

Academy could drive young stars to success

Report by
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LANARKSHIRE'S rally drivers of the future are being offered a unique chance to make it to the top.

For the Ford Rallye Academy is coming to Scotland and hope to pick out some future stars.

Amongst the teenagers already signed up for the Academy at Crail in Fife is 15-year-old Alick Kerr, a kart racer from the Bothwell area who now wants to break into rallying.

Despite his tender years, Alick has achieved notable successes in karting and raced for Scotland twice, but now finds himself ineligible for junior racing and one year too young to tackle the senior formulas.

So he has turned his attention to other forms of motorsport.

Alick has been the recipient of lottery money and is part of the Junior Development Group designed to take drivers from karting to senior motorsport disciplines. This group attended courses at Knockhill where they drove Sierra Cosworths, Single Seaters, Westfields, Fiestas and MGFs, during which time he received some useful tuition from top British saloon racer David Leslie.

Alick has been racing karts since the age of eight and has taken part at both club and national level. Achievements so far include runner-up spots in both the ASKC Super Series and the NKRA Championships and a Club Championship win at Larkhall, home of the West of Scotland Kart Club. Alick raced for

the Scottish National Kart Racing Team in 1999 and has won numerous trophies over the last few years.

Away from karts, Alick is also a member of the Lesmahagow-based Pro Motorsport Junior Team. This team was set up in 2001 to coach, encourage, train and evaluate young talent. Pro Motorsport is Scotland's most successful race team and won the Amateur's Cup in the 2001 FIA European Super Touring Car series.

This year he's doing the Ford Rallye Academy, having won the first round and finished second in the second round. Next year he's hoping to do the Junior Championship and probably the same in 2005 as he will still be too young to compete in a normal rally.

In 2006 he will probably take part in the Ecosse 205 Challenge.

Alick already has his own rally prepared car, a 1976 Ford Escort MKII and has been testing in the Galloway Forest and the Forest of Ae at organised test days. Former Scottish Rally Champion Jon Burn from Larkhall has been keen to help and pass on good advice, while assistance has also come from Glenmuir Ltd, Lanark; Yokohama tyres; Ecosse Rally School; Tunnocks and Classic Travel, Uddingston.

But it is the Academy on which he is concentrating this year. It is a 10 round series, the winner of which gets a free drive in the Junior Championship and the Junior Champion get a free drive in the KA championship. It is designed as a clearly defined career path in rallying and has the benefit of being a training course within a competitive



■ **IN THE DRIVING SEAT ...** Alick Kerr (in the car) is pictured with top British saloon racer David Leslie.

environment along with decent prizes.

The fact that it caters for youngsters between the ages of 13 and 17 means that they can drive a rear-wheeled, purpose-built Rally Sport Trainer (RST) before they have a road licence at 17.

The Academy organisers are hoping to attract a number of young would-be

Colin McRae's for the morning or afternoon training sessions at Crail in Fife.

If you are aged 12-16 then this is your chance to drive the purpose-built Ford Rallye Sport Trainer (RST) by taking part in the only Scottish Open Day on Saturday, October 11, with special guest Louise Aitken-Walker

MBE, former Ladies World Rally Champion. No driving experience necessary and there will be a team of instructors and 2003 pupils on hand to get pupils up to speed. For further information about the Open Day contact Sue Radbourne at 0870-1220221 or Mike Nairn at 0777-057-4464 or 01382-350823.