

# COURIER Sports

15 PAGES!



## MOTORSPORT

# Neil Robinson Memorial Trophy revived

One of the most prestigious trophies awarded in Irish Motorcycle racing, The Neil Robinson Trophy, has been revived!

This Trophy has been presented to the organisers of the increasingly popular Irish Minibike Championship (IMC)

'Humbled'. That is how the organisers at the Irish Minibike Championship describe their reaction to the donation of the original Neil Robinson Memorial Trophy to their thriving Junior Mini GP Championship.

Trevor Armstrong, custodian of the Neil Robinson Memorial Trophy also commented:

"I was the Chairman of the 90 Club which supported Neil Robinson during his short illustrious career. The Neil Robinson Trophy has been used by various Short Circuit promoting clubs at events throughout the years. Past winners include Joey Dunlop, Carl Fogarty, Ali Kirk, and Alastair Seeley. The Mid-Antrim Club has been hosting the feature race for the past few years, but I felt a change of direction was needed. My feelings are to support the youth entering our sport with the intention and hope of keeping the memory of Smutty alive."

Michelle Sherman-Boyd, IMC spokesperson added: "This is a very humbling, yet exciting reward for The IMC. We have worked

extremely hard over the past few years to build a Championship dedicated to providing opportunity. Whilst we cater for everyone that forms part of our family paddock, the potential that is evolving from our Junior Classes is clear to see.

"This talent must be nurtured and encouraged and there can be no greater affirmation than being acknowledged by those behind the Neil Robinson Trophy.

"As much as we are honoured to reinvent the award, we are conscious of the history and prestige such an award carries and will endeavour to do so with the utmost respect.

"The achievements and promises of Neil Robinson are legendary among the motorcycling fraternity. We will ensure that our Juniors understand what an honour it is to receive this offering and will use it to reinforce their drive to fulfill their individual aspirations."

Neil 'Smutty' Robinson, from Cullybackey, Ballymena, was on the threshold of a promising international career when he tragically lost his life at the age of 24 during a practice session at Olivers Mount, Scarborough in 1986.

Neil was exceptional. A talented and fearless racer on both circuits and roads. Robinson commanded many sensational victories including the 1983 British 250cc Championship, the 1986 Ulster Grand Prix Formula 1 Race and the



The future looks bright for this flourishing pot of talented youngsters, which includes current Champion Ruben Sherman-Boyd, 2022 Short Circuit Scholar and IMC Youth Ambassador Bailey Dobson, current Junior Gearbox Champion Buster Sherman-Boyd, Matthew Curry and Matt Davidson. They are pictured with Trevor Armstrong, Krystle Black and Michelle Sherman Boyd (IMC Officials).

1986 TT Formula 1 Race, which he took with a commanding lead.

Throughout the 2022 Junior Mini GP Championship, points scored in the 3rd race of each of the 11 rounds will correlate to a stand-alone Championship Table. This separate table will take the title of the Neil Robinson Memorial. The prestigious trophy will be awarded to the rider who stands at the top of this table at the end of the 2022 season.

Custodian Trevor Armstrong will be on hand at the end of season Awards Evening to present it, together with a Prize Fund of £500, which will be shared between the top

three riders.

Classic Bike Run returns  
The popular Classic Bike Run, which always took place before the Cookstown "100" Road Races will return for 2022. However, instead of the customary Thursday night, the run will take place on Tuesday 19th April and will start from the Burn Road carpark ( beside Burnavon).

Memorabilia Display  
To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Cookstown & District MCC, there will be a THREE-week display of Cookstown "100" memorabilia in the Burnavon, dates to be confirmed. This will take

place on the run-up to the event, which itself takes place on 22/23 April. More details in due course.

Major changes to Masters Championship

Also announced was the introduction of a radical points scoring system which will allow young riders racing in different classes to compete against each other for the 'Young Racer of the Year' title.

This season, for the first time, the premier Irish Motorcycle Racing Series will have a split season, designed to give riders who miss an event, due to other

commitments, breakdowns or accident damage, a chance to remain in contention for the championship. The opening four events will make up the first portion of the season with the August and September races as the second.

The Masters part one will see each rider counting their three best weekend points tallies from the first four events, with their worst weekend 'dropped'. With the dropped scores removed, the riders will then have a straight fight for the championship over the last two events, as their full points from all six races will be counted.

In addition to the change

to the points format the final two events of the season will now also count as a separate stand-alone championship. Following a break of a couple of seasons, Motorcycling Ireland's own Southern Star awards will make a comeback and the titles will be presented to the top points scorers from the last six Masters races of the year.

The new for 2022 Junior Championship will pitch all Masters competitors who are under twenty years of age against each other, even if they are competing in different classes. To make this possible, points will be scored according to the number of starters in a race which an eligible competitor finishes ahead of, up to a maximum of fifteen. The system is designed to incentivise riders who are successful in the more competitive classes, but will also reward those who finish on the podium in their race, as there will be bonus points for a win, second place or third.

The winner of the Junior championship will receive the Young Racer of the Year accolade as well as financial and other support towards the next step in their career. Details of the prize package will be announced over the coming weeks.

