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F1 drive is the big ambition of racer Small

Great Barr speed king by Neil Rose Russell Small is gearing up for the start of a new racing season which he hopes will put him in pole position for a career in Formula One.

The 18-year-old will be in action at Silverstone next weekend when the new Formula Jedi campaign gets underway.

And he is hoping success in the exciting single-seater championship will help him secure a drive in Formula 3 for 2007, moving him a giant step closer to achieving his F1 ambitions.

"I am aiming to win the championship this year," said Small, who is being backed in his bid for success by dad Steve.

"We have bought the car which won the title in

Sports editor 2005 so hopefully that will be a good omen.

"It's a 1000cc single-seater with a Suzuki GSXR, 170bhp engine, does 0-60 in three seconds and has a top speed of 148mph – so it can be quite frightening!

"The other target is to get into F3 next year. It's like a ladder and F3 is the main step before F1.

"Three or four racers have already made the move up from Formula Jedi so it is a good learning curve." This will be the second year

that Small, a former Great Barr Comprehensive School pupil, has competed in Formula Jedi, which provides a cost-effective route into motor racing. "I didn't do too badly last

season but I didn't have much luck either," Small said. "I missed a few races

after someone crashed into the back of me

and did about £4,000 of damage to my car. I had to be airlifted to hospital by helicopter but fortunately I only had whiplash. "I had finished fifth in my first

race at Brands Hatch. then third at Pembrey and I was on for fourth place in my last race of the season before I was forced out by a technical failure."

Small took up motor racing in 2000 after trying out karting during a corporate day at Birmingham Wheels.

"I really enjoyed it and seemed to have a natural ability for it," he said.

"It's all I wanted to do after that. My dad supported me as well because I had been hanging around with the wrong people so he brought me a kart to encourage me.

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Small enjoyed

plenty of karting success, including wins at the Glan-y-gors Senior Championship in 2004. Such is his dedication to

motorsport that he is now studying a mechanical engineering course at Brookes, Oxford. "My whole life revolves

around motorsport," Small admitted. "We study the aerodynamics, science, maths, composites and materials involved with racing cars.

"I have done some work experience with the Jaguar F1 team and I am planning to spend some time with BAR this year." Even if he

doesn't make it as a driver, Small looks set for a rewarding career in the glamorous world of motor acing.



■ (Left and above) Russell Small gets to grips with the car he hopes to challenge for the Formula Jedi championship in. (GW9040-4900/4884SP) PICTURES BY GORDON WATT

Bulldogs back in training

Birmingham Bulldogs Rugby Moor Lane ground and new League Club began pre-season players are invited to attend. training this week in preparation The new season kicks of for their Totalrl.com Midlands April 29 and more information is Premier Division campaign.

Training takes place from Young on 07855 769556 or John 7.30pm on Tuesdays at the club's Simkin on 021 707 8773.

The new season kicks off on available by calling Russell



Publishing Details

Published by: Central Independent Newspapers Ltd, Tamworth Printed by Northcliffe Press Midlands. Registered at the Post Office as a Newspaper. Certified July - December 2005 - 32,008. Observer group distribution 90,198.



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