

Gault 10th in first race in British bike championship

By Judith Tonner

MOTORCYCLE racer Alex Gault came home in a morale-boosting 10th place as he made his debut in the British championship in front of 28,000 spectators.

The 14-year-old from Carlisle was racing for the first time on the 1.2-mile Brands Hatch "indy" circuit. He achieved the best result of all those riders who were competing in their maiden race at the famous venue.

Representing Team Barrus Malaguti, he also made an instant impact on his new bike, as he was the first non-Honda rider to com-

plete the 125gp race. He came home in a time of 18 minutes 58.391 seconds, less than 12 seconds behind the winner.

It was an unexpectedly good performance by the teenager, who had struggled throughout practice and qualifying and was not even assured of a place on the oversubscribed starting grid.

Alex's inexperience on the circuit and a crash in the first session of the day as he attempted to avoid another rider contributed to his difficulties early in the race weekend.

He was unhurt, however, and although there was some damage to the bike after it slid along the track and crashed into the tyre barrier, he finished the day with a lap time of 52.104sec and 32nd place overall.

The teenager registered a faster time of 51.549sec in qualifying the following day, and although he was unable to improve his overall placing, he secured a place on row seven of the starting grid with 26 riders ahead of him — no mean feat as there had been 55 riders striving to win just 40 places.

Crowds were already queuing by 7am on race day, with Alex lining up in a 12.30pm televised race, having made some last-minute gearbox changes with just minutes to spare before the morning warm-up.

He made his way slowly but surely through the field, hitting a top speed of 122mph in an event which saw 13 of his rivals drop out due to crashes or engine problems.

The safety car was deployed early on after a crash which slowed proceedings for five laps, and the race was stopped entirely after a further incident on lap 21, with the riders' positions at that time going on to stand.

Dad Alex senior said: "This was a fantastic result, all things considered.

"We can always ask for better, but Alex finished in front of many well-established high-budget teams and very experienced riders, some of whom have won British championship rounds in the past.

"Believe the hype when you hear that this is the biggest domestic championship in the world: it's a different world from what we are used to.

"There are superbike teams with budgets of £2 million and two or three articulated lorries to transport them and their hospitality units, which are bigger than our house!"

Alex's next engagement is at Thruxton this weekend in the second round of the championship.

Law athletes finish fourth in national indoor finals

THE under-20 men's team from Law Amateur Athletics Club collected four silver medals and two bronze medals as they finished fourth overall at the national indoor finals.

David Martin was second in both the long jump and triple jump, a result emulated by 800m runner Ross Penny and Gary Brown in the pole vault.

Bronze medals went to Graham Martin in the high jump and 400m sprinter Craig Strachan.

Strachan also represented the local club in the shot put, while team-mate Gary was the busiest member of the squad, also running in the 60m sprint, 60m hurdles and 200m.

Each of the squad members had every reason to be proud of a solid performance in a tight contest.

And after winning the title at under-17 level last year, they are determined to gain a further year's experience and take the under-20 honours in 12 months' time.

The meeting at Glasgow's Kelvin Hall, the last indoor meeting of the winter, also

played host to the Scottish junior relay finals.

Law's newcomers found that their lack of experience told against the best clubs in Scotland, with the local club's younger teams running well without qualifying for the latter stages.

Under-15 quartet Anissa Mouffok, Kirsty McLeod, Alison Nicol and Emma Pringle were unlucky not to reach their final after posting the fifth-fastest time of the day despite seeing their third-leg runner having to make up ground after almost being accidentally knocked over by an opponent.

Their age-group counterparts, Kyle Nicholson, Alan Robb, Scott Livingston and Ross McDonald, were third in their heat, but again failed to make the final.

Under-13 quartets Roisin Meehan, Nicola Lindsay, Julie Dobbin and Jasmine Kays and Lewis Nicholson, Thomas Lafferty, Sean Dunne and Calum Morton came fourth in their respective heats, as did under-17 runners Lisa Hopkins, Cheryl Adam, Louise Gordon and Chanelle Miliani.