

# Kartbahn provides "the thrill of driving" 20-year old Daltech student making a go with kart business

BY GREG MCFARLANE

How many times have you driven your car, wishing that you could speed past the ignoramus clogging up the inside lane and leave him in your dust?

Well, Halifax's Kartbahn provides you with a safer venue to live out your exhaust-laden motorsports fantasies. Located on Prescott street in the north end, it is the only indoor go-kart track east of Montreal.

And if you're envisioning an image of the rinky-dink slowpoke carts that the word 'go-kart' usually summons, get a clue. The machines at Kartbahn have kick.

With a chassis so low your ass would be dragging along the floor were it not for the seat, and a speed limit that feels, well, without limits, these aren't vehicles for the faint of heart.

But what's more interesting than Kartbahn itself is Kartbahn's president, Lucas Strackerjan — a 20 year-old third-year Engineering student at Daltech. With a full course load (that's six classes) and his own business, you'd think his time was stretched a little thin. But he's the last person to buy into that philosophy.

"I don't believe in people who say, 'oh, you're too busy to do that'. That's BS," Strackerjan said. "If you have the ambition and the want to do something, then it's limitless."

A graduate of St. Pat's High School in Halifax, Strackerjan began racing karts at the age of 15. He turned professional at 16 and began racing Formula 1600 cars. At that age he also earned his Glider pilot's license and a year later he obtained his private pilot's license. When he turned 18, he began flying gliders in France, and last year he

opened Kartbahn at the age of 19.

Over that time, Strackerjan began his schooling at Dal and was also briefly hired on as a spokesperson for the federal government's *Stay in School* program. Spending an estimated 32 hours in classes and 15 hours on homework every week, he seems the ideal candidate for the job. Having a business on top of that was a goal of Strackerjan's.

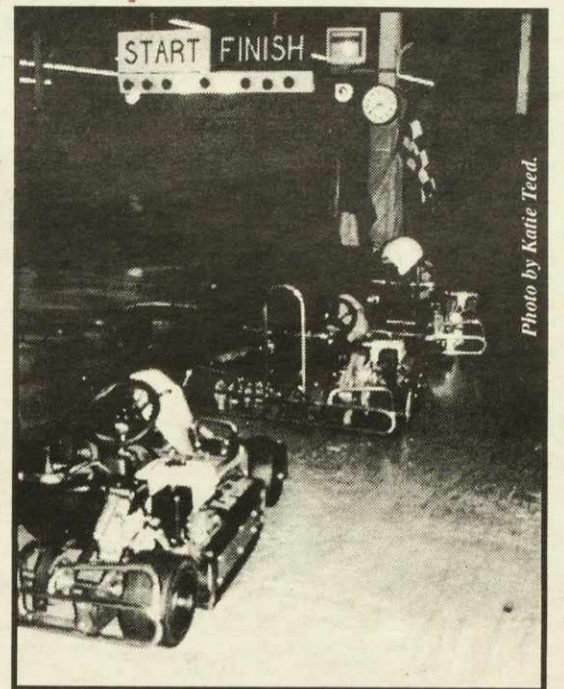
"I really wanted to start a business," he said, "and I was thinking more along the lines of a sub shop, just to get my feet wet, sort of be my own boss. But why would I even start something I know nothing about? I'm not a chef... so I took something I knew a lot about."

He knew about racing, he knew about karts, and he knew about driving fast. And he wanted to pass the excitement he felt behind

the wheel on to others.

"It's hard to get people in here for the first time because automatically, when you think about go-karts, you think 'I went to an amusement park and they went five miles an hour and putt-putt-putt' and every time you'd try to accelerate, the guy would wave his hand and say 'go slow,'" Strackerjan said. "Here, we want you to go fast and enjoy yourself. This is the thrill of driving."

"You can't do this on the street."



Pit lane at Kartbahn.

## Attracting American athletes

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who recruited Nixon last year. "We're an unknown entity to them, but we want to try to advance this thing as well as we can."

Located at the foot of the bridge connecting Windsor and Detroit, the U of W has an advantage over other Canadian universities that may be looking to recruit American college athletes.

Students who live in Detroit can drive to the U of W campus faster than some who live in Windsor.

The university also hopes it may attract student athletes who have been wrongfully passed up by the American college circuit.

"So many kids over there fall through the cracks," Morencie said. "We hope to be a safety net for them, to catch the kids that fall through."

Still, strict regulations about team composition mean U of W teams aren't about to become dominated by American players. CIAU regulations, for example, prevent men's basketball from having more than three non-Canadian citizens on a team.

And athletes with star potential aren't the only students the U of W is hoping to win over from Motortown and other American cities.

It's also making an effort to promote the university to American students in general — a task that's not so hard given the low Canadian dollar and the fact Ontario tuition is cheaper than in the U.S.

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