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Bus drivers must meet the following requirements: be at least 21, possess a Class B drivers license with a passenger endorsement, pass the state required physical, have a current criminal and driving records check for the past five years, have no convictions for a DUI in the last five years, pass a TB and drug/alcohol test, and pass the state mandated curriculum and road test. State approved training is provided by the school system.

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For more information contact Phil Coldiron at the Nicholas County Board of Education at 289-3770 between the hours of 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

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Stone represents women well in demolition derby

If you think participating in a demolition derby and crashing your car into other competitors is strictly a man's activity, well, think again.

Nicholas County's own "Demolition Derby Queen," is Rhonda Stone, who turned 33 on Saturday.

Stone destroyed most of her competitors in the small car class during the demolition derby earlier this month to the delight of a crowd of approximately 750 during the Nicholas County Fair.

It was Stone's first demolition derby.

She promises it will not be her last.

Stone did not win the competition and a powerful collision stalled her Chevrolet, which would not restart. She was thus eliminated after a 30-second delay, but still took the second place trophy after an exhilarating and destructive run.

"I want all women to know they can do whatever they set their mind too," said an elated Stone of her accomplishment.

"Don't ever let anyone tell you that you can't do something just because you're a girl."

Stone has been a demolition derby fan for many years and supported her father Bonnie Stone Sr., and her brother Ronnie Jr., during their many years of competition.

Both build and repair their derby cars and work on dune buggies at their Jackstown Road garage.

"I always wanted to be in the derby and my dad fixed a car for me (a Chevy Lumina) and told me this year that it was my birthday present. Well I did it and I was shaking from excitement."

Stone said her family talked her out of competing for years because they had safety concerns.

"My family told me for years, that I wouldn't do it because I would get hurt, but I kept begging them to at least let me try. Now they think its cool," she said with a laugh.

"A friend asked me what my goal was right before I started the derby and I told her 'just to survive.' If I'm not the first one eliminated then I'll be happy."

Her father was concerned but finally gave in.

"She kept saying she wanted to do it so I finally just told her to be careful," Ronnie Stone Sr., said.

The crowd roared their approval at Stone's fierce competitiveness and strong showing during the derby, which she says was loads of fun.

"It's very good for stress relief, too," she said. "I was a little concerned when the derby started, but after I made that first hit, it was a lot of fun."

Stone said the referees expressed concern before the competition began.

"The referee told me that anytime I got scared and wanted to quit, all I had to do was wave my flag and they would stop the derby, but I didn't want to quit. I was having too much fun."

Stone's two sons are among her biggest fans. As 7-year-old Austin, and 3-year-old Justin, were both cheering her on when the derby began.

"My family told me that Austin started crying when my car got hit, but Justin kept screaming 'Go Mommy Go!'

Brother Ronnie, who has placed strong in local demolition derbies in past years said women competitors are rare, but the strategy is the same.

"You have to try to protect your engine and front end," he said.

Ronnie's fiancée, Sarah Flora, has been videotaping the competitions and all agree that the footage has helped them understand better strategies to use while competing.

"Sometimes you don't know what's going on around you or with the other competitors during the derby because you're concentrating on what's right around you," Rhonda said.

"The engines have gotten better now though," her brother said. "So now a lot of drivers go for the wheels."

Both said the controlled road rage atmosphere was contagious.

"After you take a hard hit you want to pay them back," Ronnie said.

"I think I took more hits than I landed," Rhonda said as she looked at her battered Chevy.

Stone stays busy working at the Bluegrass Army Depot during the week, but she enjoys being outdoors and four-wheeling, demolition derbies and cross-country dune buggy trips with family and friends on the weekends.

"I'm a country girl who loves this community," she said. "I've always rode in the dune buggies on our outings, but I think now I'm ready to drive. I love trail riding in dune buggies in the woods."

Stone said she appreciated all of the support from her family, friends and enthusiastic supporters.

"I did this for all of The women out there and I'm not done yet."

Stone's Chevy Lumina took a severe battering in the derby and although family members have been working on the engine and body, the prognosis does not look good for the car ever competing again.

Stone will not be dissuaded though and says she'll compete in the Ewing demolition derby later this fall if she can get her car running or find another.

"Anyone out there got a mid-size car they want to donate?" Stone asked with a smile. "I'm going to try to take first place next time."

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