



Alex's early Christmas present

Local lad, Alex McCalmont was recently given the surprise of his life when Irish Minibike Championship series organisers showed up on his doorstep in Parkgate to announce that he was the recipient of the Dualways-IMC 2021 Scholarship - a scholarship which will see the Alex receive the use of a 10TEN 140cc Supermoto machine together with free 2021 membership and entry fees.

11 year-old Alex, who attends Kilbride Primary School, was speechless when Krystle Black and Michelle Sherman-Boyd from the IMC broke the news as he thought he had just been short listed. "I was shocked but really pleased to have been awarded the scholarship. The bike is class and I can't wait to try it out," said Alex.

IMC chairman, Mark Boyd said: "We are delighted with the support from Dualways with the donation of a 10TEN 140R machine. Young Alex has progressed well this season.

"In what was his 'rookie' season Alex has marked himself as a serious contender for 2021 and we are thrilled to be able to offer a young lad, who clearly loves his racing, such a fantastic boost. We look forward to watching Alex continue to progress and develop in 2021 as he takes on the new challenge of graduating to The Irish Motorbike Show supported Junior Elite Class."

Alex had never been on a bike until the start of the 2020 season yet had his fair share of success in the 125 Junior gearbox class. He consistently finished inside the top three all season but is still chasing that first win.

"Hopefully that will come in 2021 and it would be nice if it was on the Dualways-IMC bike," enthused Alex. For the new season Alex will also compete in the Mini GP class. It will be a busy year for young Alex but when the flag drops at round one on March 21 at Kirkistown he will be ready.

His dad Brian added: "From Alex having his first outing on the tarmac at 'White River' and getting his knee down at Turn 1 we knew this was for him. As a family we are delighted for Alex to be given this great opportunity by Dualways and The IMC. Roll on 2021."

Alex is the second youngster to benefit from initiatives rolled out by the series organisers. Lee Hara received the Baylon McCaughey Scholarship last year and the search is currently on for the recipient of a Sponsorship Package for 2021 which includes a bike, leathers, helmet and fees for competition in the 2021 IMC Series. Applications close on December 15. Details can be found on The IMC Facebook page.



Half Marathon launched

Two-time British record holder Marc Scott and five-time Olympian Jo Pavey have officially launched the 2021 P&O Antrim Coast Half Marathon.

A host of distance running stars have already confirmed their place immediately in the starting line up for the Larne Athletic Club-organised event on Sunday, August 29.

Participants will include this year's women's race winner, Lily Partridge, Berlin Marathon fourth placer Scott Overall, local favourite and Commonwealth Games fourth place finisher Kev Seaward, as well as Team England.

With global headline stars set to be announced in the new year, it promises to be one of the leading half marathons in Europe in 2021.

The organisers stated: "The 2020 elite only race was streamed live to over 40,000 viewers and saw 35 of the 62 runners run personal bests, making it the fastest half marathon ever in Ireland and the fastest domestic half marathon ever in the UK with second and third finishers in the men's race ranking third and fourth in the UK all-time list.

"There were also age group world records for Tommy Hughes and Gary O'Hanlon. Irish all-comers records were also set by 2020 race winners Sir Mo Farah Farah in 60 min 27 sec and Lily Partridge in 71:36 seconds."

The newly-certified IAAF course is one of the fastest half marathons anywhere in the world - set in the stunning backdrop of the Antrim Coast Road - and race organisers have set the bold ambition this year of becoming the first half marathon ever in Ireland to run a sub 60 minute men's and sub 70 minute women's race.

The club added: "Other big news will be welcoming back the masses in which record numbers are already confirmed for the 2021 event.

"In light of this year's global pandemic, the event is now pleased to offer every runner the opportunity to ensure their entry in case of cancellation but are optimistic that the masses will all get to run the picturesque course.

"New for 2021, and launching in the beginning of March will be the first ever P&O Antrim Coast Kid's mini marathon, where all age groups will be welcome and will be joined by some of our headline stars on the day, so please watch out for further news on all official race platforms and website."