

July 8, 2008 - A message from Team Firebird Junior Program Coordinators

Jim Thomas (JT2) - Jennifer Thomas (Big Wheels)

Jim Thomas (JT1) - Lori Thomas (sponsor relations)

Hello Team Firebird Juniors & Families !! What an amazing season we have shared with all of you, hard to believe we are beginning the second half of the year. We are very happy to say that the team is growing and we have new team members in each age group this year and also a new series program, Arizona Quick 32 (AZ Q32). Plans are also in the mix for breathing life back into the High School Program! We will keep you posted on the progress.

Thanks to the efforts of many people and several generous sponsors, the account for the Juniors/Big Wheels is in the **GREEN**. It is our goal to acknowledge and thank the sponsors at every event by utilizing signage and also decals on the team cars. Please make sure to thank all of those who help make our program a success and keep the trophies, awards and such flowing.

Changes in the 2008 program have for the most part been successful due to all of your participation and cooperation. There are more changes ahead of us which is why this message is being posted. Any questions, comments, concerns regarding any of the below items, please contact us and we will do our best to keep everyone informed. We learn something new at every event with regards to positive changes we can make, through your input and also by the old "trial and error" method. We will see you at the next Junior Team Race on August 16th.

1. **Junior TEAM CAPTAINS:** After much consideration and input, it was decided to select two co-captains for the balance of 2008 and the entire 2009 season. We would like you to help us support and welcome Ericca Martinez and Tanner Sundstrom into their new team roles. We believe they will help mentor others in wanting to become a part of our program. It is VERY important that every team driver/family provide the Junior Captains with a current email address and contact information.

*Short Biographies of Ericca and Tanner are found below, along with their email addresses and contact info.

**Also a gentle reminder to completely fill out the Tech cards with contact information at the next team race. We require this information for awards and notifications on program changes and events.



2. **BRAKES - Be Responsible And Keep Everyone Safe !** As many of you may have caught on recently, or may have knowledge of due to your involvement; the Team Firebird Junior Program was signed up as the **first Youth Race TEAM in the USA** to be a part of the program created after the unfortunate deaths of Doug Herbert's sons- Jon and James Herbert in January 2008. Doug Herbert - SnapOn Tools Dragster Driver and Racebricks have provided awards and promotional items through the Thomas Family for junior events at FIR and also SIR (Tucson). There is no "business" deal, only an opportunity to spread awareness to you - our pre-teen drivers, teen drivers and parents with regards to promoting safe driving skills. It would be sad to lose one of our team members because of a preventable accident, so as parents and those in charge of keeping you all safe, we are using the "peer pressure" process to deliver the message... and a few incentives. If you want more information, get in touch with us.

NOTE: You may also see event photo's and more info @ www.myspace.com/jrthomasms_brakes

3. **Arizona Quick 32;** If you are a paid Team Member of Firebird Juniors, you DO NOT need to pay the \$25.00 membership fee for this series. As stated in the email that went out on July 1, the series is for ages 10-17, however considerations will be made for 9 year olds who have been driving for one complete year, it is up to the Junior Coordinators to approve/deny any driver under 10 years of age. This will be done on a case-by-case basis. ****See Jim Thomas (JT1)**

4. **Division 7 Race Weekend - October 18-19, 2008 @ Firebird International Raceway;**

Many of you are hearing rumors regarding the event, planning, etc. As per the July 1st email: Our divisional race being held the weekend of October 18/19 has acquired a sponsor (however looking for additional support/funds/prizes), so we have many things in the planning stages. Please put the dates on your calendar and plan on spending all day Saturday the 18th (8am - end of day) with us having fun and the divisional race will be held Sunday morning. We will post a schedule and RSVP contact info for Saturday's dinner event being planned. The actual Divisional Race is on Sunday, again the gates opening at 8am sharp. ****If you want to help during the Divisional ... please contact us, the Thomas' or the new team captains. There is more to do that what we can do alone. We will post dates/locations for planning meetings, those interested in helping, please attend or email to let us know of your interest.**

5. **Off-track Team Events;** The coordinators all recognize the challenges that racing creates, sometimes taking away opportunities for other youth social events. It is our goal to have at least two off-track team events/fun days paid for out of the junior funds, annually, including the end of year awards (which may be held off premise this year). We have time for at least one of those events before the end of the year, so please send your ideas regarding what you would like to do as a youth group to the Team Captains & coordinators and let's see what we can get accomplished (parents ideas are welcome also).

