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Karting keeps it all in the family

KART RACING

KEN SEEBER

As we have seen before, karting can be very much a family thing.

Combine this with the smell of petrol and the noise of competition engines and you can have a succession of generations involved in motorsport.

We have seen this in all forms of motorsport, whether motorcycling, speedway, circuit racing or drag racing.

On top of that, there is always the swapping from one type of motorsport to another.

In this case, we have the Rock family, currently embroiled in sprint

karting. The father is Michael, who races in the over-40s class and his son Mitchell, 10, who races in the Rookie class.

Michael used to ride in motocross and trials, taking after his father, John, who was an Australian trials champion.

As a pair, the Rocks, who live in Manning, have been racing karts for more than a year at Wanneroo, Cockburn, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie circuits.

Often they are accompanied by Mitchell's sister, Ashlee, 10, who helps whenever possible.

Michael, a naval officer based at HMAS Stirling, feels that karting offers a fantastic opportunity to develop a strong father-and-son relationship.

"Mitchell now understands the difference between understeer

and oversteer," he said. "In fact, I have let him have a drive of the family 4WD (off-road, of course) to get the feel of a full-sized vehicle".

Additional benefits are that each can wheel the trolley back from the outgrid after the kart has been unloaded for the next race.

Mitchell, has learnt many things mechanical during the past year, now being responsible for cleaning his kart, shifting the wheels and mixing the two-stroke oil and fuel.

Tyre changing is still to come but this is something adults can have difficulty with.

In addition to karting, Mitchell plays football and tennis and attends Manning Primary School.

Mitchell's idol is Marcus Ambrose, a logical choice since Ambrose started his own career in karting.



Michael, Mitchell and Ashlee Rock at Cockburn Raceway.