

Youngsters are giants in midget racing world

By KEN VOYLES

The Indianapolis 500 it may not be, but to the Ensing children of Livonia their brand of sport is as close as they can come for the moment.

Troy and Tina Ensing are involved in midget car racing, a sport that is geared for boys and girls 5-16 years of age from all over the state and country.

Troy is 9 and Tina is 11. Both have been racing three years.

The official name of the sport is Quarter Midget racing. It derives its name from the scaled-down cars which have the look and feel of real racers but, in fact, are midget-size.

The participants drive scaled down to one-fourth size racers powered by one-cylinder gasoline engines reaching top speeds of 30 miles per hour.

Sound easy? Of course it does if you're an experienced driver, but the whole idea behind the quarter midget racing circuit is to provide a safe sport for younger children who don't possess those driving skills.

Although the racing track is only one-twelfth of a mile and the races go no faster than 30 miles per hour, it takes skill, guts and a lot of determination for the young drivers to grasp and learn the sport.

Troy and Tina are prime examples of this new breed of young racers.

The pair belong to the Waterford Quarter Midget Racing Club of which their father, Lloyd, is vice president. The club has facilities on the grounds of the Oakland County Sportsman's Club in Waterford close to Waterford Hills Raceway.

Races are held weekly at the track with regional competition on weekends around the midwest. It is, according to Lloyd, a family sport. There are 17 families involved in the club.

"We got into the sport about three years ago. The reason was my brother and his children were into it and I subsequently bought a car from him and started," said Lloyd Ensing. "Troy started first then Tina got interested and it's been pretty much a family sport for us ever since."

A unique element of the sport is the fact that girls are very predominant in numbers. There are nearly as many girls on the circuit as boys and they do very well in competition.

"Sometimes I like to play other sports but racing is the most fun of all," said Troy. "The best part of racing is when you win. If you lose you think,

don't want to race anymore, but I guess I win enough to keep my interest."

Tina is much like her brother. She said that the best part of the racing was the winning, but she also added that "going out and racing and meeting a lot of people is great."

"I know a lot of girls who race and a lot of them are my best friends," Tina continued. "I get nervous sometimes before a race. I think how am I going to pass somebody or how I'll do. Once the race starts, I think about passing people the most."

Age is not a determining factor in who one races against. Everything in the sport depends on the level of skill. A four-year-old girl, for example, can and will compete with older drivers.

The season at Waterford runs from early spring through late summer. Each driver fights for points at each race. The higher the finish, the more points. At the end of the season, points are tallied for the order of finish.

"We try to get in as many races as possible. If it rains, we reschedule the race. We want all the drivers to feel what it's like to race and to win," said Lloyd Ensing.

Troy is the more competitive of the two drivers in the Ensing family according to their father. He has been in a highly competitive class for the past two seasons and has won several awards including first in the Junior novice class in the club. Tina also has her share of trophies at least six half a dozen.

Troy is definitely more intense about the sport but I don't know if he wants to race later when he gets older. Tina's interest is waning right now and she probably won't continue next year, but the choice is up to them," said Lloyd.

"I think I'll keep doing it (racing) for awhile," said Troy. "I like it a lot but who knows."

The time it takes to learn to drive one of the midget racers, which cost roughly \$150, is very flexible. Usually five to 10 practice sessions will bring a driver to where he or she can compete. The sport not only teaches safe driving and develops good driving skills but the youngsters have fun and are safe while doing so. It's also very competitive.

Every year at the end of the racing season, there is the Indy 500 of midget racing, the Grand Nationals.

Last year, both Troy and Tina traveled to the competition held in Toledo, O. There were approximately

300 racers on hand for the event. Neither of the two young racers did well.

This year the pair will go along with their family, to Denver Colo. for the Grand Nationals late in August.

"We travel quite a bit. There are tracks all over Michigan and Ohio," said Lloyd Ensing. "I think the sport is growing because the young people want to get out and do things with more excitement in it than most sports."

