

# Speed Racer

**Macy Causey is one of many youngsters to get behind the wheel.**



BY ALEXIS BURLING

**V**roooooom! The tires on her black-and-pink racecar squealed, as Macy Causey pushed the gas pedal to the floor. On her first test-drive at Concord Speedway's quarter-mile track in Concord, North Carolina, the dial on her car's speedometer rocketed toward 60 miles per hour in three seconds flat. She flew down the straightaway. But the second grader from Seaford, Virginia, was just getting started.

Ever since her parents gave her a used, \$3,000 Bandolero racecar for her birthday, Macy has spent most of the time she's not in school either on the racetrack or working on the car.

And Macy's not alone. In 2008, more than 550 youngsters in 17 states and Canada got behind the wheel. They competed against each other in Bandolero races, a pre-NASCAR racing series for entry-level cars. Participants don't have to pass any safety tests or meet any height requirements. But they do need to be at least 8 years old—and possess a fearless desire to zoom around dirt tracks at death-defying speeds.

Sounds like fun. But is it safe?

"We are proud of our safety record," says Darrel Krentz, executive director of INEX, the company that sponsors the series. The drivers wear the same safety device that NASCAR uses for its adult drivers. Called the HANS device, this head and neck support has prevented many injuries over the past few years.

Safety isn't the only issue for young racers and their families. It can be expensive—even in the minor leagues. Mechanic bills are pricey. And the cars require haulers, vehicles the size of trailers, that demand a lot of gas and constant upkeep. The Causeys' includes a flat-screen satellite television, a kitchen, and a bathroom with an enclosed shower. It cost them \$300,000.

But for Macy and her family, the thrill of racing and the challenge of winning outweigh the financial sacrifices and potential safety risks. By the end of her first official racing weekend, Macy finished 6th out of 13 cars.

"We're so proud!" her dad said. So was Macy. Her next stop? Crossing the finish line first. ■

## Word Power

desire    device    injuries    potential  
sponsors    vehicles

Find the six words above. Using all six, write a letter to a friend explaining why you would or wouldn't want to race cars.

# No-Sweat BUBBLE TEST

Read the story on page 30. Then fill in the circle next to the best answer for each question below. Next time you take a real bubble test, you'll be a pro!

**1.** What is the main idea of this article?

- A.** Bandolero racing is fun.
- B.** NASCAR is looking for younger racers.
- C.** Some kids enjoy Bandolero racing, but it has risks.
- D.** Racecar driving is too expensive.

**2.** According to the article, what requirement must kids meet in order to participate in races?

- A.** They must have a driver's license.
- B.** They must be at least 8 years old.
- C.** They must reach a minimum height.
- D.** They must pass a safety test.

**3.** Which of the following is a fact?

- A.** Macy's favorite color is black.
- B.** More than 550 kids participated in Bandolero racing in 2008.
- C.** Macy's car can reach 60 miles per hour in 3 seconds.
- D.** both B and C

**4.** What does the phrase "death-defying" in the third paragraph mean?

- A.** dangerous
- B.** difficult
- C.** slow
- D.** uneven

**5.** According to the article, what special equipment do the Bandolero racers wear to stay safe?

- A.** special jumpsuits
- B.** extra-strong seatbelts
- C.** driving gloves
- D.** head and neck support devices

**6.** Why did the author write this article?

- A.** to convince kids to race Bandoleros
- B.** to list safety concerns about car racing
- C.** to describe a new activity kids are trying
- D.** to tell about the costs of Bandolero racing.

## Critical Thinking

Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

Explain your answers using information and details from the article and your own ideas.

- 1.** Why might Macy and other kids like her enjoy Bandolero racing?
- 2.** What are some of the challenges or concerns about the sport?