a crazy free-for-all with little in the way of paths, cover and strategy. Throw all tactics out of the window and charge en masse!

Funky Stadium

Rather than go off in blind search of individual power-up blocks and the awkward angles required to nab them, the best source for weaponry here seems to be the huge stash at the top of the central jump. There's plenty to go around up there, and you'll land in a nice central position for some soon-to-follow combat.

Chain Chomp Roulette

Set up much like Funky Stadium, with a steady supply of power-ups atop a mid-arena epic jump, the prime difference here would be the enormous Chain Chomp running rampant throughout the level. His sheer size makes him arguably your biggest threat in fact, so keep one eye on his whereabouts at all times while you engage the enemy for the good of balloon kind.

Thwomp Desert

A devilishly fiendish arena where all the power-ups are located around and beneath the biggest Thwomp known to man. The result is a huge, random group bundle as everyone darts in and out quickly, trying to nab power-ups while avoiding his crushings, which has the added effect of sending shockwaves throughout the entire map. There's often little method to the madness in this crazy showdown, but whatever you do, be sure to avoid heading too far into the middle of the chaos or you'll get sucked into quicksand and die instantly.

SNES Battle Course 4

This old classic kicks off the retro arenas with pleasing style. Concentric squares provide a wealth of narrow alleyways and plenty of individual cover, often splitting the action up into a series of smaller one on one showdowns. Turn the tables on the enemy by finding and sticking to a teammate, thus ganging up on solitary rivals who are stranded without back-up.

GBA Battle Course 3

Battle Course 3, on the other hand, is a far more open and free-form arena. More than anything, be sure to avoid the central sandbank, as it'll slow you down to near stand-still, rendering you a sitting duck for some major balloon popping.

N64 Skyscraper

This vertigo-inducing high-riser boasts numerous opportunities to drop to your doom, so handle with immense care. This includes a gaping hole smack bang in the centre of the arena, hence the better tactic tends to be running simple laps around the outer ring instead. This should keep you in a constant supply of power-ups, along with many a coin if playing that particular mode.

GCN Cookie Land

If you can keep your stomach from rumbling at the sight of this scrumptious looking beauty, you may notice that it's laid out almost identically to the previous arena, albeit minus the drops of death. A similar tactic of laps around the outer ring will keep you nicely shielded from the chaos typically erupting towards the middle.

DS Twilight House

Be wary of the rail-less outer edges on this one; it's especially easy to fall to your death when travelling too fast. That said, these edges do provide some much needed respite from the chaos that erupts throughout the level's interiors, and can act as pleasing tactical positions for attacking from and retreating to.

NOTE

In these team-based modes, power-ups will be colour coded for each team. This makes the blue team's Fake Item Block a lot harder to fall for in particular.

Mario Kart Wii Characters & Karts

<<	Characters	Kart Stats	>>
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All 25 characters in Mario Kart Wii are split into one of three weight groups; Small, Medium and Large. Besides the aesthetic characteristics associated with that, the primary difference between the three is the choice of vehicles each class subsequently has access to. Below is a full character list of both standard characters and unlockable ones, followed by a table of in-depth vehicle stats.

(S)	Small	(M)	Medium	(L)	Large
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Standard Characters	
Baby Mario	(S)
Koopa Troopa	(S)
Baby Peach	(S)
Toad	(S)
Mario	(M)
Luigi	(M)
Peach	(M)
Yoshi	(M)
Wario	(L)
Waluigi	(L)
Donkey Kong	(L)
Bowser	(L)

Unlockable Characters	
Dry Bones	(S)
Baby Daisy	(S)
Toadette	(S)
Baby Luigi	(S)
Diddy Kong	(M)
Daisy	(M)
Bowser Jr.	(M)

Birdo	(M)
Mii - outfit A	(M)
Rosalina - with Luma	(L)
King Boo	(L)
Dry Bowser	(L)
Funky Kong	(L)

NOTE

See [Unlockables](#) for information on how to earn these characters.

