

Teenage motorbike racer Alex reaches crossroads in career

CARLUKE motorcycle racer Alex Gault is spending the festive season considering his future in the sport after the toughest year of his sporting career.

The 15-year-old, currently recuperating from a bone graft to heal a troublesome three-year-old wrist injury, must decide whether to make a second attempt at the 125gp British championship despite losing the backing of Italian bike manufacturer Malaguti.

A multi-trophy winning junior champion, the youngster is keen to return to the premier domestic competition, which runs alongside the British championship, but a competitive bike and new sponsors are needed to give him a realistic chance of success after a debut season dogged by mechanical failures.

Instead, finances and circumstances might dictate that he lines up in the CB500 Cup, the new Star Championship — or even leaves the sport altogether.

Dad Alex senior said: "The choice to go with Malaguti turned out to be a catastrophe. This has been the worst season in his racing career, and now big decisions have to be made about next year.

"Without doubt, the 125gp British championship would be Alex's first choice, as he enjoyed the challenge even though he didn't have good results.

"We learned a lot and made contacts, so drawing on that experience and employing the right people would, I'm sure, take him to the top of the standings again.

"However, it would be wrong to go back without money — if I had £10 for every time I have heard 'that lad can ride a bike!' or 'we need to encourage young talent in this country', we'd be planning the 2006 campaign now, but not many people want to put their money where their mouth is.

"I favour the CB500 Cup, now that Alex is eligible to race a 500cc twin cylinder four stroke, as it uses almost-standard Honda bikes and should be the cheapest series to run in, although we don't know how competitive it will be.

"We don't know much about the Star Championship, which is in the advanced stages of planning. On the other hand, we could give in and stop racing.

"It's catch 22 — you need support to get a competitive bike, you need a competitive bike to get to the front and you need to be at the front to get support."