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Greg Van Rompaey prepares for his next race.

Karting a family affair

KARTING

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The great thing about karting is there are a lot of places where you can participate.

One of these is the popular WA Sportsman class that uses the venerable Yamaha air-cooled S engine in conjunction with the Australian-made water-cooled ARC engine. With the slightly better performance of the ARC engines, karts using this engine must carry an extra 8kg.

As the performance of karts is weight sensitive, there are three basic weight divisions in Sportsman, Light at 135kg, Heavy at 155kg and

Superheavy at 175kg. There also is an extra division, called Over-40s. As its title suggests, this is for those over 40 years of age. The intent of this was to allow "seniors" to get out and have some fun and stretch the limits of their experiences.

A good example of an Over-40s racer is Greg Van Rompaey, who has been racing for 15 years with the Tiger Club in Perth.

This experience has paid off, with him now being the man to beat in the Over-40s division.

Van Rompaey is not alone at race meetings, as this is a bit of a family affair.

His father, George, 82, and son, Brad, also race. Brad, 11, has been racing for three years and is now in the Rookie class, which uses the same

engine as the Midget class but is less restricted and has more power and speed.

As with any sport, practice is the key, so the family will usually race once a month and practise at least once between races.

Apart from his obvious passion for the sport, Van Rompaey feels that the challenge and commitment of karting are good for him physically as well as mentally because it keeps him thinking all the time as to "how to go better".

Another reason is the mateship. "Even if things do get a little close sometimes out there on the track, we always manage to have a laugh afterwards," he said.

Karting is good family fun that is open to all.