

# Town Center takes the fast lane

By Alice Collins  
staff writer

When the flag drops at noon Saturday, June 30 in Southfield, the cars will head off on the track, hugging the turn lanes and zipping down the

straight-aways in hot competition for victory.

If that sounds a little bit like the Detroit Grand Prix, it will be a little bit like it.

The primary differences are that racers in the Southfield event will

drive "Indy-type" cars weighing 150 pounds, powered by three-horsepower gasoline-fueled engines and achieve a top speed of approximately 20 mph.

The Southfield Mini Grand Prix, a fund-raiser for the Arthritis Foundation of Metro Detroit, will be one of the major events of the annual Star Spangled Southfield Festival. The race will be staged at the Prudential Town Center at Evergreen and Civic Center Drive.

Pre-race activities begin at 9:30 a.m. followed by the noon to 3:30 p.m. race.

Admission is free. The money for the Arthritis Foundation will come from entry fees.

FROM 15-20 CARS are expected to compete, and the Sports Car Club of America, Detroit Region, will direct the race.

"We'll perform the same functions for this that we perform for the big Detroit Grand Prix," said club spokesman Bob Capps. "Really what you'll see is a scaled-down, much less sophisticated version of what you see downtown, but we'll use the same professionalism."

The cars "are actually little go-carts with Fiberglass bodies powered by lawn mower engines," Capps said. The bodies carry the logo or insignia of the sponsoring corporation, business or service.

**'We'll also make sure the (the race cars) haven't been tampered with to make them perform better. You know the competitive juices flow pretty strong.'**

— Bob Capps  
Sports Car Club of America

## Parties liven up race

Where there's a car race, there must be a party or two nearby.

And the Southfield Mini Grand Prix is no exception.

A Mini Grand Prix kick-off party 7 p.m. to midnight Friday at Southfield's Civic Center Pavilion will feature a parade of the cars, food, contests, prizes and entertainment.

The party, like the race on Saturday and a post-race/fireworks party, will raise money for the Arthritis Foundation Metro Detroit Branch.

Tickets for the pre-race party are \$20 each if purchased ahead of time at the foundation or the Southfield Parks and Recreation building, and \$25 if purchased at the door.

"The decorated cars will be there on display," said Carol Lewis of the foundation, "and some sponsors will be revealing their decorations for the first time."

There will also be a parade of the

cars down the middle of the room, a tire-changing contest, best dressed pit crew contest and best looking car competition.

Foods and entertainment will be included in the ticket price, but there will be a cash bar.

THE POST-PRIX party will begin at 6:30 p.m. Saturday on the top floor of the parking structure of the Radisson Hotel/Prudential Town Center.

Entertainment will include a Dixieland jazz band and a spot for viewing the annual city fireworks show scheduled to begin shortly after 10 p.m. "That's a huge structure and there'll be plenty of room for everyone," said Lewis.

Tickets are \$10. Food and drinks will be on sale.

There will be a "Kids Corner" at the town center on race day, offering a variety of activities for youngsters such as face painting and a clown show.

Only adult drivers will be allowed to participate.

Entry fee for a car sponsor is \$2,500. The cost includes the purchase of a mini-car, a spare tire assembly, space to hang the company's banner along the race course, 10 tickets to the pre-race party the evening before the race, and an invitation to the rooftop post-race party the evening after the race — to watch the city's Fourth of July fireworks show.

If a company already has a car from a previous race, the entrance fee is \$1,500.

THE HALF-MILE RACE course has been sanctioned by the sports car club and will provide viewing points for the thousands of spectators expected to attend the event.

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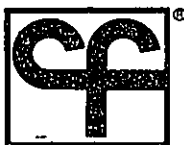
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