

Leicester partnering world sidecar champions

March 15 2012



This is the fairing (the bodywork that covers the chassis and engine) that the team are working on. Credit: University of Leicester

The Department of Engineering at the University of Leicester is collaborating with Ben and Tom Birchall, former World Sidecar Champions, to improve the performance of their F2 sidecar at this year's Isle of Man Tourist Trophy races.

The University of Leicester is working with Ben to provide improvements to the bodywork of his machine, and maximise his potential to reach the top step of the podium.

The news comes alongside the announcement that the Birchall brothers are to join forces with former world sidecar champion and three times Isle of Man TT winner Klaus Klaffenbock to contest the 2012 TT races.

This partnership has resulted in a brand new team to be known as Cofain Racing by Klaffi.

Tony Forryan of the University's Department of Engineering noted that 'this announcement is huge in the Sidecar world and any sidecar crew racing at the TT would jump at this opportunity'. The team was launched at the Isle of Man Creg-Ny-Baa on February 10, when 2009 World Champions Ben and Tom Birchall were unveiled as the riders to represent this exciting new team at the TT festival.

Considered the most prestigious motorcycle race in the world, victory at the Isle of Man TT is the goal of every racer who ventures onto the Snaefell Mountain Course.



The project team is led by professor Sarah Hainsworth (right). Credit: University of Leicester

Ben Birchall commented; "Ever since Tom and I decided to compete at the TT in 2009 it has been our desire to be successful and our ultimate aim is to win there. Joining this team will give us the best opportunity to achieve our goal and with the bike preparation now nearing completion we can't wait to begin our pre-season testing."

Dr Simon Lawes of the Department of Engineering will be carrying out a 3-D scan of the fairing, for Dr Andrew McMullan to perform a [Computational Fluid Dynamics](#) (CFD) analysis. This virtual wind tunnel work will provide clues on how to improve the efficiency of the sidecar and increase its top speed.

Professor Sarah Hainsworth of the Department of Engineering, who is leading the project, said "It is really exciting to be associated with a world championship winning team, and the aim of the work at Leicester is to help improve the aerodynamic performance of the bike which will allow improved performance. The modelling should allow us to optimise air flow, minimise the drag and improve the overall top speed that the bike is capable of.

Sidecar engineer Louis Christen has specially made a brand new LCR chassis for Ben and Tom in Switzerland. Honda engines tuned by specialist UK tuner Chris Mehew complete the package, and the Birchall brothers are anticipating top results at this year's event.

Provided by University of Leicester

Citation: Leicester partnering world sidecar champions (2012, March 15) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-03-leicester-partnering-world-sidecar-champions.html>

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