

Deaf racer selected as top 50 for NASCAR reality show

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With a strong fan base of over 75 million, NASCAR is one of the most popular sports in the world. But how about a deaf NASCAR driver? As far as anyone knows, there has been no deaf driver with any chances of competing on a NASCAR circuit. This year may be the first time.

A reality show is in the works, called *Racin' for a Livin'*. It may be picked up by a national television channel. Greg Gunderson, profoundly deaf all of his life, was selected as one of the top 50 stock racing drivers out of thousands of applications that poured in. *Racin' for a Livin'*, a hour-long weekly show, is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to receive seven fully sponsored rides in a NASCAR Busch Series car

in the 2007 season. The series will kick off with direct Internet voting, beginning on March 28, to select the 12 NASCAR rookies. The voting will conclude on July 31.

"I am truly ecstatic about the opportunity to earn my rights to drive in the NASCAR Busch Series in the 2007 season!" said Gunderson.

If Gunderson is selected as one of the top favorites on the Internet voting, he will compete against 11 other rookies both on and off tracks across the country scheduled in the early fall. Judges will consist of top broadcasters, drivers and crew chiefs when the driving competition begins. One driver will be eliminated in each episode.

The off-track poise of the rookies will also be tested with a variety of interesting encoun-



Greg Gunderson has been racing since he was 17, and a new reality TV series may soon help him reach the NASCAR circuit.

ters with top celebrities, racing legends, and current NASCAR

drivers. Judging will be based on driving ability, public appearance, and personality. The viewers and Internet voters will play a key role in deciding who stays and goes. The winner will be presented in a two-hour special finale.

Racing is in Gunderson's blood. He comes from the famous Dirkson racing family in South Dakota. His grandfather, Dewey Dirkson, was a well-known racecar owner/mechanic from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. Gunderson's father also drag raced in the 1960s and 1970s. However, Gunderson was not encouraged to race because his family was concerned about his deafness. But he proved them wrong, driving in an Enduro car race when he was 17 years old. In the summer of 1988, he jumped to Sprint car racing where he en-

joyed a successful 10-year racing career in an extremely fast lane going 120 miles per hour on half-mile tracks. The number 39 on his purple racing car is the number and color inherited from his grandfather.

"Representing the deaf and hard of hearing community is what I intend to do during the TV series," said Gunderson. "It's a good opportunity to teach the public and parents of deaf children that deaf people can do anything but hear."

Gunderson has his own web site at www.gundersonracing.com. Sign up for the E-News to keep posted of the progress toward his ultimate goal of becoming the first deaf NASCAR driver.

Visit www.racinforalivin.com for more information on the reality show.