A lot of emphasis is put on safety in midget racing. Every precaution is taken to prevent accidents and injuries.

These include car safety inspections, helmets and proper clothing being mandatory. Safety officials are also

posted around the track.

The most important safety method and real heart behind the sport is the actual teaching of driving skills. From the very beginning that is the most im-

A unique element of the sport is the fact that girls are predominant in numbers. There are nearly as many girls on the circuit as boys and they do very well in competition.

bring the event to Michigan.

"I look at the sport as a great family sport," said Lloyd Ensing. "It really is. I was amazed at the rapport we have developed since we started in racing. We seem to know each other much more."

For information about the club and midget racing, contact Ensing at 525-5072.

"It really is just like any other sport such as little league baseball. A lot of kids do it and they do it for fun. How many little leaguers go on to play pro baseball? It's great for the kids right now but if they grow out of it, they grow out of it," concluded the elder Ensing.

important aspect to the sport the young racer learn.

The year 1980 will be a big one for the Waterford Racing Club when the Grand Nationals roll into town and

BURSITIS • LOW BACK PAIN • NUMBNESS • SCIATICA

I'm Sorry, you'll just have to live with it!

OR

☐ You're Just Getting Old

☐ There is Nothing Organically Wrong With You

☐ If It Doesn't Get Better We'll Have To Operate

☐ There is Nothing Further That Can Be Done

☐ We'll All Be in Your Head

☐ Maybe It'll Go Away in Time

Have you ever been told, "You're just getting old." — "It's hereditary." — "It's old age." — "Nothing can be done." — or, "You'll just have to live with it."

Chiropractic treatment has rescued millions of Americans from years of needless suffering. Nine million Americans went to chiropractors last year to find out if chiropractic could help them.

Chiropractic screening tests are simple and painless and they can quickly indicate if you might have spinal distortions, and thereby be likely to respond to chiropractic care.

Find out whether or not you really do, "Have to live with it." Call today for an appointment. There is no charge for consultation, preliminary screening tests, a report of findings on these tests, and recommendations, if treatment or further examination is indicated. Almost all health insurance policies cover chiropractic care. All fees thoroughly explained prior to any additional service being rendered.

Dr. Walter S. Gross
Chiropractic Physician

27620 Five Mile Road
Livonia, Michigan 48154 427-6333

• PAINFUL JOINTS • HEADACHE • FATIGUE

Give a Gentle Swing to your Valentine

A REVOLUTION IN SEATING! Hammock-chairs already famous, brings a definitely new and unique touch of personal comfort to the world of contemporary furniture. This is achieved through an ingenious asymmetrical arrangement of the arm strings to perfectly support and mold the contour of the body. Entirely hand-made in the traditional hammock form, it swings, sways and rotates from a single point to give you a delightful freedom of movement that will keep you and your friends relaxed for hours.

Ceiling hooks included. Available in natural (cream white) "U.S. Patent Pending"

48⁸⁸

LIVONIA True Value HARDWARE
5 Mile at Farmington
GA2-1155-937-1611
OPEN DAILY 9 a.m.-9 p.m. SUNDAY 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Local clubs swim to wins

Woodbrooke Hills Swim Club and Farmington Glen Athletic Club opened their swim seasons with dual meet victories last Thursday night.

Woodbrooke Hills, swimming for the first time in the Upper Division of the Northwest Suburban Swim League (NSSL), outswam Woodside Athletic Club, 299-269.

And Farmington Glen, after a strong fourth-place finish in last year's league meet, started this year off with an easy 319-213 triumph over Village Swim Club.

Woodbrooke was paced by four double-winners in individual events, as it captured its first dual meet of the season. Marge Cramer churned to victories in the girls' 4010-year-old 50-meter freestyle and 50-meter breaststroke, and also swam a leg of the winning 40-year, 100-meter freestyle relay.

Glenn Spence was first in the 11&12-year-old 50-meter breaststroke and backstroke for Woodbrooke, while Tom Rennard, swimming in the 13&14 age group, won the 100-meter individual medley and the 50-meter freestyle, as well as swimming a leg of the victorious 52-year, 200-meter medley relay.

