

§ 1. Minutes before the start of a British Grand Prix in August, the drivers' faces are grave with concentration. Fans are screaming. Squeezed into his driving seat, Nelson Jones is pulling on a pair of tight black gloves. No question where he's expecting to finish: "First," he says. At the start signal, with a burst of engine noise, the drivers move quickly to the first turn.

§ 2. It all sounds a lot like a Formula One car race, but there's a difference — Nelson is thirteen years old, and he's racing in a go-kart. What could be seen as child's play is in fact the first step for young talent to move into professional race cars, because it introduces them to the essential basics such as finding the racing line, concentration and how to compete on the track. That track record makes karting a must for youngsters keen to make racing their life's ambition.

§ 3. Nelson Jones has actually been racing since he was eight years old. "When my son Nelson showed us how gifted he was with racing, even at an incredibly young age, I knew we had to do something," Nelson's father says. "Racing can be really dangerous and it gets expensive, but when I had the opportunity to buy him his first official kart, I rushed to do it."

§ 4. After taking part in three or four local races in Britain, in which he won first place, Nelson decided that he would go for it and have a crack at his first international Grand Prix in Germany, which he won as well. Nelson now travels all over Britain and Europe to take part in races. The interest he showed in racing was not via the usual exposure to video games. "We lived near a small karting racetrack and I became **fascinated** — I couldn't stop talking about it. One day, as we were driving past, I made my father stop the car so I could have a better look at the karts flying by. I saw so many people, including kids my own age, and I took a liking to it straight away."

§ 5. Nelson eventually got his chance to try it out. The family hired an instructor for amateurs to teach Nelson, who took him as far as the age of twelve. The instructor then informed Nelson's father it was time to look for someone more qualified. Perhaps it is Nelson's good **fortune** in having always been expertly advised that has made him so relaxed about facing the pressures of an international racing circuit. But what is it like to be so young with a schedule fully booked with races, and all eyes watching him, expecting victory after victory? It's good for me, as I know what I need to be doing. The public's expectations help me focus and concentrate so I can race at my highest level."

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According to the text, karting is important for future Formula One drivers because

- 1) it helps them decide whether racing is really their life's ambition.
- 2) it teaches them some of the skills they need to race professionally.
- 3) it shows if young drivers have enough talent to become professionals.