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News

WMU graduate gets the chance of a lifetime

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July 26, 2006

A former Western Michigan University student could compete in the new reality race car show "Racin' for a Livin'" and ultimately have a shot to race with a NASCAR Busch Team.

Marc Miller of Holland, Mich. has found the opportunity to boost his racing career after being a part of the show.

The JVI Productions reality show will allow viewers to look at racing through the eyes of the driver while portraying how intense race car driving can be, according to the Racin' for a Livin' Web site.

"No one sees what goes behind the scenes so much," Miller said. "The driving is about 10 percent of the job and then there's all the interaction with other people — the fans, the crew, the engineers and sponsors."

Miller holds a spot as one of 21 wildcards, and in addition to the wildcard division, 50 more drivers are included in the rookie division. He is one of only five Michigan drivers selected from more than 3,400 nationwide to be part of this competition.

The drivers will be narrowed down to 15 rookies and 5 wildcards through a voting process on the show's Web site.

Race car veterans will train the remaining 20 drivers, while the drivers compete against each other for the actual filming of the show, according to a Promote Michigan press release.

The race car veterans eliminate 20 drivers to the final two drivers. Elimination is based on lap times, scoring by a NASCAR veteran judging panel, and the drivers' appearance and attitude aside from the track, especially dealing with fans, according to the PM press release.

Fans will cast votes in a live two-hour special after the final two drivers are decided, and after the winner is selected, the driver will have seven races to prove his or her talent. The overall winner will have a shot to race with a NASCAR Busch Team.

"If you have that type of opportunity and you're able to experience something a little bit different than what you're used to, [it] may help you down the road. That's going to be a good experience, regardless

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of whether you win or not," Miller said.

Miller's passion for racing began when he was 11-years-old and continued during his time at WMU.

He chose to get a degree in communications and marketing to help develop his future career as a race car driver and professional driving instructor, according to the PM press release.

His dream is not necessarily to be in NASCAR, but to be able to make racing a full-time career. He feels this competition is about more than the rush of speed or the roaring engines. To Miller, the important thing is the people he meets and the contacts he makes, he said.

Miller has all the assets that the show is looking for in a candidate, such as marketing skills, community service and public interaction, said his publicist, Dianna Stampfler, of Promote Michigan.

"He's just this local guy that loves racing and he's got such a passion for it. He really wants to be able to do that as a career and himself and sport with other people," Stampfler said.

Miller is not the only one from the West Michigan area. Local police officer and firefighter Dan Frazier of the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety is positioned in the rookie division.

Frazier feels a big responsibility in representing Michigan, but it is looking forward to seeing how well he can do in the race.

"There's thousands of us drivers out there that are probably qualified enough to race with the upper levels, but there's just not enough spots in the upper level," Frazier said.

If the opportunity is there, it is worth taking it, he said.

"[It's] the chance to compete against some of the best people in the country," Frazier said.

Viewers will be able to see the racers' personalities and their individual desires, Miller said.

"They'll [viewers] be able to identify with that person. Not just a group of race car drivers, but that one person that is dedicated at trying to accomplish something, and from that they are going to become a race fan," Miller said.

Miller drives for the Carhartt Racing Team as No. 8 and Frazier drives for the Frazier Racing Team as No. 96.

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