

He's motorcycle Millson

Hamilton racer has great passion for the two-wheelers



Tim MILLER

He has raced karts and Legends oval track cars, but Ross Millson is happiest riding his Suzuki GSX-R1000 in the Parts Canada Superbike Championship, the highest level of motorcycle road racing in the country.

"There's something about riding a motorcycle that I believe makes you closer to the racing," the 26-year-old Hamilton resident said earlier this week.

"A rider has more input to how the bike performs," he added as he continued to explain the differences between two- and four-wheel competition. "The rider is a bigger piece of the puzzle when it comes to winning."

Millson has been riding at a professional level since 2005 and is entering his second year in the class. In 2007, he and team rider Paul Glenn competed in the U.S.-based SunTrust Moto-ST Endurance Series as well as the Canadian Superbike events.

For 2008, Millson is competing as a solo entry in the Pro Superbike class, and a private entry, something that is not easy to do against the factory-backed and well-sponsored teams in the class.

"There's nine or 10 pro riders on the circuit," Millson said. "The rest of us have experience and time. It's tough to maintain the effort at this level on your own dime. I'm relying on the help of friends, family and sponsors."

Millson will take part in seven feature races during five events.

This weekend, the tour will be at Mosport for the Parts Canada Superbike Doubleheader Weekend. The other events are at the Ontario tracks of Shannonville and Calabogie, but there's the trips to Calgary and Nova Scotia, which aren't cheap.

"To do it properly and be competitive at this level, you need about \$50,000," said Millson. "I'll spend a least \$15,000 on tires alone this year."

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**ROSS MILLSON,
MOTORCYCLE RACER**

A 1,000-cc Suzuki similar to the one he rides will cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000. With some engine tweaks and high (110 or 114) octane fuel, Millson will have about 185 horsepower at his disposal, which will propel him and the 365-pound motorcycle to speeds of up to 185 mph at tracks such as Daytona. He said he expects to hit at least 150 mph racing at Mosport.

His riding suit is comprised of kangaroo hides, which offer more durability and are stronger than cow hide. His suit also contains armour in several sections, such as the shoulders, elbows and back, to protect him, as well as special boots that contain carbon fibre plates.

To help pay for his passion,

Millson works as a shop foreman at a Burlington auto dealership, and has secured sponsorship from Summit Gearworks, Inifinet Designs, Heroic Racing Apparel and Essential Image. Going into rounds three and four of the series, Millson sits eighth in the 31-entry field.

He likes to give back to the sport. He has been mentoring 14-year-old Steven Nickerson, helping the young Hamilton rider hone his skills in 125-cc competition.

Millson is in the middle of the pack, age-wise, and, although he has broken some bones and suffered a few scrapes, he wants to continue racing as long as possible.

"There will be certain days after a race when I wake up and I feel things I didn't a year ago," he admitted. "I'd like to do this until I'm 50, but seriously I'll probably realize one day that it will be just time to stop."

"But, right now, I never think of that. Once I'm on that grid, I still have the desire. It's great when the bike's working great. It's a unique feeling and there's nothing better than that."

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Weekend winners ... James Gray of Brampton added to his points lead as he captured the Lucas Oil Can-Am Midget feature at Flamboro Speedway last Saturday ... With the cancellation of the IHRA Nationals at Cayuga Dragway this year, the closest major event in the series is at Grand Bend this weekend ... The World of Outlaws Sprint Cars return soon to Ohsweken Speedway for two shows, running full events July 22 and July 23.

Tim Miller
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