

WEST AUSTRALIAN 28/9/05 #9

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Rookie class part of the progression

KART RACING

KEN SEEBER

Some weeks ago, we looked at the Midget class — the entry level to karting for youngsters aged 7 to 10.

The next class is Rookies, which has an age range of 10 to 13 years.

This class uses only the Yamaha KT100J engine and, as with the Midget class, a controlled restrictor is fitted and sealed into the exhaust.

This restrictor is slightly bigger to provide increased performance (a top speed of about 90kmh) and also to cater for the increased combined kart-and-driver weight of 105kg, up from the 90kg for Midgets.

A typical Rookie driver is

11-year-old Brad Van Rompaey, who has progressed from the Midget class.

Along with his dad, Greg, Brad has raced at various circuits, including Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Wundowie.

As with other Rookie drivers with a few years experience, Brad can now work on the kart, taking the pressure off Greg by doing such things as cleaning the kart, adjusting the wheels, oiling the chain and mixing and adding fuel.

Doing these necessary tasks, young karters develop a mechanical understanding that will be invaluable throughout their life.

In terms of practice, Brad has been fortunate to spend some time with Daniel Elliot (recently crowned 2005 National Formula Ford series winner), who started his karting in Perth with the Tiger kart club.

As Greg says of Brad: "I can tell him what to do but am not sure if he really listens to me.

"But when (the more youthful) Daniel tells him, he does exactly what he says."

Sound familiar?

With or without Daniel, Brad practises once and races once a month. This still leaves time for tee-ball and basketball.

We have been looking at the Midget and Rookie classes for sprint (bitumen) racing but there are similar classes in dirt racing.

In WA, there are two dirt-racing associations — the Australian Independent Dirt Karting Association and the Wheatbelt Karting Association.

Website and contact details for those that "do it in the dirt" will appear in the next column.



Rookie-class competitor Brad Van Rompaey gets set for his next race.