

MOTORCYCLING

Mini GP bikes – how do they compare?

Courier motorcycling correspondent BAYLON McCAUGHEY gives his verdict

FOLLOWING last week's article regarding the FIM Mini GP Series, I had quite a few people contacting me with regards to bikes used in this class.

So I thought for this week I would do something different - I decided to do some research on the three most popular Mini GP bikes in use, these being the KAYO, BUCCI and OHVALE machines.

Regarding last week's article about the FIM Mini GP series, which will use the Ohvale 160 machine, I contacted an official from Motor Cycle Ireland and he told me that they have received a response from 12 would-be competitors. That sounds positive, but, as I know from past experience, talk is cheap - it's easy to stick your name down in an email, but when it comes to purchasing the bike etc, one can easily change their mind, especially as the bike required will not meet the rider's protocol at IMC level!

So let us look at the three manufacturers involved in our local Mini GP scene.

The Ohvale has done an excellent job with their marketing, however, does that mean that they're the best machine on the market?

The Italian Bucci, albeit a much smaller firm, produces a quality mini GP machine, whilst the Kayo, a Chinese-built machine, is proving a popular bet with many.

Let's look at a few facts and figures.

The Ohvale 160 is £3,750 plus VAT, as they have to come from the importer, Peter Hickman. You then have to get it transported to Northern Ireland/Ireland, which is in the region of £200. Total: £3,950 plus VAT. This is the normal price. The FIM Mini GP agreement has a subsidised price, which would be approx £3,200 Plus VAT.

The mini GP Bucci 140/160 is £4,110 plus VAT, with an updated engine and race carb fitted. It is sold by a local dealer in Northern Ireland. Bucci comes in either 10-inch or 12-inch wheels. Bucci also comes with Mopo race shock and fully adjustable Mopo front forks, which is a top Italian race suspension as used by riders in 600 supersport class. Bucci has twin front brake discs. Basically, when you buy a Bucci, you are ready to race! A lot of MotoGP riders train on Bucci.

Moving over to the Ohvale, these machines have basic shocks fitted and forks are non-adjustable. They only come in 10-inch wheels and only a single front disc. Parts for Ohvale are more expensive compared to Bucci or Kayo. The Ohvale comes with a choice of 140/160 cc engines and costs £4,110 plus vat with an upgraded carb and engine. A popular training bike

amongst WSBK and BSB riders.

The KAYO, which is a Chinese spec machine, is a very popular bike here in Ireland with over 30 sold. This Chinese bike is also used widely by many top Moto GP teams, such as Team Aspar, as they use the KAYO for their riders to train on. Second in last year's Moto 3 Moto GP, Tony Arbolini, uses one for his training. The Tech 3 team do likewise with their riders - Johan Zarco trains regularly on his Kayo. The ZF GP Race School in France have 80 Kayos for their youth academy!

Former British 600 stock champion, Korie McGreevey, and his brother Kia both use the Kayo to train on, so they certainly are quite popular here.

It's a 150cc engine, with a five-speed gearbox, and the bike is a wee bit heavier than its rivals.

Costs? You can buy a KAYO MR 150 GP for £1,895, or a fully loaded package - which includes, spare wheels, adjustable rear sets, quick action throttle and stainless steel rear stand - for £2,395. A new package to be announced shortly will include lightened swing arm and fully adjustable front and rear suspensions - the price is still to be determined but it will be under £3k.

So, what is the overall verdict? For styling and getting what you pay for, the Bucci scores best, and you can purchase it here in Northern Ireland (Cullybackey).

Value for money? Without a doubt, the KAYO holds its own here, and you only have to travel to Omagh to purchase.

The Ohvale is definitely a great bike, but like everything else it all comes down to the rider's choice, plus Ohvales can only be purchased through none other than Peter Hickman, the world's fastest road racer, who is the main agent in the UK for these machines.

Anyway, those are only my views - no doubt the young riders will prove which bike is best!

With the IMC Junior Mini GP class now a standalone class, we can look forward to exciting racing by the stars of tomorrow on these small bikes.

Rossi joins WM Racing

He might not be Valentino Rossi, but our own Rossi Dobson, the young up-and-coming 15-year-old British Talent cup rider, has joined forces with WM Racing in an exciting four-rider line up for the forthcoming season.

WM Racing are better known for its presence in both the Irish and British mini bike paddocks, where last season their riders, Peter Willis and Lewis Mullen, both in their rookie season, finished second and third respectively in the 140 Mini GP British Minibike Championships, and were amongst the race winners on

home visits to the Irish Minibike Championships when BMB dates didn't clash.

Rossi Dobson, now entering his second year in the British Talent Cup, will bring his experience and expertise to this young and exciting team.

Belfast rider Rossi will also be on hand to help rookie 12-year-old Peter Willis learn circuits etc.

Dobson impressed last season with a personal best finish of 7th at the final round at Brands Hatch. His goal for 2021 is to get podium finishes.

Son of North West 200 250cc podium finisher Sammy Dobson, Rossi's presence in this young team can only help bring this vibrant team forward with their goals.

For Peter, this talented young rider is ready to step up to the Moto3 British Talent Cup class. This year will be a big learning curve for the Cullybackey scholar, learning a new bike and tracks. With his goal to try and collect points at each round this year, he's looking forward to the challenge.

British MiniBike Championship

Ten-year-old Newmills rider, Lewis Mullen, will continue his challenge at the British MiniBike Championship. Finishing third overall in the 140cc Championship in 2020, for 2021 Lewis will progress into the Ohvale 160cc Championship and challenge for the top spot. This will be a new series within BMB for 2021 and will hopefully be part of the Ohvale 160cc World Championship, in which Lewis hopes to gain an entry into the final world series round at the MotoGP round at Valencia.

Lewis will also be part of the Vision Track Michael Laverty Academy for 2021, gaining valuable knowledge from his mentor and fellow Northern Ireland rider, Michael Laverty. Lewis will also contest the Irish Minibike Championship when rounds don't clash.

Irish MiniBike Championship

Irish Minibikes Championship is where it all starts for young Irish talent and eight-year-old Paige Mullen is no stranger to the paddock. In only her second year of racing, Paige will compete in the IMC BAMBAM Championship.

One of only a small number of girls in racing, Paige will certainly be one to watch out for.

All four riders began their tarmac career with the IMC.

WM Racing said their goal "is to help with the development of young riders from Northern Ireland".

"The British Talent Cup is the perfect platform for the next stage as a team and to see our young talent grow.

"We look forward to having our riders compete at British and Irish level again this year."



KAYO: Johnny Campbell on his Kayo. SC210754



BUCCI: Freddie Cooke on his Bucci. SC210755



OHVALE: Lewis Mullen on an Ohvale. SC210756