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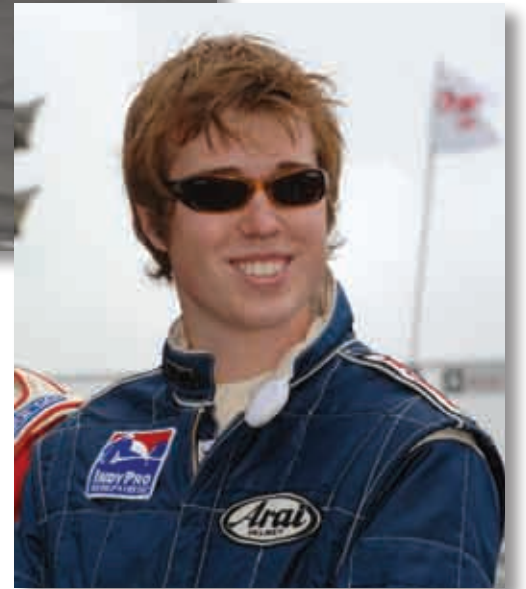


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CR Crews racing his
Indy car
photo provided by Rik Crews



Crews Control

By Steve Hunt

OPEN-WHEEL RACING'S next big thing could be Frisco's own Charles Richard (CR) Crews III. He drives an Indy car, which has no fenders and is more aerodynamic than the stock cars used in NASCAR. The sport's showcase event is the Indianapolis 500, which annually attracts more than 400,000 people during Memorial Day weekend.

CR, 18, attended Staley Middle School before attendance became an issue because of his full schedule. "I was gone over a hundred days a year because of my racing," CR said. He then attended Spring Creek Academy in Plano, where one of his classmates was U.S. Olympic Gold Medal-winning gymnast Carly Patterson.

He enrolled at Ole Miss this fall and had a dorm room and class schedule, but decided not to attend at the last minute to focus on racing. "I knew that I would miss so much school," CR said. "I will see how next year goes and make a decision after that. Racing is the focus right now. I'm going to see where it takes me."

Should CR attend college, he will likely not study engineering like current NASCAR star Ryan Newman, who has a degree from Purdue. "I have thought about that," he said. "I had a sponsor

in 2004 who was an attorney from Dallas. That was my plan in school, to get a law degree. Engineering does interest me but if it didn't happen in racing, I could make pretty good money in engineering, but a lawyer has a lot more options."

When he was seven years old, CR started racing. "I went to karts, won two state championships and four national championships," he said. "We got into cars and have gone up the ranks. It's been a lifestyle for me. I love the thrill and have had some great experiences."

He credits a strong family presence, which includes father, Rik, and his grandfather for providing the support necessary to be so successful. "It's been amazing," CR said. "Between my dad and my grandfather, it's been amazing what they've done. My dad got me started and works pretty much full-time helping me do this. My grandfather comes to as many races as he can and they're there for me, helping me make deals and doing whatever they can to help me along."

Last June, CR made his debut in the Infiniti Pro Series (IPS), a feeder for the Indy Racing League. His first race was at Watkins Glen, a historic road course in upstate New York and he finished ninth. "It was good," CR recalled. "I was the youngest starter ever (in the IPS),

which added to the thrill of it. I wasn't super nervous. We had a top-10 finish in our first race, which was our goal."

One thing he is looking forward to is running the Indy 500, one of the most high-profile races in the world, in the near future. "I like that I have some good luck going for me there (in Indianapolis)," he stated. "Running a 500 is something that I want to do really soon. I know that I'll be there at some point. It could be next year or the year after. I'm looking forward to it because it is one of the most exciting races in the world."

In the future, it could be Frisco's own CR Crews drinking milk in Victory Lane after winning the Indy 500. If he does win there, he would become only the third Texan ever to do so, joining the legendary A.J. Foyt, who has won the race four times, and Johnny Rutherford, who was victorious in 1980. That's some fast company.

Steve Hunt is a freelance writer living in Frisco.