

# Moto Kart Enthusiasts Enjoy Racing in Downtown Russell

Racers from three provinces navigate twists of one kilometer course

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**Crossroads This Week**

The sights and sounds of Moto Kart racing brought excitement to downtown Russell on Saturday, July 10, as some 70 teams showcased the sport to curious onlookers.

Drivers of the high performance karts were challenged by one hair pin turn, several corners and a short straight-a-way on the kilometer long course that snaked around a four-block portion of downtown.

The inaugural running of the Russell street race featured members of the Manitoba Karting Association (MKA), along with competitors from Saskatchewan and Ontario. MKA is a group of avid race enthusiasts who participate in kart racing over the summer in Gimli for the most part, with the Moto Kart Classic - Manitoba's only urban street race - serving as race number four on the MKA's season.

"Street racing is much more challenging than regular track racing as no one is familiar with the track so all competitors are starting at the same point," said Marcy Richard, MKA President. "The opportunity exists for many bumps and accidental touches of the karts while racing in the corners which can cause damage to the karts and/or require parts to ensure participation in the next round on the track."

With spectators lining the course, male and female competitors, ranging from age eight to 50-plus battled for the checkered flag in six classes throughout the day.

Three classes of racing are equally divided between Honda engines (four stroke) and Rotax engines (two stroke). The breakdown of ages and approximate speeds are: Junior One - ages 8-12, Honda engine, 35-45 mph; Junior Two - ages 12-16, Honda engine, 40-50 mph; Honda 6.5 - ages 17+, many drivers in this class are 40+; Mini-Max rotax engines, ages 8-12, 45-55 mph; Junior Rotax, ages 12-16, 60-70 mph; and Senior Rotax, ages 17+, speeds in this class range from 80 mph and up.

While speeds varied throughout the day, drivers of the mini Indy race karts did provide thrills and spills for motor sports fans.

"I heard from the DD2 driver that competes with the Senior Rotax class that the local RCMP clocked him at 103 miles per hour down the straight-a-way on Main Street," stated Richard. "Other drivers in this

class averaged 25 second lap times on the street course, compared to regularly having 45-53 second lap times on our track in Gimli which consists of one hair pin turn, a couple of S turns and other challenging curves."

It's not only on Manitoba soil that MKA members showcase their drive and determination for this type of racing, as competitors from all classes regularly reach the podium at the Western Canadian Championship series of the Rotax Max Challenge Series which takes place in Chilliwack, BC (May long weekend), Saskatoon, SK (July long weekend) and Edmonton, AB (August long weekend). The national event for this series takes place on the second weekend in August in Montreal, QC.

And no matter the class, Richard feels kart racing provides great entertainment for racing enthusiasts and the community in general to enjoy. "The MKA is very happy with the day of racing that occurred and look forward to further dialogue with the Town of Russell to ensure an event takes place again next year," added Richard, who oversees the provincial club which is a collective of volunteers who are responsible for organizing, coordinating, and directing the race season that runs from May to September.

In conjunction with the races, an all ages live music street party was held in the evening.

Wes Anderson, organizer of the event, said 400 people were on hand to listen to classic rock band Dryrun of Winnipeg, classic rocker Nathan Layh of Russell and his guests - a trio of Brandon University students, and country singer Jessica Moskaluke of Langenburg, SK, to cap off the day of high energy in the community.