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STUDENTS WON'T LET CHANGE OF VENUE BE A DISADVANTAGE

They're ready for soapbox derby



No go: The Eastern Suburbs Soapbox Derby will not be held in Stonefields this year.

By LAUREN PRIESTLEY

SOUPED UP Soapbox trolleys will not be racing down Stonefields Ave this year.

The Eastern Suburbs Soapbox Derby competition is usually a highlight of the school calendar and draws a big crowd of spectators.

But the event is being held almost 30 km away in west Auckland this Sunday - partly due to the loss of a sponsor.

Remuera Intermediate School students say they won't let the change be a disadvantage. Their team of 11 and 12-year-olds is in the final stages of preparation and has high hopes of coming home with the trophy.

"We have spent just so much time together, we're ready for it," pupil Matthew Tanner says.

Rotary Club of Auckland East president Owen Williams is disappointed the race won't be held in Stonefields. But he says a key sponsor pulled out early this year and a couple of school teams also withdrew. The club also mistakenly thought it didn't have council permission to run the event at Stonefields - despite approval being granted on February 5.

"We would have had to run it at a big loss and when the schools pulled out there was still a huge amount of work for the benefit of fewer people," Mr Williams says.

The six fastest teams in this weekend's competition will go through to the New Zealand finals on March 30 and the top driver at nationals gets to hit the track at the World Championship in Ohio.

Remuera Intermediate father and team organiser Steve Harris says the derby is about more than just racing.

It teaches maths, physics, mechanics and engineering skills as well as the benefits of teamwork and participation, he says.



New ground: Remuera Intermediate School's soapbox derby team isn't daunted by the idea of racing on a new track. Front: Tim Kessell, back from left: Jacob Bates, Jared Dwight, Dylan Harris, Hamish Brown, James Chester, Andrew Jantke, Matthew Tanner and Nick Jantke.
Photo: LAUREN PRIESTLEY

More schools need to get involved in the eastern competition, he says.

"We need to build it up. It's not a lot of work and what the kids get out of it is such a huge amount of value. The kids don't have to be the sportiest or top in the school. It gets

them intrigued and wanting to learn more. It's just amazing for them."

Remuera Intermediate student Tim Kessell says the team has been putting in some hard work.

"I just have this feeling we're going to win."



Go to soapboxderby.co.nz for more information.