



Announcement: Scottish Motor Sports to Launch SMS Academy, supported by McNish and Mackenzie

Scottish Motor Sports are delighted to announce the launch of a new talent development initiative to support promising young SACU riders and MSA drivers in Scotland.

The SMS Academy – which will officially launch at the Ignition Festival of Motoring in August - will benefit from the inputs and support of two Scottish motorsport legends; three time Le Mans 24 hours winner Allan McNish and three times British Superbike Champion Niall Mackenzie have both pledged to support the new initiative. Both Allan and Niall will form part of the competitor selection panel and will also play a role in the delivery of the programme, offering guidance and advice to SMS Academy members. Scotland's National Motorsport Centre – Knockhill Racing Circuit – has also committed to support the initiative and will host the majority of the SMS Academy sessions.

Having benefited from the guidance of individuals like David Leslie and Jackie Stewart, early on in his own career, Allan McNish recognises the importance of supporting the country's young competitors:

“Throughout my career I was lucky to have the support and guidance of the Scottish motorsport community, and that support culture has been a strong factor in Scotland's quite amazing success's on the international stage in 2 and 4 wheels. But the future is where we must look, and along with Niall, I am proud to contribute to the next generation of talent and looking forward to seeing them writing their own piece history.”

The SMS Academy will support 20 competitors (10 SACU competitors and 10 MSA competitors) aged between 14 and 20 years of age. The programme will run in line with the ethos and principles of the MSA's Academy programmes and for four wheel competitors, it will act as the talent pool for the MSA Academy. The SMS Academy will be delivered by qualified motorsport coaches and will support members in all aspects of their development, equipping them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to maximise their performance.

Niall Mackenzie – who is currently mentoring his own two sons, Tarran and Taylor through the motorcycle racing ranks - commented:

“Scotland has produced a wealth of motorcycling talent over the years so I'm pleased to see a new initiative for the youth in our sport. Its small steps at the moment but the SMS Academy project is aimed at assisting young riders on their career path. I'm delighted to be involved and hope my experience can be of value.”

Selection for the SMS Academy will be carried out via an application process. All applications will be reviewed by a panel comprising of a representative from the SACU and MSA, with inputs from Allan McNish and Niall Mackenzie. Traditionally, talent development initiatives have focussed support on rallying and racing; the SMS Academy aims to support competitors across SACU and MSA motorsport and we therefore welcome applications from all disciplines.

Further details, including eligibility criteria, can be found in the application form, which is available [here](#). Applications open today (6 June 2017) and close at 12:00hrs on 30 June 2017.

The successful applicants will be announced at the SMS Academy's launch on August 4th 2017 at the Ignition Festival of Motoring, in Glasgow.





SMS National Development Manager, Rory Bryant, has been responsible for pulling the programme together and commented:

“The SMS Academy is an exciting development for up and coming competitors in Scotland. As a nation, we have well and truly punched above our weight in the international motorsport arena and we are delighted to launch this initiative that aims to support our talented competitors and ensure that Scotland continues to produce world beaters in motorsport.

We’re delighted with the amount of support we have had to launch the Academy and we are grateful to our partners Knockhill Racing Circuit and the Ignition Festival for their assistance in this. We are also hugely excited and grateful to have the support of Allan and Niall, whose knowledge and experience will be invaluable to the Academy and its members. Both started their careers from humble beginnings in Scotland and it’s fantastic for them to come back and help develop the next generation of Scottish competitors.

The SMS Academy will be unique in delivering a combined programme for two and four wheel motorsport competitors. We believe this will promote a productive learning environment that will allow competitors to share practice and learn from one those out with their own respective sporting domains.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

Scotland’s motorsport heritage: Motorsport is without doubt one of the sports in which Scotland and Scottish competitors excel. Scotland has an unrivalled track record of success in the world of motor sport, being one of only five countries in the world to have produced World Champions on two, three and four wheels. Indeed, the names Stewart, Franchitti, McRae, Taylor and Mackenzie resonate with mental images of success throughout the world. More detail on Scotland’s success in motorsport can be found at: www.scottishmotorsports.co.uk/page/Champions

Motor Sports Association (MSA) is the sole national governing body for four-wheel motor sport in the UK, as recognised by the world governing body, the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). The MSA have 66 member clubs in Scotland, which are represented by one of the MSA’s 13 Regional Associations throughout the UK, the Scottish Association of Car Clubs. In Scotland, the MSA represents approximately 2000 competition licence holders and 600 volunteer marshals and officials, and issues permits for around 450 motor sport events every year. In Scotland, the MSA has approximately 6000 club members in total.

The MSA Academy refers to the Motor Sports Associations talent development pathway that supports UK drivers and co-drivers.

Scottish Auto Cycle Union (SACU) is the recognised controlling body for motorcycle sport in Scotland, as recognised by the British governing body, the Auto Cycle Union (ACU). The SACU is a not-for-profit organisation (limited by guarantee) comprising of 36 affiliated member clubs. The SACU represents approximately 1250 licence holders and around 300 volunteer marshals and officials, and issues permits for around 300 motorcycle sport events every year. The SACU has approximately 2000 club members in total.





Scottish Motor Sports (SMS) is the development body – funded by sportscotland - for two and four wheel motor sports in Scotland. SMS comprises of a committee that works on behalf of the SACU and MSA to assist with the overall development of the sport through a collective approach to strategy and communications. The SMS committee is chaired by Tom Purves, Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club and non-executive Director of the Motor Sports Association. The rest of the group consist of representatives from various positions within 2 and 4 wheel motor sport, Sportscotland and also EventScotland.

Allan McNish, is a former racing driver, commentator, and journalist from Dumfries, Scotland. He is a three-time winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, most recently in 2013, as well as a three-time winner of the American Le Mans Series, which he last won in 2007. He won the FIA World Endurance Championship (FIA WEC) in 2013. He is also a co-commentator and pundit for Formula One coverage on TV, radio and online.

Niall Mackenzie - from Stirlingshire - won the British Superbike Championship three times from 1996 to 1998 with the Rob McElnea-run Yamaha team, and the British 250cc and 350cc titles twice earlier in his career. Starting in 1984, Niall had a long career in the Grand Prix motorcycle racing circuit which concluded in the 2000 British Superbike series. Mackenzie now supports his younger sons, Tarran and Taylor, who are forging successful careers for themselves riding in the British Supersport and British Superbike Championships respectively.

Knockhill Racing Circuit, located near Dunfermline in Fife, is Scotland's National Motorsport Centre. Knockhill have kindly agreed to support the SMS Academy by providing the use of their media centre for the delivery of the Academy programme. Amongst many motorsport events, Knockhill plays host to the British touring Car Championship and British Superbike Championship each year.

The Ignition Festival of Motoring will run for the second year in August 2017 at the SECC in Glasgow and will host the official announcement of the SMS Academy members on 4th August. IGNITION is a true celebration of all things motoring and our specially constructed street circuit gives you the unique opportunity to get up close to the sight, sound and smell of everything from rally cars to Formula 1, supercars to classic cars, motorbikes and all things wacky and wonderful.

For further information please contact: Rory Bryant on rory.bryant@scottishmotorsports.co.uk

