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YOUR PLACE, YOUR PAPER

Win just the ticket

By LAUREN PRIESTLEY

HURLING downhill at speeds of 60kmh has earned one lucky youngster a ticket to the United States.

The soapbox derby team from Remuera Intermediate School won the national competition on Sunday at Stanmore Bay.

And it was Remuera 11-year-old Andrew Jantke who drove the side to victory.

The win means Andrew gets to go to the All-American Soap Box Derby World Championship in Ohio, US, from July 20 to 26.

Hearing his name called as the winner was a special moment, Andrew says.

"Everyone went crazy, yelling and cheering.

"I came second last year so it just felt really good to beat that."

Mother and team manager Victoria Jantke says the group put in long hours to get to this point.



Racers feel
the need
for speed

Speed racer: James Chester racing for Remuera Intermediate in the national competition.

Photos: PHOTOTEK.CO.NZ

The whole crew was vital to the team's success, she says.

"I'm an extremely proud parent but I'm also just proud of the whole team.

"Watching your son flying down a hill where you've seen carts flip before is terrifying but it's about them having fun, working together and letting them do what they do."

She will be travelling to the US with Andrew and is fundraising to ensure team coach Mike Thorpe can be there too.

Most of the Remuera Intermediate youngsters used to go to Meadowbank School where Thorpe is the caretaker as well as resident soapbox expert.

The primary school came second at nationals this year.

"He has really ignited something in these kids. He has put his heart and soul into this and it has meant they all have a passion for it," Victoria Jantke says.

New Zealand soapbox racing is organised by Rotary clubs.

Auckland East member Sam Mukhtar says the organisation is happy to help

run the event because of the benefits for youngsters. The lively atmosphere

makes all the hard work worthwhile, he says. "Watching the prizegiving

was certainly a delight. The kids were shaking bottles of grape juice around and had

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- Team manager Victoria Jantke



No 1: The Remuera Intermediate crew includes, back from left: James Chester, Jacob Bates, Matthew Tanner and Jared Dwight, and front from left: Dylan Harris, Tim Kessell, driver Andrew Jantke and Nick Jantke.



these amazing looks on their faces. They just get so much from it."

The eastern competition was held in West Auckland this year because a key sponsor pulled out and not enough east schools entered (*East & Bays Courier*, March 14).

Hopefully the derby will be back in Stonefields in 2015, Mukhtar says.

Rotary is looking for new sponsors and is pushing to get more schools involved, he says.

"We're keeping an open mind.

"We would like to go back to Stonefields and carry on with the event over there if we can overcome these barriers. It sees New Zealand's name on the world stage – and that's something to strive for."



Get ready: Meadowbank School students transport their cart for a race.
Photos: PHOTOTEK.CO.NZ



Road race: James Chester from Remuera Intermediate School gets low in his cart.

Schools vie for soapbox honours

Hundreds of youngsters took part in the soapbox derby nationals on Sunday including the six fastest teams from the Eastern Suburbs competition. Remuera Intermediate School took out first place and Meadowbank School came in second.

Cruising along: Joshua Sunkel from Meadowbank School gives it his all.

