

TimesPORT

PACE SETTERS: Farm Cove rally driver Andrew Keightley and co-driver Jonathan Kane, of Meadowlands, are running hot in their Ford Fiesta S2000 in the Stilo Top Half Rally Series. **▶ Page 23**

Trophies galore for giant

By PJ TAYLOR

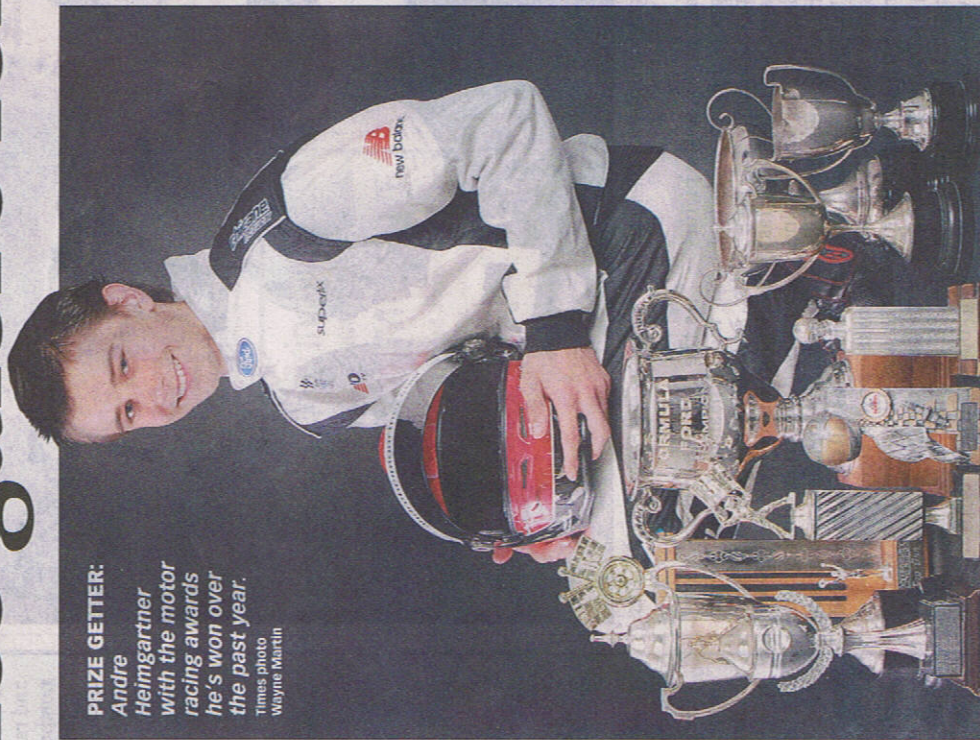
EMERGING teenage motor racing driver Andre Heimgartner has finished the 2009/10 season with a large collection of trophies, including the South Island Formula Ford Championship.

The impressive 14-year-old Heimgartner, known around the traps as "Andre the Giant", won the overall South Island championship along with the series' class one title, while also claiming a selection of other awards.

At the end of the last round of the championship series at Timaru's Ruapuna circuit, Heimgartner was presented with the rookie of the year prize, the most improved driver award and the top gun award. He also scooped the King of Ruapuna title.

Capping off a magnificent season for his family, dad Mark Heimgartner, who has been a high-rating motor sport driver in his time, won the South Island series' Sportsman of the Year award for his efforts in supporting his son's racing career, which has included constant travel and organisation in getting from their Dannemora base to each round of the southern competition. The successful finish to the South Island champs followed on from Andre Heimgartner's victory in last year's national Formula Ford Winter Series at his first attempt.

He also placed sixth in this year's New Zealand Formula Ford Championship in his rookie year, despite missing that series' final round because it was held on the same weekend as the penultimate round



PRIZE GETTER: Andre Heimgartner with the motor racing awards he's won over the past year.
Times photo
Wayne Martin

with his career results to date, and has learnt plenty over the past summer and year of racing.

"I have come out of it a better driver," he says. "I am keen to progress further."

"Heartfelt thanks to my sponsors New Balance, Harmony Homes and Superlux Lighting and the Motor-sport Solutions crew. I have two championships in the bag now and bigger challenges are ahead for me in New Zealand next season."

Heimgartner took the lead in the South Island championship after the second round of the six-round series. He was still leading after round four early in the new year, before a long wait delayed the competition. After some date changes, the weekend of the second-to-last round of the South Island champs clashed with the final round of the national Formula Ford champs.

The Heimgartners decided to contest the South Island round at Teretonga Park, Invercargill, in an attempt to add another championship title to his quickly expanding racing CV.

Despite fluctuating weather conditions at Teretonga, Heimgartner was the fastest performing Formula Ford driver on a circuit he admits he really enjoys.

In the second race, his winning margin ahead of the field was an amazing 27 seconds, as he demonstrated his prowess in the rain.

Heading to the final round at Ruapuna, Heimgartner only needed to finish one of the three races.

He claimed the South Island title by winning the first race convincingly by five seconds.

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SPORTS BITES

Cross country champions

TORRENTIAL rain did little to dampen the spirits of hardcore secondary schools cross country competitors in the Auckland championships at Saint Kentigern College.

Pakuranga College athlete David Lee is a seasoned distance runner and took first place in the junior under-14 boys over the undulated 4km course. Lee beat Jonty Morreau of Auckland Grammar, and Max Kelly of Westlake Boys High.

Senior under-19 girl Brigitte Hicks also ran 4km and brought home a bronze medal for St Kent's, finishing 22 seconds behind the winner Ella Mangan-Walker of Epsom Girls. Georgie Grgec from Diocesan School finished second.

In the teams events local schools fared well. In the junior boys three-man team event, St Kent's were second ahead of Macleans College, who were third and also placed second in the six-man team race. Howick College's junior boys finished third out of the six-man teams.

Roll out the barrow

PANMURE'S annual King of the Mountain race and social run and walk to the top of Mt Wellington and back is on Sunday June 27.

"This event has a long history and the wheelbarrow race was New Zealand's first extreme event in 1958," says Panmure town centre manager Chris Sutton.

This year's event features a team wheelbarrow challenge, a 5km and 10km walk and run, and for the first time, a children's mini marathon of 2.6km.

For more information, visit www.kingofthemountain.co.nz.