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### Fort Worth native Nur Ali thrilled to race at hometown track

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BY CARLOS MENDEZ  
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His name doesn't sound all that Texan or Fort Worth.

But anybody who grows up playing behind a cash register in a convenience store on Rosedale in Stop Six is about as Cowtown as it gets.

"I'm a Texan," said Nur Ali, an ARCA Series driver who spent Tuesday testing his car at Texas Motor Speedway for next month's Rattlesnake 150. "I love this state. Texas has given us a lot of opportunities."

Ali was 8 when his father, newly arrived in Texas with his family, found a store to operate in the southeast Fort Worth neighborhood. His parents hardly knew any English. He and his 5-year-old brother knew not a word, only the Urdu they had learned in Pakistan, where they were born, and German, because they spent part of their childhood in Europe.

Their father spent so much time in his new store trying to learn the business that the boys went weeks without seeing him at home.

"He'd go in at 6 in the morning, come home at midnight, and of course, my brother and I would be asleep when he left and asleep when he came home," Ali said. "My mom used to bring us to the store for a couple of hours after school so we could see him."

Now Ali will get a chance to make a mark in the town where his parents made their mark. The Rattlesnake 150 will be the 35-year-old's first chance to race at TMS as he tries to build a track record in stock cars.

He has only two major sponsors: Budweiser and Tara Energy, a Houston electricity company, along with his dad's Dallas company, A to Z Wholesale, where his start in the convenience store business led him.

If Ali can get the money to race more ARCA events, he'll do it. The Rattlesnake 150 is the only one he's sure of. He didn't have enough to race at Daytona. But he understands why potential sponsors might shy away from a Pakistani-born driver.

"My background shouldn't be an issue. I'm an American. We all come from somewhere," he said. "This country has given me and my family everything we have. If a corporate sponsor gave us an opportunity to represent them, I think we could do a lot for them. When we go into a board meeting, trying to explain ourselves, it's always, 'Yes, yes' -- they're excited. But they come back with an answer, and it's no for whatever reason.

"But my father always taught me to not give up. When he left Pakistan in 1969 at age 18, he was basically homeless. He came to this country with just a few dollars. And now he's a successful businessman, my brother's a lawyer. I'm going to keep at it. I've got two great sponsors in this market that believe in me, so we'll keep at it. Something will come out of it."

Ali hopes he can at least get some name recognition in Tarrant County. He's a 1993 graduate of Euleless Trinity, his parents now live in Southlake, and he's lived in Fort Worth since 2005. The only time he



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hasn't lived in Texas in the past 27 years is when he went to school at American University in Washington, D.C.

"When I found out in late November that the ARCA Series was going to be at Texas, for the first time since '98, my family and I were just ecstatic," he said. "We started discussing with our local sponsors to see if we could put together a program for the Texas race. My sponsors have been supportive for many, many years, but when we got a chance to run at home, they said let's see what we can do."

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