

Strong winds powering Manawatū Blokart Club

Manawatū reporter

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World champion Scott McIntosh will be on the tarmac this Saturday when Manawatū Blokart Club hosts the Manawatū Open.

WARWICK SMITH / STUFF

When Manawatū Blokart Club hosts its open tournament on Saturday it will do so not only as the sport's largest club in New Zealand, but the biggest in the world.

From humble beginnings in 2008 the club now boasts more than 100 members, and there's room for further wind-wrangers at its Sanson Domain base.

The Manawatū Open will be held over February 3 and 4, and will act as valuable preparation for four members bound for the world championships in California in April, including Scott McIntosh who will defend his world title in the lights division.

Blokarting is the racing of a light weight, three-wheeled trolley, powered by wind in a sail, reaching speeds of 50 to 60 kilometres per hour.

Club president John Anderson said "there isn't a better thrill".

The Manawatū group hosted the world championships in 2022, attracting 148 international sailors.

It will also host the New Zealand Open later this year.

The lease of the domain land from Manawatū District Council since 2011 has been key to the club's growth and the development of surrounding amenities.

The club fundraised to pave the track, created a parking area and most recently built a covered shed for shelter.

The council, meanwhile, developed a walking track around the perimeter, a designated freedom camping location and public toilets.

Its community assets liaison James Adamson said the relationship had been instrumental in developing and maintaining a highly exposed location in the district.

"It's amazing to drive by on a Saturday morning to see the colourful sails of the blokarts flying around the track knowing that the club is helping us, and the Manawatū District Council is giving the club a place to call home."

The club has races on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, both very wind and weather dependent.

Members of the public are welcome to book a time to give the sport a try, with kart and safety equipment available to hire.

The action at the Manawatū Open is expected to get under way from about 9am on Saturday.

- Manawatu Standard

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