

## Kyle Soper Continues Family Racing

*Racing has always been a family sport in the Soper household.*

Kristin Rynd  
Publication Assistant

**M**anorville born and raised Kyle Soper's first go-kart race was just a little over a month after he got the kart from his dad, and just a week before he turned 8 years old. After that, the rest is history. Kyle raced nationally, going as far south as North Carolina and as far west as Indiana, winning a national championship his first year.

When he turned 13 they bought his first Legend car and he promptly started racing at Riverhead Raceway. On race weekends, he will get up early to get his car out of the garage, clean it and then load it onto the trailer. After that he finds Tom to discuss the days' race and make any assessments on how to adjust the car so that it is faster on whatever track he will be racing on that day. Kyle isn't the first in his family to take up racing, though. His grandfather, Richard Baulch also raced at Riverhead Raceway in the '60s, and Tom himself raced during the late '90s to 2002 in the Charger division. Having experience on the track has allowed Tom to guide Kyle through whatever the race might hand to Kyle while he's out there. Tom is proud to be able to stand by his son's side and support him



Kyle Soper, 17, poses with his 34 Chevy Coupe, which races in the Legends Class.

Photo courtesy of Tom Soper & Family

during races, but the race is all up to Kyle. "He is himself out there, and I will say he is better than I ever was."

Tom takes the role of Crew Chief; he does the setup on the car for all of the races.

Tom's wife Janet is also at the track every week videotaping the races while Kyle's sister Kaylee cheers him on and Tom pounds on the fence cheering with her.

"Sometimes the adrenaline rush is so strong that I think my heart is going to pound out of my chest." Kyle's Uncle Richie also helps out at the track.

None of the cars, equipment or gear comes cheap, however. Family friend Glenn Maningo does a lot of reaching out in order to find local sponsors that make it possible for Kyle to keep racing. Tom said that "without his help I don't know if we could race as much as we do."

With a career as promising as this, Kyle hopes to keep moving up the ladder in racing, but post-graduation dreams might put that on a slight hold. He has hopes of joining the Army as Military Police, and then someday becoming a policeman; but for now, he wants to keep speeding around the track carrying on a family tradition.

### IN BRIEF

#### Sopers' Have Unique Bond in Racing

Nowadays, it's rare that families have the opportunity to find activities and hobbies to do together. The Soper family has always enjoyed watching stock car racing together, and when Kyle got his first go-kart, they snatched the chance to turn this into some real family time. Kyle's sister Kaylee also used to race go-karts for a little while. This was all kept as a family sport, and they would work on the karts all week just to take them racing on weekends. Now, Kyle will get up early to get his car out, clean it, load it on the trailer and then discuss the upcoming race with his father. Kyle also has friends that he shares these races with, and they all have a great time off of the track, but when it's time to race, it's all business.



Photo courtesy of Tom Soper & Family