

# Biker in race against time

INJURY and unseasonal weather have left Alex Gault facing a battle to be ready for the start of the new motorcycling season.

The Carluke teenager and his team deliberately left it late to begin testing for their campaign in the CB500 Cup to allow him maximum time to recover from a wrist operation — only for the late winter to force the cancellation of three of their six planned test days.

He then missed out on yet another scheduled session on his new bike after pulling a knee ligament when he finally managed a run-out at the official test day staged by Melville Motorcycle Club.

Alex, who has changed events after an ill-fated year in the British championship, was reduced to riding his nine-year-old motocross bike on snow-covered terrain after last month's bitterly cold conditions wiped out his testing plans on his new CB500 machine.

The Melville test session saw him adjust to the four-stroke bike after an understandably "clumsy" first session.

Dad Alex senior said: "This was only to be expected as the bike weighs at least twice what he is used to, the gear box is round the wrong way, and it was his first time under

four-stroke power, which is different to the traits of a two-stroke."

The youngster then successfully tried out a new 400cc bike, equipped with familiar features such as a race-tuned engine, tweaked suspension and powerful brakes, and had moved up to seventh-fastest in an experienced field by the end of his third 15-minute session.

He injured the ligament due to the exertion of the practice session, but is now battling to be ready for the first race of the season with the expert assistance of Carluke-based sports therapist Michael Valentine.