<<	Characters	Kart Stats	>>
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Kart / Bike Name	Size	Speed	Weight	Accel.	Hand.	Drift	Off-Road	Mini-Turbo
Standard Karts								
Standard Kart S	(S)	5	5	6	7	6	5	6
Baby Booster	(S)	3	4	7	9	4	6	7
Concerto	(S)	7	5	3	4	8	3	8
Standard Kart M	(M)	5	6	5	5	6	4	5
Nostalgia 1	(M)	5	6	8	7	7	5	6
Wild Wing	(M)	7	7	3	4	8	3	7
Standard Kart L	(L)	6	8	5	5	5	4	4
Offroader	(L)	5	8	6	7	2	5	6
Flame Flyer	(L)	7	7	2	3	6	2	6
Standard Bikes								
Standard Bike S	(S)	5	3	6	7	6	5	6
Bullet Bike	(S)	6	4	4	5	8	3	8
Nanobike	(S)	3	3	7	9	5	7	8
Standard Bike M	(M)	5	5	5	6	6	4	5
Bon Bon	(M)	4	4	7	8	4	6	7
Mach Bike	(M)	7	5	3	4	8	3	8
Standard Bike L	(L)	6	7	6	6	6	5	5
Wario Bike	(L)	5	8	7	7	3	6	7
Bowser Bike	(L)	8	7	2	3	6	2	7

Unlockable Karts								
Rally Romper	(S)	5	5	5	6	3	8	5
Cheep Charger	(S)	4	4	8	7	7	5	6
Blue Falcon	(S)	7	3	5	3	6	3	4
Royal Racer	(M)	4	6	7	8	4	6	7
Turbo Blooper	(M)	6	5	4	5	3	7	5
Piranha Prowler	(L)	7	9	4	5	4	3	3
Dragonetti	(L)	7	8	3	3	7	3	7
Unlockable Bikes								
Quacker	(S)	4	3	8	7	7	6	7
Bubble Bike	(S)	6	3	5	5	6	4	5
Dolphin Dasher	(M)	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Nitrocycle	(M)	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Rapide	(M)	5	5	6	7	3	8	6
Twinkle Star	(L)	6	6	4	4	7	3	8
Phantom	(L)	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

NOTE

See [Unlockables](#) for information on how to earn these vehicles.

Mario Kart Wii Unlockables

<<	Courses & Cups	Characters	Vehicles & Misc.	>>
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Courses & Cups	
Star Cup	Earn trophies in the Mushroom and Flower Cups (same for all CCs)
Leaf Cup	Earn trophies in the Shell and Banana Cups (same for all CCs)
Lightning Cup	Earn a trophy in Leaf Cup (same for all CCs)
Special Cup	Earn a trophy in Star Cup (same for all CCs)
Mirror Class	Win all 150cc cups

Drive Bikes in 50cc Cups

Earn trophies in all 50cc cups

NOTE

Press + on the Wii-mote when selecting race class to toggle this option on and off.

Drive Bikes in 100cc Cups

Earn trophies in all 100cc cups

NOTE

Press + on the Wii-mote when selecting race class to toggle this option on and off.

<<	Courses & Cups	Characters	Vehicles & Misc.	>>
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Characters

King Boo	Win the 50cc Star Cup
Diddy Kong	Win the 50cc Lightning Cup
Baby Daisy	Earn at least a 1 star rank in all 50cc Wii Grand Prix cups
Dry Bones	Win the 100cc Leaf Cup



Mii (Outfit A)

Win the 100cc Special Cup

NOTE

This only allows you to play as the Mii currently associated with your profile, however you can easily switch the Mii associated with your profile any time you choose via accessing the license settings in the game's main menu, ultimately letting you play as any Mii stored on your system.