Debby Houser captured the 15-17-year-old 50-meter butterfly and the 100-meter individual medley.

Farmington Glen had few problems with Village, a Southfield-based team that also just moved up from the Lower Division of the league. The 16-team NSSL Upper and Lower Divisions are determined during the season-ending league meet. The top eight scoring clubs in the meet will be in the Upper bracket the following season, with the last eight composing the Lower Division.

IN ITS VICTORY over Village, Glen was paced by four double-winners Jim Vik and Chris Inch won all four individual events in the boys' 9&10-year-old category. Vik won the 50-meter butterfly (44.0) and the 50-meter freestyle (38.7), while Inch captured the 50-meter breaststroke (51.0) and the 50-meter backstroke (49.2).

In 11&12-year-old competition, Mike Pelon swam to firsts in the 50-meter breaststroke (42.4) and the 100-meter individual medley (1:16.1). Mark Grover was a double winner in the 13&14-year-old 50-meter backstroke (33.9) and the 50-meter freestyle (22.5).

For Village, Lisa MacMillan won the 13&14-year-old 100-meter individual medley (1:14.81) and the 50-meter butterfly (32.67), while her sister, Chris, won the 9&10-year-old 50-meter breaststroke (48.63) and the 50-meter butterfly (41.81).

Laura Van Buskirk was Village's third double-winner, taking the 9&10-year-old 50-meter backstroke (42.55) and the 50-meter freestyle (37.55).

Woodbrooke travels to defending league champion Bloomfield Surf Swim Club Thursday, while Farmington Glen is at Heart of the Hills.

SIMPSON GRANITE WORKS

Commemorative Artists Since 1929

BRONZE AND GRANITE MEMORIALS OF DISTINCTION

featuring

STALMARK

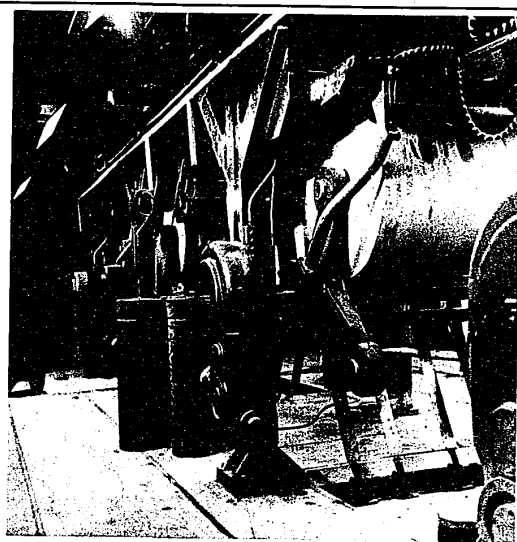
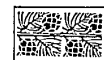
ROCK OF AGES

memorials

23496 Grand River Ave. Ph. 531-0378
5 blocks east of Telegraph in Detroit

Dian S. Eidschun Antiques
Announces the Arrival
of a New Shipment from England

Visit our 5,000 sq. ft. showroom
in The Pine Lake Mall
4337 ORCHARD LAKE ROAD
Corner of Lone Pine Rd., W. Bloomfield
626-5440



WHAT'S THIS?

This is the Goss Metro Press. It prints your hometown newspaper twice each week. It's big! It stands 28 feet tall and weighs 150 tons. It holds 2,000 pound paper rolls that are about six and one half miles long.

Tours of the Observer & Eccentric Livonia Plant, where 12 hometown newspapers are printed twice each week, feature a visit to the pressroom where this mighty giant can be seen in operation.

They also include a visit to the newsroom, and a peek at the classified advertising phone room where want ads are typed on what looks very much like a small television screen.

To arrange for your group's free tour, call 591-2300. Tours last approximately one hour and are given on Mondays and Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. for groups up to 25.

36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, 591-2300

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers