

## Aurora's Thompson making moves on the karting track



### By Jake Courtepatte

At just thirteen years old, Jake Thompson is burning rubber.

The young Auroran added a number of accolades to his ever-growing trophy case in the 2017 go-karting season, and Canadian Karting News' 'Up and Coming Driver of the Year' is ready to return to the track in 2018.

Behind the wheel since the age of ten, walking in his father's footsteps after doing some recreational karting himself, Jake took home four track titles as well as being named a top-ten junior driver in North America by Briggs and Stratton, a leading small engine supplier with a significant hand in the karting community.

Thompson's home track is Stouffville's Goodwood Kartways, a historic track covering over a full kilometer of paved roadway and helping drivers hone their skills for over sixty years.

On the track almost every day in the summer months for up to a hundred laps, Goodwood named Jake their most improved driver of the year last season.

'Time in the seat' is a mantra all drivers talk about,' said Jake's mother, Kerri Thompson.

With multiple configurations, the ten-turn course attracts drivers from all across North America each summer, and provides the perfect setting for up-and-comers like Jake to perfect his craft.

'Goodwood hosts weekend races which are open to the public and offer a lot of adrenaline and excitement,' said Thompson. 'For people who want to experience the sport, Goodwood offers an 'arrive and drive' program where they supply the kart, helmet and suit and run races nightly. It's super popular and tons of fun.'

Though Thompson sings the praises of the fun, tight-knit community of kart racing, those without knowledge of the sport may not realize it is much more than just child's play. Having previously raced a four-cycle engine in his kart capable of reaching speeds of 70-80 kilometres per hour, Jake is taking it up a notch this year with a newly-released two-cycle engine with the moniker 'ROK', reaching racing speeds of over one-hundred kph.

'Jake is moving up a level to race with more experienced and older racers this upcoming season,' said Thompson. 'The two-cycle shifts even faster.'

Like any good driver, Jake has a dedicated pit crew behind him, namely his coaches and former karters Dave Anderson and Lon Herder, as well as his father, who doubles as his mechanic, a job Thompson said, 'he loves every minute at the track with Jake.'

With the track reopening in early April, the young karter will have plenty more checkered flags in his sights in 2018.