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New sponsor will help IMC young guns hit their 'MAX'

Once more the proactive IMC are keeping ahead of the rest of bike sport with their new plans for the coming season, and I spoke to the club's Vice Chairperson Baylon McCaughey about their exciting new sponsorship and plans for 2021.

'Despite the changing world, we find ourselves in, the IMC Championship continues to work tirelessly behind closed doors, building bigger, better and full of hope for what the future holds,' Baylon said. 'To date, the IMC has introduced three individual scholarships, providing a helping hand in the progression of youth riders among our expanding ranks.'

'We are delighted to announce that thanks to the Harris Group, a £1000+ prize fund has been earmarked for the Senior Classes Championship. The prize fund will be titled The Denise Harris Award. Monetary awards will be distributed to the top three competitors across all Senior Classes at the end of the 2021 Championship, adding a massive incentive to all concerned. This is yet another massive boost to the IMC Championship and its members, particularly in these uncertain times.'

'Any support to the Championship is graciously received. To have the Harris Group - Maxus reach out a helping hand to the club in these difficult financial times is humbling. We must be doing something right. Why not have a look at the sponsors website at www.harrisgroup.ie/brands/maxus.'

The Harris Group is one of Ireland's leading importers and distributors of commercial vehicles for the construction, distribution and mass transportation industries. Founded in 1961, the company has developed an unrivalled reputation for exceptional customer service through a state-of-the-art parts distribution centre and extensive workshop facilities. Harris Group is the distributor for the Maxus range of vehicles in the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Malta and Cyprus.

Baylon was also keen to advise me on the new sponsorship from Road Racing Ireland Magazine with the 'Future Stars' set to receive added incentive from the magazine.

'The Stars of tomorrow, and we are in no doubt that they are, are to receive an added incentive in the form of a monetary award which will be allocated to the top three finishers in the Road Racing Ireland supported Junior Gearbox Class 2021 Championship. The award will go a long way to boost essential funds required for any rider in the competition. This in-

itself is fantastic, but, what cannot be underestimated is the boost that it will provide to every one of the Junior Riders in the class who benefit from the support and the lending of the name of such an iconic magazine.

'In 2020 we were ecstatic to reveal the birth of the Road Racing Ireland IMC Partnership, and are beyond delighted to see that partnership not only grow but flourish. In a move that cements that partnership into 2021 and beyond, RRI will provide an award for 'Most improved rider' providing a custom set of RRI branded leathers. The award will be open across all classes, Junior and Senior and will be awarded at the end of the season. Regardless of the difficulties faced by many, support for the Championship continues. We guess that says it all.'

More great news for this growing end of our sport, and it just goes to prove, that there is support out there, despite the current climate, and we look forward to seeing this family orientated club prosper in the coming years. The club has issued the race numbers for the season and it is great to see that there are already 26 Juniors registered, which is very encouraging. Keep'er lit!

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Business as usual for Superbike champ Rea in Barcelona testing

SIX times World Superbike Champion Jonathan Rea carried on where he left off at the end of last season by topping the timings in the first official test for the upcoming season in Barcelona.

Riding the new Kawasaki ZX-10RR, Rea's time of 1'40.264s was over a second faster than the existing WSBK lap record at the track, and just pipped his 2020 rival and Ducati mounted Scott Redding.

Redding led the morning session with a time of 1'41.198

and that stood until the last hour, when Rea lapped at 1'41.180, but that was then topped by American Garrett Gerloff on the Yamaha at 1'40.910. Once more Rea wound up the pressure on his rivals, when he topped the leaderboard in the final ten minutes of the second day.

Gerloff, who had featured at the top of the timesheets for most of Thursday's test, suffered a small crash in sector two as he attempted to better his time, allowing British rider Redding to move up to second

place on his Ducati Panigale V4, 0.179s behind Rea.

Rookie Jonas Folger impressed as he slotted into fourth for the MGM Bionovo Action satellite BMW team on the new M1000RR machine. The German rider was ahead of new Ducati signing Michael Ruben Rinaldi in fifth, while Tom Sykes completed the top six for the official BMW Motorrad squad, six tenths off Rea's pace. Pata Yamaha rider Toprak Razgatlioglu was withdrawn from day two of the test on Thursday after testing

positive for Covid-19.

It was strange to see that Eugene Laverty, who will ride for the new RC Squadra Corse satellite outfit on a BMW M1000RR, was absent from the test, but is set to complete his first laps on the new 'M' bike in the coming weeks at Aragon.

The opening round of the championship is scheduled to take place at Motorland Aragon in Spain from May 21-23.

Patrick Dagger leads the field at Athboy in 2020. Photo Jack Corry



Buster Sherman-Boyd was only beaten once in 2020 and he won the Bam-Bam championship, and will be a force to be reckoned with this year. Photo Jack Corry



Max Robinson will be one to watch this season in the Junior class of the IMC. Photo Jack Corry



Jack Whearty (67) in action in a hectic IMC race at Athboy. Photo Jack Corry



Jonathan Rea set the fastest time of the two day test in Spain on the new Kawasaki. Photo World WSBK

Cork outfit off to a flyer in Spain

THE Cork based 'Team 109' and their rider James McManus got their 2021 Supersport 300 World Championship season off to a fine start in the recent two day CatalanTest at the Circuit de Barcelona in Spain, with James significantly improving his lap times throughout the four on track sessions.

After an impressive ride at the final round of the 2020 Supersport 300 World Championship, James who will turn 17 by the time the season starts, finished 12th overall in the British Junior Supersport Championship and enjoyed a podium in his name, whilst finishing ninth in the Last Chance Race at Estoril in his WorldSSP300 debut.

James was able to take advantage of near perfect weather as he got to grips with his new Kawasaki machine. Spending the opening day testing various set-ups, it was Tuesday that saw the biggest improvement, where despite a small crash, he was able to run with several leading contenders during both the morning and afternoon session meaning both he and the team move confidently towards round one of the WorldSSP300 season at MotorLand Aragon in May.

James McManus: 'Overall the test was pretty good. I'm happy with how things went, and the bike feels like my bike now. Tuesday started well and I was able to run pretty good times more or less straight away but with fifteen minutes to go I had a crash. The boys worked hard, and I was able to get back out in the afternoon. I struggled to get back into a consistent rhythm and I would have liked to have gone faster but we are getting there, and everyone is working hard. I really like the track and can't wait to come back here later in the year for the race. I am feeling good about the season. I have a test at Aragon before the first race and I will keep working with the team to be as ready as I can be for the first race.'

Paul Tobin - Team Manager: 'We are incredibly happy with James, it was his first proper day with the team on Monday and we tried many things to get him comfortable on the bike. Unfortunately, he had a small crash before lunch on day 2, but he was able to get back out and rebuild some confidence before the end of the day. James has fit into the team well and we are looking forward to our next test at Aragon in a few days.'

Mondello set revised dates

Mondello Park has revised their dates for the forthcoming Dunlop Masters Championship, and they are as follows;

The first Pre-Season test day will take place on the National Track on Saturday 8th May, with the second test scheduled to take place again on the National Track on Saturday 22nd May.

Rounds 1-3 of the championship will now take place on the National Track on 26/27th June, with rounds 4-6 on the International Track the weekend of 24/25th July. Rounds 7-9 will be on the National Track on 28/29th August, while rounds 10-12 will take place on the International Track on 25/26th September, with the final rounds 13-15 held on the National Track on 9/10th October.