

SPORTS

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GO GO, ALEX!

Young go-karter to be part of reality TV show

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

At three years of age, Alexander Cerullo likely didn't know the meaning of speed. But that sure didn't keep him from craving it.

Having barely shed the need for a high chair, the rural Miltonian was already kicking playtime into high gear.

"We got him one of those electric cars when he was three. The first gear was about five miles (an hour) and the second went about seven. As soon as he figured out you could go faster in second gear, that was it," recalled mother Patricia. "We spent a lot of time chasing him down the driveway... and beyond."

Of course Alexander's need for speed didn't exactly come as a surprise.

Some of his earliest memories are of visiting southern Ontario race tracks, where father Rocco could regularly be found near the front of the drag racing pack — having twice been the True Street champion at Cayuga and once won the Ontario Fastest Street Car title in Grand Bend.

Said Alexander, "I'd go out there with my head phones on and watch my dad race. Sometimes I'd even get to steer it (car) back to the pit afterwards. It was cool."

Fast forward several years and father and son have undergone a role reversal, with Rocco having recently put the brakes on his racing days and Alexander — now nine — deeply immersed in the go-karting scene.

"I've always loved racing and working on cars, but honestly it's even more fun watching him out there," said Rocco.

The young adrenaline junkie will have a lot more than just family eyes on him later this month, when he hits Bowmanville's Mosport Raceway for the start of filming for

a reality TV series that'll offer a behind-the-scenes look at go-karting.

Among 24 pre-teens picked from among 80 applicants for the junior cadet division, Alexander will be part of the Stars of Canada five-race series (races third weekend of every month from May to September) that will feature driver interviews and paddock clips — along, of course, with plenty of racing action.

Learning about the new show through a friend and fellow go-karter, he jumped at the opportunity — and was selected for more than just his racing ability.

"Alex was accepted for a number of reasons..." said driver administrator Tina Isaac of the Russ Bond Agency, which is producing

READY TO RACE:

Alexander Cerullo eagerly awaits the start of the Stars of Canada series.



couldn't believe how much faster they were than what you would drive just for fun," explained Rocco.

That added speed certainly presents the possibility of injury, even with all the safety equipment and precautionary measures involved.

"One race last year I went hard into the tires (that line track) and lost a tooth," said Alexander, who enjoys watching Formula-1 with his maternal grandfather, but much prefers being a racing participant than a spectator. "It hurt, but didn't make me want to stop. You can get hurt in any sport."

The young racer also doesn't seem hesitant about making the jump to a two-stroke kart, which tops out at 65 miles an hour.

Said Patricia, "He's like the Energizer bunny. Given the choice, Alexander would rather be outside on his trampoline or racing than inside playing video games."

While Stars of Canada will provide the karts, the Cerulllos and their series counterparts will have to foot the bill for travel costs and other series-related expenses.

They've already gotten a major shot in the arm from area businesses. Among those from town helping out are Milton Honda (Team Powerhouse), Uniboard Canada Inc., Fifth Wheel Truckstop and Milton Hardwood Flooring.

"The support's been great," said Patricia.

In a field with racers up to three years older than him and many with more experience, Alexander will certainly have his work cut out for him in the hunt for the \$10,000 grand prize.

But just the chance to take his racing to the next level seems to be more than enough incentive right now.

"I just want to do my best and have fun," said Alexander, who also plays soccer and has a musical side as well — as a student of both the piano and guitar.

There are no dates set yet for Stars of Canada, although it's expected to air in late summer or early fall. The stations it'll be shown on have yet to be released, though Isaac said they'll be national networks.

For updates on the series, visit www.starsofcanada.com.

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