

Athlete of the Week

Zaden Hickman – speed skater, cyclist, tri-athlete

If you asked 9-year-old Zaden Hickman what he likes most about his sports he would reply, "I like to go fast!" Zaden is involved in speed skating, indoor bicycle racing, outdoor cycling and is a tri-athlete.

Zaden has just wrapped up his winter time sport, speed skating. Awarded as the 2010-2011 Junior Male Skater of the Year and currently standing 5th in Ontario in his age group, Zaden is one of the youngest competitors in the Cambridge Speed Skating Club. Zaden's parents introduced him to the sport at the age of six.

The speed skating season starts in September and goes through to April; the first race is scheduled in October. Zaden practises at the Club's facility in Hespeler once or twice a week. He regularly competes against skaters from

Ottawa, Milton, Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

Speed skating is the fastest human powered sport. Competitor #747, Zaden whips around the 500m track in just 1.2 minutes. The skaters wear specially designed skates with 14", square edge blades. For safety, Zaden wears a Kevlar body suit, neck guard and helmet.

Zaden is also an accomplished indoor track cyclist. Many speed skaters cross train by cycling as the same principals of speed, stamina and endurance apply. Zaden rides at the Forest City Velodrome in London. It is the only indoor cycling arena in Ontario and one of only four indoor cycling facilities in North America. The track measures 138 meters with steep 50-degree banks and 17-degree straights.

Zaden races around the track on his specially-designed race bike covering 138m in just 11 seconds. The bikes that the riders

race with are light weight; they do not have brakes or gears. Going at such high rates of speed can be dangerous. It is mandatory that riders wear helmets, protective equipment and specially-designed race suits.

One of Zaden's greatest track racing moments came when he won a race and did his victory lap proudly carrying the Canadian flag.

Zaden's interest in cycling racing is not limited to indoor racing; he also participates in outdoor bicycle races. Recently Zaden rode in the Paris to Ancaster Bicycle Race.

Before the 60km race began, Zaden was announced as the youngest participant in the race. The weather for the race was dreadful, with below zero temperatures, a cold wind, rain and hail. The course was soaked and mud caked; deter-

mined to finish, Zaden was one of only five riders under the age of 15 to cross the finish line.

Zaden has also participated in triathlons, swimming, biking and running his way to the finish line. He has competed in triathlons held in Caledon, New Market and Milton with plans to participate in more this year.

When Zaden is not training or racing, he enjoys playing chess. An accomplished and award winning chess player, Zaden applies the strategy of the game of chess to his sports; anticipating his opponent's moves and planning his strategy.

Zaden is a grade 4 student at Brisbane Public School; he is an academic student, an active member of several clubs, sings in the school choir and plays for many of the school's teams.

–Janice Ellison for the Advocate



GEORGETOWN  **TOYOTA**

15 MOUNTAINVIEW RD. N., GEORGETOWN

905-877-2296 • 905-874-4276