

Kids gear up for derby time

By CARALISE TRAYES

The countdown is on and racers are practising for the 2014 Whangaparaoa Rotary Soap Box Derby, for which the *Rodney Times* is the media sponsor.

The seventh annual event has drawn seven schools from around the area and four community groups for this year's race-off in Stanmore Bay on March 29.

Three categories of carts will be racing on the day with super stock, masters, corporate, and super kids racers.

All racers get two runs each.

The event will also include activities, rides, food stalls and entertainment on Rata Reserve, located next to the Stanmore Bay Pool and Leisure Centre.

Drivers and their support crews have already started training, with popular roads used in Gulf Harbour and Red Beach.

If one day of racing wasn't enough for speedsters the national finals will be held the next day on March 30.

It will take place along the same track at Brightside Rd.

The national winner goes on to compete in the international All American Soap

The *Rodney Times* will be featuring teams and their friendly rivalry in the lead up to the March 29 event. Here is the first in the series.

Box Derby in Akron, Ohio. This event takes place in July.

Despite Orewa College having two winning drivers in the Whangaparaoa event, one last year and in 2011, the school is not entering a team this year.

"We have a huge range of co-curricular activities at Orewa College and we predominantly put our efforts into activities that involve large numbers of students. This year we were not able to focus on the trolley derby," deputy principal Sue McCarthy says.

Last year's winner Dylan Smith went on to win the nationals and went to Akron.

Dylan isn't re-entering because he is competing in the Go Kart CRC Speedshow Top Half Series which clashes with the derby competition dates.



► WINNERS

Whangaparaoa Rotary Soap Box Derby winners:
2013 – Dylan Smith of Orewa College.
2012 – Jen Mowatt of Whangaparaoa Primary School.
2011 – Yasmin Pena of Orewa College.
2010 – Matthew Fishlock of Stella Maris.

Ready to roll: The Whangaparaoa Primary School's team comprises Aedan Burmester, front; Jamie Ward and Kane Edwards, middle from left; Paukea Haraki, Haruki Paul and Jasmine Wilkinson.



Team profile: The Orcas

Whangaparaoa Primary School team

Four drivers: Aedan Burmester, Jamie Ward, Haruki Paul, and Kane Edwards.

Statement to the other teams: "We have got a need for speed. We're not afraid," Kane Edwards says.

Three support crew: Paukea Haraki, Jasmine Wilkinson and Elijah Winchester.

"We will be supporting the drivers and helping with the cart," Jasmine Wilkinson says.

Jasmine isn't worried about being the only girl on the team.

"I'm used to being the only girl and I can handle it."

All the members are year 6 students and 10-years-old.

Team animal: Orca. "Orcas are fast and dangerous."

None of the team has previously competed but the drivers have all raced go karts and two have driven dirt bikes.