

STRONG INTEREST IN NEW GINETTA GT ACADEMY

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

An impressive 20 cars are expected on the grid for the inaugural round of Ginetta's GT Academy series this year.

The category replaces the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club as the manufacturer's entry-level division and features the new GTA-spec G55 (below), which will run on road tyres. The series will feature predominantly on the support bill of British GT but is also due to appear at the Silverstone British Touring Car Championship event.

Ginetta motorsport manager Ash Gallagher says 22 cars are currently in build, with one destined to race with the 750 Motor Club and another for a driver planning a testing programme this year.

"If you had said six months ago we're looking to have 20 cars at round one, I would've been made up," he said. "It's testament to how good the car is, and that makes it much easier to sell if everyone loves driving the G55. We've had hundreds of people drive the car from our pool of drivers and they've all liked it."

G40 Cup graduate Roy Alderslade and former GT4 Supercup competitor Lee Goldsmith are the latest drivers to reveal that they will be competing in the GT Academy this year, driving for the Assetto Motorsport squad.

Gallagher added that nearly all 40 places on the combined GT5 Challenge and G40 Cup grid are taken for 2021, while Ginetta Junior interest is also strong (see above left).

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Elite reveals its Junior racers as new team joins

GINETTA JUNIOR

Leading Ginetta Junior squad Elite Motorsport has revealed a mixed line-up of podium finishers and rookies for the 2021 season, as the number of entries in the series has already surpassed 20.

Elite has been the team to beat in the category in recent seasons, and has powered Adam Smalley, James Hedley and Tom Lebbon to the past three titles.

Tommy Pintos and Seb Hopkins, both of whom took a podium with the squad in their rookie campaigns last year, will lead Elite's 2021 roster. Will Jenkins will also remain with the team, after joining for the final three rounds of 2020.

Joe Warhurst, who made his debut at the penultimate event last season, will also race for Elite, and will be joined by karting graduates Max Hall and Josh Rowledge.

Meanwhile, a new team will enter Ginetta Junior this year. Breakell



Hopkins finished fifth in 2020 standings with Elite

Racing, which is more used to running prototype machinery, will run Ginetta scholarship finalists Aqil Alibhai and Fergus Chalmers.

"The transition for our team into the Ginetta paddock from our roots in sports-prototype racing has been a couple of years in the making," said team manager James Breakell. "Our strategy is to give talented young drivers a route into prototype racing."

The winning scholarship drivers have also announced which teams they will be competing for this season. Maurice Henry will drive for the Fox Motorsport squad, while Robert de Haan becomes Richardson Racing's first confirmed driver.

New series will feature a car similar to this Alfa 158-styled racer, but with added rollbar

SERIES PLANNED FOR ALFA ROMEO 158-INSPIRED CAR

TIPO184

A new series for machines inspired by the successful Alfa Romeo 158 grand prix racer will be operated by the British Racing & Sports Car Club in 2022.

The Tip0184 concept was created by Dowsett Cars, a company founded by television car-builder/designer Ant Anstead, and the series will feature drivers buying kits to convert a regular Mk2 Mazda MX-5 into a machine that resembles the 1950s Formula 1 car. An example, which does not feature a roll bar, has already been built.

The Alfa 158 dominated the inaugural F1 world championship season in 1950. It powered Giuseppe Farina to the drivers' crown, despite having first been built in 1938, and achieved success not only before the Second World War but immediately after it.

A pilot race for the machines is planned at Cadwell Park in August ahead of a full series in 2022.

"It's something we were approached with by Ant Anstead and his team of people at Dowsett Cars," said BRSCC head of formulae development Greg Graham. "We get approached by numerous projects, as do all clubs, every year and this struck me as a little bit

different. They've spent a couple of years coming up with the idea and building the first car, and the lads involved in it are really well connected. They convinced us they've got a lot of interest in the road-spec cars and race-spec cars globally, so we thought let's give them a bit of support to develop a race series."

Graham believes that the MX-5 – a car the BRSCC has strong links with through its Mk1 and Mk3 championships – is one of the key selling points of the idea. "You don't need to go out and spend a lot of money on specialist parts," he said. "The MX-5 is a cracking donor car and you do get a lot of kit cars that use their underpinnings, so it makes complete sense."

"It's not a historic racer and it's not a modern car – it's not one or the other – and people are intrigued by it. It's got a lot of plus points and it's completely different to anything else."

Anstead added: "I was so inspired by the Alfa 158 that I made my own version of it from scratch. It was such a great experience building and driving it that I wanted to give other enthusiasts the opportunity to build their own."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Karting graduate Bolger will join Bilinski at Carlin

Bilinski moves to Carlin for F4

BRITISH FORMULA 4

British Formula 4 podium finisher Roman Bilinski has switched to Carlin for his second season in the category this year, where he will be joined by promising karter Dougie Bolger.

Bilinski finished eighth in the standings last year in his first season in single-seaters with Arden, but has now moved to the squad that has powered the champion in four of the six years to date of British F4.

Bilinski is only the second driver with previous F4 experience to be announced as racing in the series for 2021, and is set to be the highest-placed driver to continue.

"Last season gave me a lot of really valuable experience, and I'm looking forward to putting that together with the team to really unlock my potential," said Bilinski. "I know first-hand how competitive the championship can be, so I've got a busy winter now to keep testing, keep learning and make sure we arrive at Thruxton [for the first round] in the best position possible."

Japanese racer Bolger, meanwhile, has become Carlin's third driver announced for 2021, alongside fellow karting graduate Kai Askey. Bolger, who is half-British and has been part of McLaren's DNA Programme that has supported karters, has already completed numerous tests with the Carlin squad.