

# Local mechanic to take pit stop at Molson Indy

By ROBERT RISK  
Herald Sports Editor

Alex Sekulovich is going to be an integral part of a pit crew at the Molson Indy in Toronto on the July 19 weekend. While not exactly on the Formula One circuit, he will definitely be in the pits at Exhibition Place.

Sekulovich has taken a rather roundabout route in becoming a member of the Keen Engineering team that races in the Formula Atlantic series cars, which is two levels from the Formula One class. When he went to the University of British Columbia in 1987, he had no idea he would soon be putting high performance machines into working order.

"I was doing my masters thesis on Particle Physics and I needed to have a model built for my course. To get it done, I went to Marty Knoll, who also happened to work on cars and he got me interested in it."

Sekulovich said after he and his brother Andy marshalled the races at Mosport in 1988, he was hooked on the sport and began helping Marty put together the car.

"I raced Formula Ford and then Formula Atlantic until 1988 when I became a mechanic for the president of Keen Engineering. Alex has been helping Tom Johnston since 1989," said Knoll, who is hoping to move up to the Firestone Indy Lights class.

"The trick is getting the sponsorship. I know a lot of guys who won a lot of championships and aren't racing because they don't have any backers. It's really tough, especially now with the economy in rough shape."

While Knoll is trying to get back into the driver's seat, Sekulovich is thinking about making his way behind the wheel for the first time.

"The best way to learn how to race well is to learn how to prep a car. It's exciting and it's a great way to get experience without having to spend the money. I figure it will be a year or two before I'll be taking a shot at it - if I can still fit in the car."

In the meantime, both are more than happy to make sure driver Frank Allers is given the best performance the vehicle can put out, which requires hundreds of hours of work between races. Knoll said cars that reach speeds of 160 mph and can go from zero to 60 miles in two and a half seconds can undergo a lot of stress.

"In the Atlantic series, each race takes about 45 minutes. For


every hour the car is on the track, it takes about 100 hours of maintenance to make sure everything is in top shape. It's rough on your personal life too, since you don't have much time outside of working on the car."

After Toronto, Marty will be

heading out to Calgary for races on July 3-4, back to Trois Rivieres on August 18 and then to Vancouver for an August 31 race. Due to work commitments, Alex said he will only be able to go to the Montreal race, which is on September 1.



Marty Knoll (left) and Alex Sekulovich stand with the race car they have been working on to prepare it for the race at Exhibition Place during the Molson Indy on July 20. Both are kept busy with the car, which requires about 100 hours of maintenance for every hour it spends on the track. (Herald photo)

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