The Dunlop Masters Superbike Championship gets underway with a pre-season testing from March 25th to 27th, followed by one event per month between April and September. For more on the Masters see the championship web site [www.masterssuperbike.ie](http://www.masterssuperbike.ie).

## FOOTBALL

# Draperstown Celtic share spoils with Sky Blues in keen contest

**Draperstown Celtic 1 - 1 Sky Blues**  
Draperstown Celtic Firsts hosted Sky Blues at a windy Cahore and it combined with both teams cancelling each other out, which led to a very poor opening 30 minutes where the only incident of note was an injury to K McGuigan.

It got a bit more eventful in the closing stages of the half when A Kelly was sent off much to the disgust of the home bench who felt the decision was very harsh. Both sides had no more than one clear chance each in the half and it finished goalless.

Draperstown Celtic came out determined to make the most of the wind that was on their back in the second half and on the 55th minute, won a free kick on the edge of the box. M Mackle's shot clipped the wall and that lifted it up and over the 'keeper to break the deadlock, 1-0 Celtic. The Blues had a chance to hit back quickly but Crozier saved well.

The visitors did hit back after the hour mark, however. Both sides had chances to seal the victory but neither could take them as the game heated up towards the end and it ended with the spoils even.

MOTM - R McSorley

**Draperstown Celtic Reserves 3 - 1 Ballycastle United Reserves**

The weather put an early stop to any

notion of a footballing spectacle at Cahore on Saturday morning as Draperstown Celtic Reserves took on Ballycastle Reserves for a place in the next round of the Chronicle Cup.

It was a very scrappy opening, neither team could get any good passages of play going despite their best efforts.

On twelve minutes, D McGlade broke the deadlock with a fine strike from a good 30 yards out. Flanagan came close to doubling the lead when he intercepted a poor goal kick but the 'keeper redeemed himself with a fine save from point blank range.

Ballycastle posed a threat going forward and came close from a wide free kick on the edge of the box.

Draperstown Celtic were soon two up when McCann played a beautiful ball through to Flanagan and he made no mistake with the finish this time. Draperstown had a chance for a third when the ball bobbed around the visitors' six yard box, but it just wouldn't fall for anyone and Ballycastle cleared.

Ballycastle continued to look dangerous on the ball and again could have had a goal but when one-on-one with the 'keeper, they put it just wide. Draperstown capitalised though and McCann soon had us three up with a 25 yard screamer. Celtic

were let off big time when another long range effort from Ballycastle had the 'keeper beaten, but bounced out off the crossbar. Ballycastle did get their breakthrough just before the half time whistle with a good effort from inside the box.

The second half started fairly scrappy with the wind seeming to have picked up a notch and it took 20 minutes for either side to have a clear chance.

D McGlade found himself with a one-on-one with the 'keeper but the 'keeper was well out and the best McGlade could do was put the ball just over. Both teams seemed to just cancel each other out in midfield for long spells.

C McSorley thought he had Draperstown Celtic's fourth on 75 mins when he chased down the ball and rounded the 'keeper just outside the six yard box, but a heroic last ditch tackle from the Ballycastle defender kept it at 3-1.

Late substitute Kidd had a chance to put the icing on the cake for Draperstown when played in by McGlade, but he put his effort just wide.

Draperstown Celtic battled on for a fourth until the bitter end but it never came.

At full time the game ended 3-1 to

Draperstown Celtic who progress to the next round. The only blemish for Draperstown came towards the end when Henry Heron went off with a dislocated shoulder. Best of luck for a speedy recovery Henry.

**Draperstown Celtic 2008s 0 - 1 Dungiven Celtic**

Draperstown Celtic 2008s played out a very entertaining game against our neighbours Dungiven Celtic FC in horrendous conditions at Cahore on Sunday afternoon.

It was a very evenly balanced contest that was decided with a high strike that the wind caught and it went in off the crossbar in the dying minutes.

The lads battled hard and deserved a share of the spoils and fair play to the Dungiven coaches for acknowledging that a draw would have been a fair result.

The lads will pick themselves up again for the next match where hopefully the weather is better.

**Draperstown Celtic 2012s 3 - 2 Ballycastle**

Draperstown Celtic 2012s produced a gutsy performance in atrocious conditions on the North Coast to grab a 3

- 2 victory. After soaking up some early Ballycastle pressure, Draperstown went in front thanks to a superb left-footed drive from F. Burns leaving the 'keeper no chance.

Close range finishes from S. Kennedy and C. Murray followed as Celtic raced into a wind-assisted 3-0 half time lead.

Ballycastle rallied after the break, with the Draperstown rear guard holding firm, until halfway through the 2nd half, when the hosts grabbed one back.

A frantic final 10 minutes followed with Draperstown conceding a second with just five minutes remaining. However, a wind battered Celtic defence held firm much to the relief of the travelling support.

**Draperstown Celtic 2013s 2 - 1 Magherafelt Sky Blues**

A great result for the boys against Sky Blues at Meadowbank. After going 1 nil down they battled back, first with a wonderful strike by Darragh Murray, followed by a breakaway goal created and taken by Luke Kelly.

A good competitive game that could have went either way. But thanks to a good performance by everyone, they managed to get the win. Well done boys!