

Karting ace Rachel driven to realise four wheel ambitions

In a move redolent of a teenage Andy Murray's enrolment at a Spanish tennis academy Edinburgh motor sport prospect 17-year-old Rachel Robertson has upped sticks to be nearer realising her four wheeled dreams.

Rachel, formerly of Trinity Academy, has, for the past few months, been attending Witshire College, Chippenham, where she is studying Motor Sport Engineering as part of her inclusion, amidst stiff competition, in the Radical Racing Rebels team which aims to aid the step up from karting to car racing.

"Yes, I can see the connection to what Andy Murray did" said Rachel, "for this move takes me closer to the centre of things. For example there are a lot of circuits nearby including Castle Coombe which is 15 minutes up the road. There wasn't scope in Scotland to make the same progress.

"My course means spending Monday to Wednesday in college then the rest of the time on the track.

"What I am learning will stand me in good stead however things work out.

"It is possible, with the right backing I can go all the way through the motor sport ranks.

“And being more aware of the technical side of things means that others (mechanics and engineers) will want to work with what I will be able to tell them.”

An outstanding karter, which is a traditional route into F1, the clock is counting down to Rachel's first race and she is preparing thoroughly for that Radical Cup outing at Donnington Park towards the end of March.

“I have just returned from a seat fitting so that I am more comfortable in a car that might corner at over 100mph which means quite a lot of buffeting.

“I'm also sourcing the components for a simulator I am building myself and finding time to prep my fitness mainly by developing more neck strength as Radical races can last 30 minutes and that is not including the Endurance category.”

As for the simulator, Rachel knows just how different races are going to be compared to karting.

“In karts you tend to be bumper-to-bumper with other drivers whereas in car racing you have to adapt to being comparatively spaced out as well as laps being completed in almost double the time.”

One of three girls on her course compared to 17 boys Rachel is aware of being something of a standard bearer.

“I know there is a lot of emphasis being placed on getting more females into motor sport and being one of the few on my current course is a chance to put myself out there.”

To that end Rachel has had some contact with the 'Girls on Track' organisation founded by fellow Scot Susie Woolf, MBE, founder of the F1 Racing Academy and a fellow professional motor sport driver in her own right at one time.

“There is a girl in the F1 Academy aged just 16 so I know it can be done” says Rachel who in her time away from the track

indulges a passion which has raised eyebrows among petrol heads.

“I love cross stitching as a form of relaxing even though some find that a bit of a strange hobby!”

Behind the wheel, though, Rachel is creating a rich tapestry of opportunities which – who knows – might one day make her a pioneer in car racing?





Rachel Robertson

