

Hakonson team sets sights on taking the checkered flag

Former Spirit of Stouffville junior A hockey club owner and his family hope to make their presence felt in the 2000 CASCAR Super Series

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Ed, Hiedi and Jamie Hakonson are off to the races. The Stouffville husband/wife/daughter team has partnered with an Edmonton interest to enter a racing team for the 2000 CASCAR (Canadian Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) Super Series.

To be called Team 3 Red, the trio of gleaming red 2000 General Motors Monte Carlos will bear the logos of three principal sponsors including the Hakonsons' Stouffville-based Choko Motorsports, which provides apparel for the auto racing industry. GM Goodtrench and Snap-On Tools, along with four other companies, will share the sponsorship spotlight.

Ed Hakonson said the decision to become involved in the ownership and management of a CASCAR team was a logical next step after years of following the stock car racing scene in Canada and the United States.

"It's something we always wanted to do," said Hakonson, a CASCAR stock car sponsor for the last seven years.

His daughter Jamie, who is in charge of marketing for Team 3 Red, said her family has racing in the blood.

"We as a family are very racing-gear," she said. "I've been going to the track since I was two years old."

She said the family is well aware of the commitment they have taken on.

"You really have to love the sport. There's a lot of travelling and a lot of work involved."

The travelling will start for the Hakonsons and their rookie driver, Chris Fowler of Stirling, near Belleville, the weekend of May 20 when they head to London's Delaware Speedway Park for the first race of the CASCAR season.

Fowler, who will graduate from the Canadian Royal Military College (CRMC) in Kingston with a mechanical engineering degree later this month, has taken special training to help ease the step up from F1600 open wheel racing to the CASCAR stock car scene.

LINE RACE SCHOOL

"We sent Chris to Finish Line Race School in Florida," said Jamie. Fowler, who won seven Canadian Grand National go-kart championships in the early 1990s, said he's making the adjustment.

"It's a new experience just turning left on an oval track after open wheel road racing. But racing is racing, and this is an excellent opportunity."

Fowler contested several Canadian Pro 1600 races during the past four years while enrolled at CRMC. Among the contacts he made on the track was fellow competitor Lewis MacKenzie, the former Canadian military general who was in charge of the United Nations peace keeping mission in Bosnia.

"Lewis and Chris are friends," said Jamie. MacKenzie has agreed to race one of the Team 3 Red cars at the Molson Indy in Toronto in July.

Jamie Hakonson said her team is looking to make a mark in its first CASCAR season.

"We're out after the rookie championship."

She said it will take a consistent effort by Fowler and the Team 3 Red staff to accomplish that goal.

"We must complete every lap and we have to stay in the lead lap. And we want Chris to bring the car home in one piece."

Looking down the road she said the overall goal is simply to experience the enjoyment of racing.

"We're in this to have some fun and to represent our sponsors the best we can."

While direct involvement in CASCAR racing is new for the Hakonsons, they will benefit from their association with their partner, Edmonton's Tim Woelke.

"Tim has owned CASCAR teams before," said Jamie, who said the combination of Woelke's direct experience and Choko's marketing know-how should produce a winner.

"We've combined our promotion and sponsorship with Tim's cars to make Team 3 Red. We're pretty excited about it."

The team will compete in 10 events in the CASCAR Eastern Canada division this season. The season will also include two cross-over races with the Western Canada division, to be held in Edmonton and Calgary in July.



PHOTO/BRUCE STAPLEY

The Team 3 Red racing team of (from far left Ed Hakonson, Hiedi Hakonson, Jamie Hakonson, Chris Fowlere and Lewis MacKenzie is ready to embark on the 2000 CASCAR season starting May 20 in London.

Grey Hares tackle Wanderers

The Markham Rugby Club Grey Hares overcame a 12-point second-quarter deficit to emerge with an opening-game 15-12 win over the host Ajax Wanderers last weekend.

Peter Goodhand scored the game's winning try on the last play of the game. Colin Campbell added a try and penalty goal for the Grey Hares.

On a separate note, the Grey Hares are still looking for players over 35 years of age who might be interested in coming out to play a little rugby on weekends.

Any interested participants should contact Alan Unsted at 294-9630.

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