



NEED FOR SPEED

I enjoy the feeling of speed and the excitement of competing and winning. Now, I'm just trying to improve as much as possible.

ALEX HUANG, who became interested in karting when he was just nine, and hopes to follow in the footsteps of Formula One champions such as Lewis Hamilton.

FULFILLING SON'S POTENTIAL

We want to do our best to help him fulfil his potential, and there is nothing more thrilling than to see him achieve this in a sport.

DR MARTIN HUANG, father of Alex, saying the sacrifices involved in helping his son pursue his dreams have been worth it.

Alex Huang races nearly every weekend, saying that a disciplined lifestyle has helped him perform better in competitions.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ALEX HUANG

15-year-old with a driving ambition

Kart racer Alex Huang is training full time in Britain, to fulfil his dream of being a race car driver

Calvin Yang

He is not old enough to get a driving licence here, but 15-year-old Alex Huang is already chasing his dream of becoming a professional racing car driver.

Unlike his peers in Singapore who are busy thinking about choosing a college, the boy has been training full time in Britain since last August, with his expenses – adding up to a hefty \$500,000 a year – largely covered by his plastic surgeon father Martin Huang.

“I enjoy the feeling of speed and the excitement of competing and winning,” he said. “Now, I’m just trying to improve as much as possible.”

The teenager, who began kart racing at the age of 11, is hoping to follow the likes of many Formula One world champions such as Lewis Hamilton, who kicked off his career by winning karting races.

Eyebrows were raised when Alex left school to pursue his passion.

“My peers thought I was crazy at first, but I think they now understand that it is making me a better driver,” said the former Singapore American School student.

He has competed in about 80 races so far and secured top 10 finishes in nearly 30 of them.

He has also finished on the podium for a number of karting races in Britain and around this region, including winning round one of the X30 Southeast Asia Championship last year.



Besides spending hours on the track, Alex also trains in the gym, where he does mostly high-intensity interval training. He has competed in about 80 races so far and secured top 10 finishes in nearly 30 of them.

Coach Ben Barnicoat, a McLaren GT Factory racing driver who has worked with talent such as last year’s British Formula 3 champion Enaam Ahmed, has been guiding Alex for the past seven months and believes he has “great potential”.

“The British karting scene is renowned for being one of the toughest there is in the world due to the high quality of drivers,” the coach said.

Alex became interested in karting when he was just nine. While on a vacation in Abu Dhabi, he tried it

out at the F1 Yas Marina Circuit and won the kids’ race.

Perceived as a stepping stone to the higher ranks of motor sports, karting teaches basic car control and cornering techniques.

“At first, it was simply a hobby,” said Alex, who found his passion for the sport after a year of racing from age 11. Early last year, his parents decided to find a way for him to pursue racing seriously in Britain.

“There are many more races and racers in the United Kingdom, and the overall skill level is a lot higher,”

said Alex, who has lost count of the trophies he has accumulated at his home, a bungalow in Clementi.

Now, the teenager races nearly every weekend, saying that a disciplined lifestyle has helped him perform better in competitions.

Besides spending hours on the track, Alex trains in the gym, where he does mostly high-intensity interval training. He follows a strict diet and sleeps about nine hours daily.

His parents have ensured that his schooling has not been sacrificed.

The 1.73m-tall teen is studying on-

line at the National University Virtual High School, where a flexible schedule allows him to race and still keep up with his studies.

The family has also engaged a tutor to clarify his doubts and schedule his academic work. The tutor doubles as his personal trainer.

His father, Dr Huang, admitted that they have to be realistic, as it is tough to carve out a career in professional racing. “We wanted to find a solution where he could pursue racing seriously enough that he was given a chance to fulfil his potential, while not compromising on his education so that he would have this to fall back on if necessary,” he said.

Karting is not without danger. Once, another driver tried overtaking late on Alex. Their wheels collided, causing his kart to flip and land upside down. Fortunately, he escaped unscathed.

Dr Huang, however, played down the risks involved, insisting that karting is still a relatively safe sport.

While the plastic surgeon runs a busy practice here, his wife Patricia, 50, has moved to Britain to take care of their only child.

Alex’s training expenses – at least \$500,000 a year – go towards equipment costs, coaching fees, tuition, travel and accommodation, among other things. He owns four karts, each costing at least \$6,000.

Dr Huang said their sacrifices are well worth it, adding that Alex has shown great improvement and is also more mature as he constantly works with adults to hone his craft.

“We want to do our best to help him fulfil his potential, and there is nothing more thrilling than to see him achieve this in a sport,” he added.

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And many more...

Event Details

JUN 30 30th June 2018, Saturday

9.00AM – 5.00PM (Registration starts from 8.30AM)

SPH News Centre Training Room T8.2 / 8.3 1000 Toa Payoh North, Singapore 318994

\$S48 for 1 Ticket
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CK Ee
Co-Founder & CEO,
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