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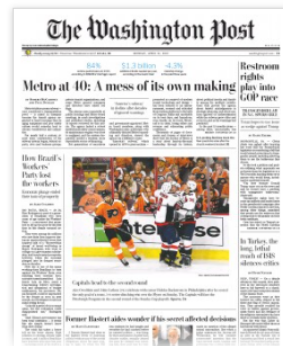
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BACK ON TRACK

Same name, new digs in Strathmore for Calgary Kart Racing Club

Calgary Herald 22 Apr 2016 GREG WILLIAMS
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The Calgary Kart Racing Club has moved its track to the nearby town of Strathmore, but the group is not considering a name change. Since the early 1960s the CKRC has had a nomadic existence. It started by organizing races in parking lots, and then on the abundant asphalt of an old airstrip near the southwest campus of Mount Royal College.

The club moved in 1984 from Mount Royal to Kart Gardens, northeast of the airport. In 2001 it relocated to a purpose-built track, dubbed Varsity Speed Park, which was adjacent to Race City Motorsport Park. That lasted until the end of 2013, but for years the

group knew it would have to find yet another suitable piece of property.

"We'd heard rumblings about a lease issue between the city (of Calgary) and Race City back in 2007 or 2008," said CKRC president John Kwong.

"We tried to get a location near Irricana, and that didn't work out. Neither did a spot within Calgary at Shepard, just east of the old Race City spot."

Kwong said the CKRC rallied its membership of close to 125 enthusiasts to help develop some leads in the club's search for land.

It took until 2012 for something substantial to happen. That's when Nathan Bartley of North Star Contracting Inc., and then club secretary, was doing some work for Strathmore, a town with a population of just over 12,000 about 40 minutes east of Calgary.

"Nathan mentioned to Strathmore that we were looking for some land to lease, and they thought they might just have what we were looking for," Kwong said.

What Strathmore offered the

CKRC was an eight-hectare plot in the southeast corner of the town.

The property has a nine-metre elevation change from highest to lowest points, and the group chose to create a track based on a mirror image of one located in Wanneroo,

"Rather than design our own, we took a proven track design, one that was already FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile) approved," Kwong said. "We just made it a mirror image to take into consideration the features of the

In early July 2014 work began by fencing off the land, and then the nine-metre-wide and 1,225-metre-long, 14-turn track was laid out. North Star Contracting brought in some of its heavy equipment and began the earthmoving process, and asphalt was put down in October.

Last year, the club spent time on finishing touches while hosting its first races. And now it's full speed ahead at North Star Raceway at Strathmore Motorsport Park. There are racing classes to accommodate almost everyone, from a youngster of five to a senior be-

yond 70, and the group offers its Try-A-Kart program for those interested in learning what the sport is like to get back on the track.

Eleven-year-old Enzo Sartor is happy to get back on the track. He started racing last year after his dad, Frank, asked him if he'd like to kart race.

"I didn't have to think about it too long," the young Sartor said. "I immediately said 'Yes!'"

Frank raced karts about 45 years ago, and then his eldest son, Gianfranco, started racing with the CKRC at the Varsity Speed Park track. That lasted five years, before he got too tall to comfortably fit a kart, but brother Enzo clearly remembered spending time at the track. "I remembered being there when I was two or three, and leaped at the chance to try it myself," Sartor said. "Last season went better than I expected."

Sartor won the Junior 1 (206-cc Briggs & Stratton four-stroke engine) Championship. He said it took him some time to gain his confidence but he continually got faster and was fully confident in the last four races of the season.

"Every race, I learned more about the kart and the motor," the fifth grader said.

"My favourite thing about kart racing is the speed, and hanging out with my dad."

Frank added, "The entire family is involved, but it's a great bonding experience for myself and Enzo. I'm the mechanic, and he's the driver, but he's asking more questions about the engine and isn't afraid to get his hands dirty."

In 2016 Sartor will race Junior 1, and he's also got a new kart so he can compete in Junior II twostroke (125 cc Rotax Mini Max two-stroke engine) events.

Spectators are welcome at the track, and there is a grandstand

with good sightlines of the entire race. Visit [ckrc.com](#) for an updated schedule. The first race event is scheduled for April 24.

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Kart racers work their way around the new nine-metre-wide, 14-turn North Star Raceway track at Strathmore Motorsport Park.