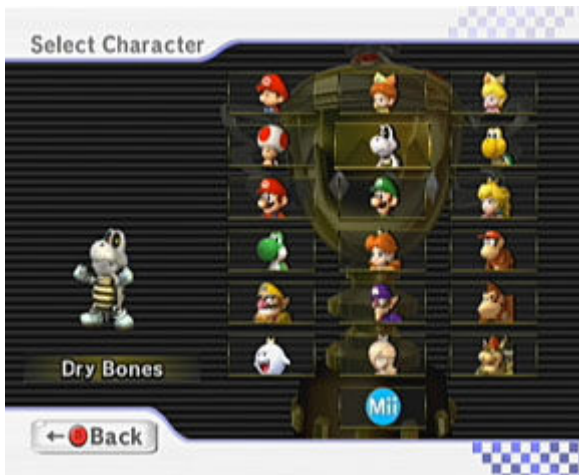
Bowser Jr.	Attain at least a 1 star rank in all 100cc Retro Grand Prix cups
Daisy	Win 150cc Special Cup
Dry Bowser	Attain at least a 1 star rank in all 150cc Wii Grand Prix cups

Birdo

Beat 250 people online

NOTE

This is not total races won, but the actual number of players you've beaten, meaning you can potentially net 11 per race. After your 250th victory, you will need to restart the game for it to kick in). Alternatively, play Time Trial on 16 different courses.



Toadette	Play Time Trial mode on all 32 courses.
Funky Kong	Unlock 4 expert staff ghost data records in Time Trial mode.
Baby Luigi	Unlock 8 expert staff ghost data records in Time Trial mode.

Rosalina

Unlocking Rosalina appears to be somewhat enigmatic (and possibly even random), but in the game's own words, involves having Super Mario Galaxy save data on your Wii somewhere along the line ("You Got a Present From Super Mario Galaxy" appears on her unlocking). It seems she will unlock at different times for different players however, some reporting it on merely booting up the game, others on winning the Banana or Mushroom cups at 100cc with a 2 star ranking. These could be good places to begin your search if she hasn't appeared for you yet.

<<	Courses & Cups	Characters	Vehicles & Misc.	>>
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Vehicles & Misc.

Alternate Title Screen	Win every cup.
Piranha Prowler (Large Kart)	Win the 50cc Special Cup
Turbo Blooper (Medium Kart)	Win the 50cc Leaf Cup
Cheep Charger (Small Kart)	Earn at least a 1 star rank in all 50cc Retro cups
Rapide (Medium Bike)	Win the 100cc Lightning Cup
Twinkle Star (Large Bike)	Win the 100cc Star Cup
Nitrocycle (Medium Bike)	Attain at least a 1 star rank in all 100cc Wii Grand Prix cups

Royal Racer (Medium Kart)	Win the 150cc Leaf Cup
Quacker (Small Bike)	Win the 150cc Star Cup
Dragonetti (Large Kart)	Win 150cc Lightning Cup



Dolphin Dasher (Med. Bike)	Win Mirror Star Cup
Phantom (Large Bike)	Win Mirror Special Cup
Bubble Bike (Small Bike)	Win Mirror Leaf Cup
Blue Falcon (Small Kart)	Win Mirror Lightning Cup
Rally Romper (Small Kart)	Unlock an expert staff ghost data record in Time Trial mode
Aero Glider (Large Kart)	Earn at least a 1 star ranking in all 150cc Retro cups
Torpedo (Large Bike)	Unlock 12 expert ghost data records in Time Trial mode
Magikruiser (Small Bike)	Play Time Trial on 8 courses.

Victory Photo 1

Earn a trophy in every cup for any one class. After the credits you'll be greeted by a victory photo of your Mii hanging out track-side with Mario and Peach which you can then save to your Wii's Message Board and send to your friends.

Victory Photo 2

Win every single Grand Prix cup and you'll be greeted by another neat group shot of your Mii, this time hanging out with all 24 fellow characters in the game.