

Prix course: A grand challenge for these drivers

By C.J. Rieak
staff writer

On Sunday afternoon, the eyes of motorsport enthusiasts from around the globe will be focused on a 2.56-mile circuit of Detroit's city streets.

Those eyes will be riveted on the group of drivers behind the wheels of the Formula One race cars. Grand Prix racing is the cream of international auto sports, and Detroit is the sole remaining site of a Grand Prix race in the United States.

Four local drivers will be on the Detroit track this weekend — not compet-

ing with the world's best. These drivers will be battling in the four supporting races accompanying the prestigious Grand Prix.

These races — the Kroger 100 Formula Mondial, Renault Le Car Cup, Champion Spark Plug Challenge and Kelly American Challenge — are not the reason 100,000 people will jam the grandstands around the Detroit circuit this weekend. These drivers know that.

But to them, the competition is just as intense in their race. Winning is a single unifying reason for both support race drivers and Formula One competitors to climb behind the wheel.

DAVE MROZ of Livonia has no illusions of grandeur when it comes to racing.

"I've always raced closed canopy cars, so I never thought about racing them," Mroz said when asked about dreams of driving a Formula One car.

Mroz will compete in the Kelly American Challenge, the last race Sunday afternoon. His Ford Mustang will be making its initial appearance.

"That gave us an idea of what it takes in these races, and we look back and built a whole new car."

THE RESULT of his efforts will be on the track Sunday. Mroz isn't expecting too much — "basically, it'll be our test session" — but figures that if he can finish in the top 10, he'll have a car capable of top five performance once adjustments are made.

Mroz, who works at Ford's Engine Design Engineering and Research Center in Dearborn, has been racing for 12 years. He started with the SOCA (Sports Car Club of America) Amateur

National circuit and worked up to the IMSA (International Motor Sports Association) GT series.

For him, a victory Sunday would be completing the race in the top 10 with no serious mechanical problems.

GARY WITZENBURG of Troy is also a realist. Witzenburg will be driving his 710 Datsun in the Champion Spark Plug Challenge Sunday, and he will also drive in the Renault Le Car Cup race.

"I'd have to say our chances are remote that we'll win but are good to finish in the top 10," Witzenburg said. "We just revived this car 2½ weeks ago at Charlotte, North Carolina. It was competitive when we bought it 6½ years ago. But it's been idle for four years, since the middle of '79."

Witzenburg said that the Champion Spark Plug series "this year is dominated by front-wheel drive cars." His Datsun has better horsepower but can't handle as well as its front-wheel drive competitors.

Southfield man main race medic

Is there a doctor in the house? At Detroit Grand Prix II, there will be plenty more than that — a Southfield resident is making sure of it.

Dr. Ronald Krome, director of the emergency department at Detroit Receiving Hospital, is chief medical officer and race physician for the Grand Prix.

He is in charge of coordinating all emergency services for the race. That means he'll oversee more than 500 emergency rescue personnel, including 30 physicians and 53 nurses and paramedics from Detroit Receiving's staff.

It's no accident Detroit Receiving was picked to provide medical care for race participants and spectators. "The proximity of our facilities and staff is a tremendous advantage in planning emergency medical services for a race in a city like Detroit," Krome says.

Not only is the hospital close, but it contains one of the most modern, well-equipped trauma centers in the world. And it has the only burn center in the tri-county area.

The type of patient we would expect to see at Medical Control, should an accident occur, the course, would be a multiply-traumatized patient," said Krome. "Modifications in the course have increased its overall speed; however, emergency physicians and staff at Detroit Receiving have extensive expertise in treating this type of patient. We have the staff and facilities here, and the experience to treat these patients quickly."

AN ELABORATE network for emergency services has been planned for racers and spectators alike.

In an emergency, patients will be evaluated at Medical Control, a special facility which will be set up adjacent to Tower 500 of the Renaissance Center. If special treatment or services are needed, patients can be transferred to the hospital in eight minutes via a specially cleared ambulance route, or in two minutes by helicopter.

From the time a patient reaches Detroit Receiving, it takes only five to 10 seconds to get to the resuscitation room. That area is equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic and medical equipment. The operating room suite is just another 60 seconds away. The burn center contains 18 beds (six for intensive care), a hydrotherapy unit and its own surgical suite.

During the race, Detroit Receiving will have double staffs on call in the emergency department and in operating rooms.

It's expected that most calls for medical attention will be less serious than for an all-out emergency. Detroit Receiving physicians say the majority of cases will probably be for minor cuts and bruises, burns and problems from overexposure to the sun. Last year, more than 130 spectators and concession workers required first aid.

So, medical personnel will be available at three first aid stations during the race: at Cobo Hall, Hart Plaza and behind pit row.

District baseball, softball pairings

DISTRICT PAIRINGS CLASS A BASEBALL

At Southfield — 10 a.m.: Redford Catholic Central vs. Livonia Franklin. Noon: Southfield vs. Livonia Bentley. Championship game, 2:30 p.m.

At Royal Oak Kimball — 10 a.m.: Southfield-Lathrup vs. Birmingham Seaholm. Noon: Birmingham Groves vs. Royal Oak Kimball. Championship game, 2:30 p.m.

At Plymouth Canton — 10 a.m.: Farmington vs. Northville. 12:30 p.m.: Plymouth Salem vs. Milford Lakeland. Championship game, 2:30 p.m.

At Holly — 10 a.m.: Rochester Adams vs. Clarkston. Noon: West Bloomfield vs. Waterford Kettering. Championship game, 3 p.m.

CLASS B BASEBALL

At Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook — 10 a.m.: Cranbrook vs. St. Clair Shores South Lake. 12:30 p.m.: Auburn Heights Avondale vs. Madison Heights Lampshire. Championship game, 3 p.m.

CLASS D BASEBALL

At Waterford — 10 a.m.: Southfield Christian vs. Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes. Noon: Marine City Holy Cross vs. Cardinal Mooney. Championship game, 2:30 p.m.

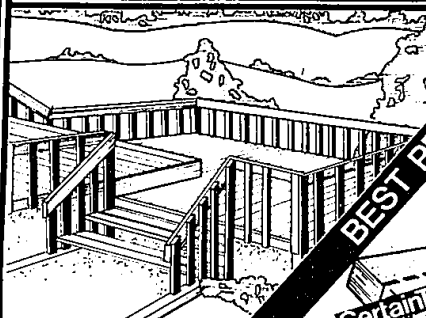
CLASS A SOFTBALL

At Troy Athens — 10 a.m.: Athens vs. Birmingham Mariab. Noon: Royal Oak Dooder vs. Birmingham Seaholm. Championship game, 2:30 p.m.

At Southfield Oak Crest vs. Redford Bishop Burgess vs. Detroit Mumford, Redford Union vs. Livonia Stevenson. Championship game, 3:00 p.m.

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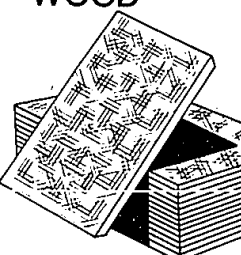
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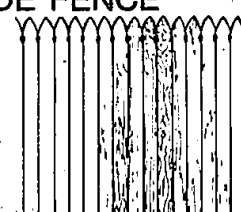
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