

East & Bays Courier

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Wednesday, April 4, 2012

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video from the event.

Golden girl: St Ignatius School won the nationals of the 2012 Soapbox Derby on Sunday. Driver Gemma McDougall is pictured with Harry Clarke of Meadowbank School, who came second. Sparkling grape juice made for a sticky, fizzy celebration.

Soapbox spectacle



Drivers ready: Gemma McDougall gets ready to race. Soapbox drivers must sit low in the car to reduce wind resistance.

Photos: CATHERINE HEALY

By CATHERINE HEALY

ONE lucky young lady is off to Akron, Ohio, for the All-American Soapbox Derby in July.

Gemma McDougall was the driver who led St Ignatius School in St Heliers to victory on Sunday in the New Zealand finals.

The Pak 'n Save Glen Innes Eastern Suburbs Soapbox Derby was held on Saturday in Stonefields Ave with the top entrants going through to the national event the next day.

The teams were whittled down to eight and then a final four. Meadowbank School was second and Stonefields School came third. Fourth place went to the Riverhead Scouts team

from west Auckland.

The event was Stonefields' first attempt at soapbox racing.

"It's been great for the school and great for the community," associate principal Chris Bradbeer says.

"People have walked up from the development to watch and so many have said to me they want to be involved next year."

The race was organised by the Rotary Club of Auckland East. Members were on site at 6am to set up and worked two long days to make sure everything ran smoothly.

Schools lease their soapbox car from the Rotary club and invite businesses to sponsor them in order to cover costs.

Soapbox teams are made

up of a pit crew, drivers, a cheer squad and many willing parents and teachers.

A soapbox car has no engine. They are released from the starting blocks on a steep street and it is gravity and the driver's ability to hold a straight line that determine the winner.

Soapbox racing is a serious business. Cars are checked before racing to make sure they comply with regulations.

They must be weighted evenly and their weight is checked before they reach starting blocks. All of the wheels are swapped out before the finals to make sure none have been tampered with and everyone has a fair go.

More soapbox photos P18

Derby day at Stonefields

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Stonefields Ave was closed over the weekend for two days of soapbox racing. Schools from all over the eastern suburbs took part.



Serious stuff: Jonathan Kuismwary, Anthony Doctor and Levi Samuels of Pt England School represent their school as soapbox drivers.

Photos: CATHERINE HEALY



Fun day: Soapbox racing is serious stuff, but ultimately the event is about having fun as a team. Elizabeth Malu of Orakei School is all smiles before her race.



Yes officer: Constable Casey of the Glen Innes station drops in on Saturday. The drivers take great delight in being breath tested and watching Constable Casey use the speed radar gun. He confirms that the cars are travelling around 40km/h. James Coughlan is the driver representing Somerville Special School. James attends Churchill Park School but races on behalf of Somerville Special. The boys in blue are from St Kentigern School.

Get ready, left: Teams from all over Auckland compete in the eastern suburbs event.



Three cheers: It is Starhope Rd School's first time at the Pak'nSave Glen Innes Eastern Suburbs Soapbox Derby and they go all-out with a large cheer squad.



Lining up, above: Calvin Fraser of Parnell District School eyes up his run to the finish line.



Head down, right: Daniella Collett from Stonefields School gets ready to race.

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Soapbox spectacle



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Derby day at Stonefields



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