6. **Junior Team Contacts:**

Jim Thomas (JT2 - the young one) &

Jennifer Thomas

email: jrtmotorsports@aol.com

Phone:

Jim Thomas (JT1 -the more mature one)

email: jthomas@g-pst.com

Lori Thomas

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Ericca Martinez -

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Tanner Sundstrom -

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Chuck Sundstrom - FIR Race Director

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JUNIOR TEAM Co-CAPTAIN
ERICCA MARTINEZ



Her favorite things about racing are the competition, speed, and the people who make up the close bonded drag racing community.

Ericca Martinez is currently competing in the NHRA Jr. Drag Racing League. Ericca, who is 15, is from Chandler Arizona, and is a sophomore at Hamilton High School. Outside of drag racing, Ericca has been playing volleyball for four years. She is currently driving a junior dragster sponsored by BP Graphics. Her older sister, Desiree, is her team manager and a former Jr. Drag Racer, as well.

Growing up, drag racing had always been a big part of Ericca's life. Once she saw her first pair of cars go down the race track she knew this was the sport for her. On the day of her eighth birthday Ericca received her official license in a birthday card from her mother and father, only to notice a junior dragster sitting in her backyard. Two years after getting her first start, Ericca became a member of team CPR Jr. Drag Racing, whom she still proudly represents today.

Finally in 2004, after many second place finishes, Ericca won her first race in Tucson, Arizona, at Southwestern International Raceway. In 2005, Ericca and team CPR Jr. Drag Racing was approached by Checker-Schuck's-Kragen Auto Parts, who they end up representing for the following three years. Her career best point finish was in 2006, with a second overall at Firebird International Raceway. In 2008 she is looking for her first track championship.

Her favorite things about racing are the competition, speed, and the people who make up the close bonded drag racing community. Not only does she enjoy the racing, she also enjoys doing car displays and talking to people about what she does. Displaying in car shows for charities and younger children are her favorite because she loves to see the expressions on their faces, knowing that she may have helped make their day.

During her many years of racing it has been one of Ericca's greatest pleasures to see the Jr. Drag Racing program grow over time. After her Jr. Drag Racing years are completed, she hopes to continue driving(racing) after she finishes her education. Her parents have been a big support during her past seasons and have put everything into it. She looks forward to representing and working with the Team Firebird Juniors and also getting the message out regarding BRAKES
-Be Responsible And Keep Everyone Safe.

JUNIOR TEAM Co-CAPTAIN TANNER SUNDSTROM



"To me racing is about having fun. To race and to do well is the most fun a kid could have. But doing well is not easy. It takes focus and determination." ~ Tanner

Tanner Sundstrom is currently competing in the NHRA Jr. Drag Racing League. Tanner is a 14 year old from Gilbert Arizona and attends Mesquite High School. Tanner has been around drag racing all of his life, going to Firebird Raceway since before he could walk, and states he was basically born and raised at the track. Tanner has two brothers and one sister who also participate in the Team Firebird programs (Big Wheels, Juniors and High School Class). His parents Stephanie and Chuck both work for Firebird International Raceway and are familiar faces in the office and on the track.

In 2001 Tanner started racing in the Big Wheel class, wanting to race a junior dragster some day. He began driving a Junior Dragster during the Firebird program in 2005 when the Christman family asked him to drive one of their cars. Starting at the age of 11, he raced with them for a year and half. Shortly thereafter the Sundstrom family started their own team and can be found at Firebird almost every weekend.

During his first year of racing Tanner was rookie of the year at Firebird, where he also won the Firebird Jr. Dragster Challenge his first two years of driving. He has also won an SIR Jr. Dragster Challenge race and numerous Team races at Firebird and Speedworld. Tanner's first year in the 13-17 age bracket he finished 2nd place overall for the year and his average reaction time for the entire 2007 season was **.016**.

Working first with Robert Christman, and now his Dad, along with a lot of trial and error and help from many people, Tanner has learned to do almost all of the work on the family's three(3) junior dragsters.

In 2007 while the Sundstrom family team was in Denver for the western conference finals, Tanner teamed up with Kim Jimerson and his family from Tucson in the Wicked West Coast 330 organization. In one evening they built a complete 330 car (from the frame up) and Tanner raced it for the first time the very next day. Although he didn't qualify to race in the event, he learned from the experience and had a great time. This year Tanner has had the opportunity to travel with the Jimerson family attending numerous 330 races, where he has consistently qualified in the top half of the field. He has yet to win that "first" 330 race, however it is out there for him. Participating in 330 racing and working on 330 cars, Tanner has learned a lot about the motors, clutches, computers, etc. He is also pretty fluent on the NHRA rule book concerning Juniors and safety. Tanner brings a lot of experience and knowledge to the junior program, and looks forward to working as a Team Co- Captain and sharing his knowledge with other team members and families.