

MOTORSPORT

FIM announces new Mini GP Series.. but will it work here?

BY BAYLON
McCAUGHEY

LAST week, an interesting post appeared on social media.

The post had been shared multiple times on various individual social media pages of clubs affiliated to the MCUI.

The post was 'aimed at gauging interest in the newly-launched 'FIM Mini GP Series' and stated that they (MCUI) 'believe this is an exciting opportunity for our young riders between 10-14yrs'.

The class is controlled – using a one-type-fits-all machine – to provide equality and showcase talent.

The MCUI would run the series as per FIM rules.

The MCUI would run the series on approved karting circuits.

The winners of the individual series will have access to join the BritishTalent Cup.

This is a worldwide championship linking to it to 'The road to Moto GP' development programme.

To comply with FIM requirements, a minimum of four events must take place, with a minimum of 15 riders and within a specified period.

Brilliant – a fantastic opportunity for any youngster.

But – hold on a minute – we already have 'an exciting opportunity for 10-14yr olds.'

Where? The Irish Minibike Championship (IMC). A flourishing young vibrant club creating classes to bring race-ready youth forward to our short circuit paddocks.

In the past two years, competent riders have come from the IMC, filtering seamlessly into the USBK, BSB and Honda Talent Cup paddocks.

Curtis Trimble, winner of British 300 championship race (after only 3 rounds) benefitted from his time in the IMC Paddock.

Gary Scott, Rossi Dobson,



Mini GP Racing at the IMC, a class introduced just over two years ago, is growing in popularity.

Rhys Coates, Alexander Rowan, Lee Hara, Jack Ferris, Kai McClintock - all young riders who have progressed from the IMC.

The Baylon McCaughey/IMC Scholarship sees a rider from the IMC provided with the opportunity to compete in the newly-formed USBK Moto-One Class having been given the use of a brand new Tianda 300, free of charge for a full season - the first award of this type EVER provided to a young rider in Ireland!

A class that, it should be pointed out, was created to help transit and encourage youngsters

from their Minibike Racing experience, together with those in their first years of tarmac competition. A better-controlled class on purpose-built machines that are within people's budget.

Never before has the transition for youth been more fluid than since the IMC created a Junior MiniGP Class in 2019. A class which grew steadily throughout 2020, remarkable given the difficulties faced by everyone due to the pandemic.

The Baylon McCaughey Scholarship is just one of the initiatives rolled out from this forward-thinking club which encourages participation from

youth riders as young as six.

The IMC has also put a young rider on a 140 Pit Bike machine free of charge for the 2021 season.

It is an opportunity which will be provided to a different competitor each season.

In addition, thanks to generous support from Thomas Fitzsimmons of Tag Racing Irl, a young rider will be fully kitted out with a new bike, leathers, helmet, paid entries etc for the 2021 season.

Furthermore, in the not too distant future, the IMC will be announcing yet another chance for a rider to avail the use of a

machine free of charge for 2021!

Certainly, the IMC have - and will - continue to help develop, encourage, and provide an opportunity to progress the future stars of motorcycle racing in Ireland.

Now we are reading, that our governing body for motorcycling is gauging interest for the FIM Mini GP Series!

One must ask: Why are they gauging interest for this one-make series?

One does not condemn this series - any progress in developing youngsters in any sport is to be encouraged.

But when you have a successful club doing exactly that on your own doorstep - it baffles me as to their intentions.

They always say, "Support your local businesses" and "Support those that support your sport".

Well, how about MCUI/MCUI(UC)/MCI start supporting local biking businesses and suppliers or, indeed, instead of emailing all affiliated clubs to gauge interest for this FIM Series, how about emailing all affiliated clubs and encouraging them to purchase a Tianda 300 for the Moto-One Class and put a young rider on it, thereby providing opportunity, building our short circuit grids, and nurturing more young riders within the USBK and Mondello Masters Series.

Support each other and build on what we are privileged to have.

Here's a quote from a parent of a leading junior competitor at the IMC: "Both FIM & IMC

deserves credit. Thanks to the IMC, (not the MCUI), we now have kids in this country riding competitive Mini GP bikes from a young age, the same as most of Europe, and mark my words, in a few years it will pay off for the next generation of kids coming through."

Personally, I agree.

Mid-Antrim 150 Club

A statement from the club said: "It's with sadness we have to announce the cancellation of our first events planned for 2021 due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic and current restrictions to protect our community and NHS service."

"Ballymoney Motorcycle Show sadly has been cancelled due to extended lockdown and even after hoping a later date would allow us to run, it is obvious that indoor events will not be possible in near future."

"With the recent announcement from MCUI UC that all tarmac events are postponed to at least end of May, our April spring cup USBK meeting at Bishops court racing circuit and mid-Antrim 150 team races have also been cancelled. Currently, we are not sure if this event can be rescheduled due to the availability of viable dates and circuits. We are very hopeful that Neil and Donny Robinson memorial races will take place in July as planned."

"The club-like hope you all stay safe and thank all NHS staff and frontline workers for their dedication to help us through this."



This year, the Mini GP will have its stand-alone class where grids looking promising, with double figures predicted. SC210630