

WHARTON GRADUATES ON TRACK IN VEGAS

KTM-BACKED TYLER WHARTON of Pilot Point, Texas, achieved a different victory during the 2007 NMA World Mini Grand Prix in Las Vegas when he was presented with his high school diploma through a unique independent study program known as On Track.

The program, created by Andrea Leib – wife of Rocket Exhaust owner Don Leib – who has a Master's Degree in education, is tailored to suit the needs of students who are pursuing professional sports careers, such as motocross.

"Since these kids are like olympic champions, and they can't go to school, retain and then go back, I figured that if I was going to do this with my son [amateur racer Michael Leib] – which I didn't want to do, which is funny – then I was going to make this work for everyone," Leib said.

The On Track program, which extends from Kindergarten through 12th grade, is different in that it is nationally accredited and students receive a real high school diploma rather than a G.E.D.

"We do use a nationally accredited curriculum, complete with transcripts, because when students want to go on to college, they need transcripts to show their progress," Leib said. "Tyler had to pass five major tests in order to complete the program. I know that he is prepared, he has a Plan B, and that is a good feeling. You know that for 96 percent of these kids, Plan B is really going to be Plan A. You need your education, and I just love the fact that I can help these kids accomplish that."

Wharton, who now has a high school diploma at just 16, said he feels like a tremendous burden has been lifted off his shoulders.

"I was behind in school when I first got started on it, Wharton said. "When you're struggling in school, and then turn it around, just gives you extra confidence. It's a lot less stress off my family, knowing that my education is handled. I'm very happy about it, and I think that racers should focus on this program so that they can get done with school as soon as possible and then focus on what they need to do [with racing]."

For more information on the On Track program, check out www.stayontrack.net on the Internet.

Thanks to On Track, Tyler Wharton (center) accompanied by his mother (right), received his high school diploma at the World Mini Grand Prix. The program is headed by Andrea Leib (left).

