

Big fun on mini road-race bikes



The Alberta Mini RoadRacing Association is a non-profit amateur organization that introduces motorcycle road racing to riders of all ages and abilities.



PHOTOS COURTESY ALBERTA MINI ROADRACING ASSOCIATION



All ages and abilities — even entire families — hit the track in road-racing club

MICHAEL WOOD
Calgary Sun

Some families hike — others rip around racetracks on 150 CC four-stroke engines.

It's the kind of family outing Jay Fox, a longtime bike enthusiast, envisioned 10 years ago as a way to spend quality, white-knuckle time with the wife and kids.

"I was looking for something to do with my own son, who was 10 at the time," says Fox, president of the Alberta

Mini RoadRacing Association (AMRA) and a sales associate at Rocky Mountain Powerhouse Honda.

"He's now 20 and we've spent many, many years in competition. And he doesn't let Dad win."

The AMRA is a non-profit amateur organization that "provides an introduction to the sport of motorcycle road racing to riders of all ages, gender and abilities," according to the club's online mission statement.

What it has become is nothing short of a small miracle within Canada's amateur racing circuit, producing national-level competitors and an outlet for road racing families to compete.

"We have many complete families that roadrace together from age seven and up," Fox says.

"We've had three generations on the track at the same time, a daughter a mom and a grandmom."

The club hosts classes for

enthusiasts of all skill levels beginning with a youth program for kids age seven to 10, all the way up to Formula 80 bikes for more experienced riders.

The AMRA races locally at Calgary Kart Track — located at the south end of Race City Speedway, at 64 Ave. and 114 St. S.E. — but is involved in competitions spanning Western Canada.

In its 10 years, the club has seen its fair share of young riders go on to greatness, includ-

ing Royce McLean, a native of Coaldale, east of Lethbridge.

At age 14, McLean, who was sponsored by Yamaha, became North America's youngest Pro 600 Superbike racer.

"We're a stepping stone for children to become champions," says Fox.

While there are risks associated with any extreme sport competition, Fox says it comes down to knowing your sport.

The club boasts a low rate of injury thanks to instruction

from experienced members.

"What I find unsafe is hockey. I've never played hockey, I've always been in motorcycles. It's the same as hockey parents who don't know what we do — they might be a little apprehensive," he said.

The club maintains a comprehensive website at www.amra.ca

"If they're interested in demo rides or want to try our sport, we supply the bikes and gear, you supply the talent."