

Manalvo motors home

NITRO CARS

THIRTY-two competitors lined up for the 2011 Nitro-X NT Nitro Championships at OCR Raceway in Winnellie last weekend.

The radio-controlled motor sport racing was fast and furious and after a hard-fought qualifying battle, local drivers filled the top five grid positions for the hour-long A-Grade final.

Third among the front row qualifiers was the MBX6 buggy of eventual winner Sergio Manalvo, who had a

pretty much untroubled race and won by 20 seconds over Tony Knauth (MBX6). Third was Nathan Tampe in his Hyper 9 buggy.

Manalvo said it was his biggest win in the sport he took up almost a decade ago.

"I was pretty nervous during the race and an hour is a long time to me to concentrate, but it was my biggest ever win, and with dad as my pit support, it was a family affair," he said.

The hard luck story in the final was OCR Raceway owner and Championship run-

ner up Knauth, who flamed out (stalled) in pitlane looking for a fuel refill. Knauth re-entered the race over a lap down on Manalvo and Tampe, and although managing to pass the pair, he couldn't bridge the final gap by the end of the race.

Knauth loves to win but prefers a good race.

"I flamed out in the pits and lost a lot of time and distance over the others," he said. "I always love winning, but I'm not disappointed because it was an amazing race and to have three Top End

boys on the podium was extra special."

The buggies will be slipping back into action on July 8 for the first of the seven-round Aussiemove Championship Series.

"You get addicted to this sport and we race all year round," Knauth said.

Podium finishers at the 2011 Nitro-X NT Nitro Championships were winner Sergio Manalvo (centre), second-placed Tony Knauth (left), and Nathan Tampe (third)



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Ashleigh Holland, 11, and Jasmine Ristevski, 11, foreground, with Kristine O'Meara, 9, and Emma Forsyth, 10, (left back), and their NT Junior Calisthenics rep team, who are off to the national titles at Gold Coast

Picture: PATRINA MALONE

Girls' exercise is to beat odds

CALISTHENICS

THE NT Calisthenics junior representative team left Darwin on Saturday for the Gold Coast to compete in the 2011 National Titles.

The age-limit for national junior competition is 12, and the Territory squad comprises 21 girls ranging from 8 to 12.

"We'll concentrate

mainly on the teams events, but four of the girls will compete in the solo," said coach Cassandra Smith.

"The competition doesn't start for us until Wednesday for the solo and until Friday for the teams events, but with such a young group we are leaving early to give them time to settle in and acclimatise.

"We will find plenty to do

and spend much of the time in training."

Calisthenics routines are scored by three adjudicators, who each give a score out of 100. Most of the routines are freestyle, with consideration given to the difficulty of the choreography and execution.

"The Territory is traditionally the weakest team at the nationals, but last

year we came fourth overall out of six and we are out to at least equal that this time around," said Smith.

"Our girls have been training for up to 10 hours every week for the past six months for this, so we are ready."

The championships are conducted at the Gold Coast Arts Centre, and wind up next Saturday.

Teens set for national test

BASKETBALL

NORTHERN Territory under-16 men's and women's basketballers leave on Thursday for Kilsyth in Victoria to take part in the Basketball Australia National Championships.

The championship features two pools of seven teams in each of the men's and women's divisions, with finals to determine the winners next Friday and Saturday.

"I always coach to win, but it is an unknown at national championships because you never know the opposition," men's coach Brian Lawrie said.

"We've trained and worked hard to prepare for the tournament but the scoreboard result won't be the entire measure of our success.

"It's the first serious national championship for most players, so a measure will be team effort and individual performance and improvement across the tournament."



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Women's coach Steve McGugan has similar ideals for his team, which has suffered badly through injury and illness during preparation.

"We would normally be tapering our fitness training as the championship approaches, but because of illness and injury it is still a priority," McGugan said.

"It will be a tough task for us to put up much scoreboard pressure against some of the biggest states who have huge numbers to choose from.

"But we see it as a great challenge to be able to compete and then gauge ourselves against the best."

Rebekah's kick is chasing two goals

SOCCER

REBEKAH Morrison is a multi-talented athlete from Katherine whose ambition is to be selected to represent her country in either athletics or soccer.

The 16-year-old is a member of Katherine Athletics Club and competes each Friday night, and also the Katherine Football Association where she plays in the under-18 mixed competition. She has already achieved recognition at Territory level for track and field and competed at the 2008 Pacific Schools Games in Canberra.

The middle-distance running athlete has put the spikes away for the time being because football happens to be higher on the agenda at the moment. She is currently hard in training for the FFA U15 Nat-

ional Championships at Coffs Harbour, which get under way on Friday, and the School Sport U19 Championships in Adelaide during August.

"There is a few of us girls in Katherine who have been selected in both teams," she said.

"We don't do anything special for the U15 Championships apart from playing club football, but the girls and boys in the School Sport team train together every Wednesday and Sunday.

"It's expensive for us to travel so I've been raising funds with raffles, and the business people of Katherine have generously donated heaps for the prizes."

The year-11 Katherine High School student has a passion for sport and helping children develop sporting skills.