



Photos by John Larsen

Matt in his Honda Civic as he prepares to go on the track at Daytona.

Life in the fast lane

Local racer Matt Pritiko starts the season on the right track

by Russ Bond

When Daytona comes to life in late January, you know that the new racing season is here that is something London, Ontario's Matt Pritiko looks forward to each year.

"Well there goes another off season in the books!" Pritiko said. "The time has finally come to head to Daytona for the first round of the Koni Challenge Series. I can't wait to step in the Compass 360 Racing Honda Civic for the first time and break it in on the high banks of Daytona International Speedway."

Pritiko was in high spirits heading into the Daytona opener, but was on an even higher cloud by the time he left.

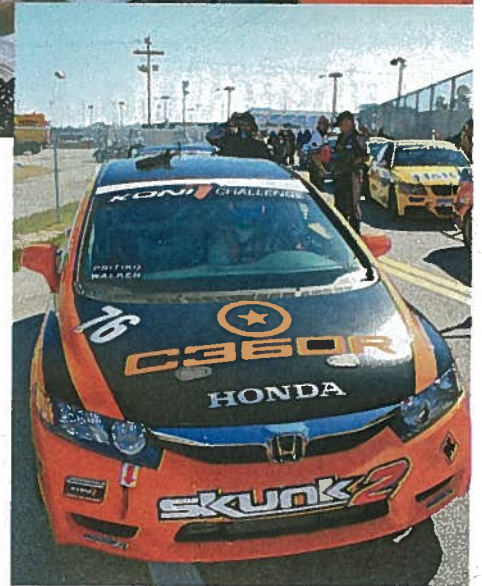
"To be on the podium in the first event helps us build momentum for the rest of the year," Pritiko said of his first ever podium finish in the Koni Challenge Series.

Realistically, seeing Pritiko on the podium wouldn't come as a surprise. The 20-year-old has made a habit of excelling in every division he has been in. It started back in go-karting, with his first title being the World

Karting Association Winter Nationals title in the 80cc junior division. Pritiko followed that up with an Ontario Grand Nationals Championship in Intercontinental C and multiple regional level victories and podiums throughout his karting career.

Pritiko was helped in his car career when he was chosen by Ron Fellows to be part of the Sunoco Team Ultra 94 and competed in the Bridgestone/Firestone F2000 series. Pritiko performed very well claiming second overall in the series title chase and garnering a podium finish in 11 out of 12 events. With his strong driving talents, he also performed well off the track and for his efforts received the David Preston Sportsmanship Award.

2006 saw Pritiko enter his first Grand-Am Cup event at Virginia International Raceway. Competing in a six hour endurance race, Pritiko worked with fellow drivers, competitors and team engineers flawlessly. Taking in as much information as possible, Pritiko showed the speed and gained the



Matt on the starting grid for the first race of the 2009 season.

necessary experience to take a shot for future titles.

More important than on track results is Pritiko's off track presence; Pritiko is prototypical of the new breed of racer, a person as comfortable dealing with people as he is driving at the limit. His charisma, personality and appeal are second to none and they attract the exposure needed to provide supporting companies the benefits they deserve. In 2009, He will be extremely busy by focusing his attention on the NASCAR Canadian Tire Series.