

IN THE BLOOD

Racing is all in the family for the McClymonts, a three-generation clan of Baypark Speedway legends.

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If Shakespeare was correct when he wrote “music be the food of love”, then the soundtrack to Brent and Hayley McClymont’s romance was playing long before they met. Instead of chords and harmonies, however, the backing track to their lives consisted of revving engines and the roar of a crowd as they travelled the speedway tracks of the North Island with their fathers.

Hayley and twin sister, Kylie, grew up around motorsport with their dad, Brian Audas, racing at Mystery Creek in Hamilton. A hundred kilometres away in Tauranga, Brent and his brother, John’s dad Dave, were also racing, and had helped build the old Baypark racetrack, behind what is now a trucking yard across the road from the current venue. Christine, the matriarch of the McClymont clan, has been involved with Baypark Speedway for many years, serving in a variety of roles including treasurer and secretary.

With both senior members of the family holding honorary lifetime club memberships, and their lengthy involvement in racing, it’s unsurprising that Brent and John followed in dad’s tyre tracks and took up the sport themselves. There was even a time when all three McClymont men were competing weekly against each other on the track.

Hayley, Emma, Brent and Luke McClymont at Baypark Speedway.



ABOVE: Dave McClymont supervising at Waikaraka Park Speedway.

RIGHT: Brent's final season of racing saloons before retiring to support Luke. The Grand Parade at Blenheim Speedway 2015.



ABOVE: Luke, winner of the Regional Competitor of the Year Award in July this year, holding the cup with his dad, Brent.



ABOVE: Dave and Christine.



ABOVE: Brent McClymont at Baypark Speedway 2010, proudly carrying the 1NZ on the car – showing the form that helped him retain a New Zealand number of his car for seven consecutive years.

RIGHT: Hayley wishes Luke good luck before a race.



Keeping things in familia, more than 20 years ago Hayley married Brent, and Kylie married John. Both couples had children – Luke and Emma, and Jack and Josh, respectively – and the third generation of McClymonts became involved with speedway, either behind the wheel or in the pits.

Call it fate, karma or kismet, but Luke even made his earthly debut the opening night of speedway 20 years ago.

“It was also Brent’s birthday,” laughs Hayley. “Brent didn’t want to miss any racing, so he stood outside the hospital while I was in labour, doing a rain dance in the hopes it would be postponed – the speedway, that is, not Luke!”

While still only a few days old, Luke and Emma could be found at the racetrack, and grew up around the sport, playing in prams and sleeping on chairs. The speedway community was like family, and all the competitor’s children would have a collective eye cast their way to ensure they were safe and staying out of trouble.

Although Brent hung up his helmet at the end of the 2014/15 season after 25 years of racing, he did so with an impressive array of trophies to his name. He’s a two-time NZ champion and has the distinction

of being the only competitor to have placed in the top three on the podium for seven consecutive national titles since the recognition of the saloon class of cars.

The decision to pass the racing baton to his son came after Luke was rushed to hospital following a crash one night, with Brent unable to accompany him due to already being strapped into his own car and sitting in the line-up. He knew he could no longer fully support Luke and maintain his own racing career.

“I had another go last year when Luke was sick with COVID-19,” Brent explains. “Now, though, it’s watching the kids coming through the ranks that I get a buzz from.”

Luke says racing is in his blood and that he’ll never get rid of it, nor would he want to.

“Dad raced on the first ever opening night of speedway at Baypark, and there’s definitely a legacy there,” says the winner of the Regional Competitor of the Year Award 2023. “It’s something I’ll definitely want my kids to do, too.”

Unable to officially race at Baypark before the age of 12, Luke and Emma, along with cousins Jack and Josh, started out in motocross. When old enough, the three boys moved into racing mini-stocks, with Josh and Luke now competing against each other

in the six-shooter category. Even Emma’s boyfriend, who used to race, has been brought into the fold as part of the McClymont pit crew.

Apart from a handful of “mums’ races” during fun days held at Waharoa Speedway (that turned quite competitive when sister Kylie joined in), Hayley is happy off the track, behind the scenes and in the pits. When they began dating 30 years ago, Hayley knew what she was getting into and jumped in boots and all. After race-day, she could be found polishing the car’s aluminium panels and cleaning Brent’s helmet. She acknowledges that although it’s the drivers who get the accolades, Brent and Luke know the work their crews do behind the scenes is what enables them to get out there and do what they do best. Competing is a full McClymont team effort.

“The crew make sure the gear is cleaned, memberships completed, accommodations booked when travelling for competitions, and entry forms filled out,” Hayley explains. “Brent and Luke always get up and thank everyone behind the scenes when they win, and that means a lot.”

The family credits their sponsors, particularly the ongoing, long-term support of local business McLeod Cranes, with their ability to keep racing.

“McLeod’s have always been on the side of our cars – Brent and John’s saloons, all the boys mini-stocks, and now Luke and Josh in the six-shooter class,” explains Hayley. It’s no surprise to learn there’s even a family connection there. “Brent’s mum is godmother to one of the boys who now run the business!”

With Luke firmly buckled into the driver’s seat and eyes focused forward (at the time of print Luke received sponsorship from Seamount Racing, taking him into the Midget class), dreams of racing sprintcars are on the horizon. However, his biggest obstacle in getting this out the gate isn’t the competition, but the financial outlay it requires.

“The only way that it could happen is if someone else owns the sprintcar package, Luke races it and we help maintain it,” says Hayley. “That’s the dream scenario, anyway – or to win Lotto!”

If the family’s record of wins is anything to go by, the odds are most likely in their favour. And with two competitors still in the game, we’ll no doubt be hearing the name McClymont announced for the victory lap over loudspeakers at Baypark for quite some time to come. **1**

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