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LOCAL

Women race for hope

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Race car drivers don't usually walk around the pits carrying big pillows.

But when the car you're driving is rigged for a guy many inches taller than you, a pillow is a necessity. Waiting for the drivers' meeting to start at the Mission Bay ice track, Lynda Moore clutched one of two pillows she needed just to reach the gas pedal and see over the dash board.

"I felt like I was in a La-Z-Boy to reach," the petite woman said about the practice run she'd just taken, along with six other female drivers.

The seven women climbed into ice racing cars to have a bit of fun and to raise a bit of money so cancer patients can get a lift to medical appointments.

Spinning out on the slick ice and pushing competitors into snowbanks were just side benefits of the event.

Called Racing for Hope, the five-lap event brought in \$5,700 for the Canadian Cancer Society's transportation program. Locally, the society spends \$16,000 each year to have volunteers drive cancer patients to treatment and to provide financial help to those who need to leave the community for care.

Kathryn Kempton, another of the seven rookie racers to hit the ice Sunday, knows all about the service.

Every week, a volunteer not only drives her mother-in-law to the cancer centre, but the volunteer sits with the older woman as well because she's blind, Kempton said.

A sales manager at a car dealership, Kempton was approached about driving in Sunday's event.

Just the practice laps left her heart racing after she was sideswiped and spun by Dee Jaroway, a Rock 94 FM radio host and the eventual race winner.

In second place until the end of the last lap, Jaroway gunned it on the final stretch and deliberately put front-runner Moore into a snowbank before speeding over the finish line to win, Dana Levanto, cancer society fundraising co-ordinator, later recounted.

"Had it been a normal race, she would have been black-flagged for that," said Levanto.

Instead, everyone found it entertaining, Levanto said, adding she figured spectators had assumed women's racing would be tame.



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