

RACING NEWS



Pearson: first in

PEARSON JOINS BRITISH F4 WITH VIRTUOSI

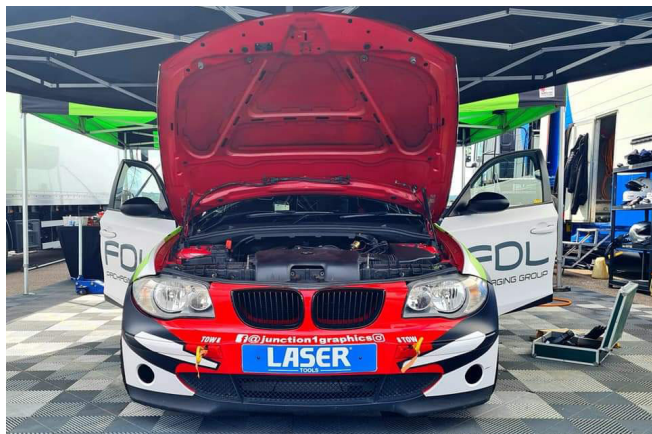
Famous junior single-seater outfit Virtuosi Racing has confirmed its first driver signing for its maiden British Formula 4 campaign this year as Ginetta Junior graduate Edward Pearson.

The 15-year-old from Guildford last year racing with Richardson Racing finished 17th in Ginetta Junior's standings and took his maiden category podium in the Brands Hatch season finale.

Pearson said: "To join such a prestigious team for my first steps on the FIA single-seater pathway is only a benefit for me."

"I'm no stranger to a high level of competition, having raced on the BTCC support package, but I'm aware this will be a new challenge, but one I'm ready to face head on. The car is fantastic, and I can't wait to get the racing underway."

Virtuosi's British F4 team manager Mark Salmon added: "Edward last year showed great potential and gained a good knowledge of all the circuits on the 2022 British F4 race calendar."



New contest will match UK 116 Trophy's regulations

116 TROPHY SET FOR CONTINENTAL SISTER SERIES STARTING AT SPA

Racers in the affordable endurance contest to get opportunities to compete abroad

By Graham Keilloh

The 116 Trophy low-cost BMW 116i endurance series is set for a sister contest based in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium starting with a combined Spa meeting in August.

The mainland Europe series

is headed by Cees Prins, chief operating officer at Circuit Meppen in Germany. Its opener is planned for Spa in August followed by a meeting at 'home track' Meppen.

The UK and mainland Europe series will use the same rules and cars so racers in either can compete in the other. In addition the Baltic

Touring Car Championship has added a 116 Trophy class for 2022.

Prins told Motorsport News: "We are a Dutch company, called Driving-Fun, we are Europe's biggest trackday organisation. We are just missing an affordable racing class with a lot of driving time."

"I was in contact with Ben Wilshire from Driven

International and I saw that he is driving in this class [116 Trophy], so I thought 'hey this is interesting'. We have some racing classes over here but not with a lot of driving time; when you're young you need to drive a lot to gain experience."

UK 116 Trophy coordinator Mark Bate added to MN: "It makes

the [UK] series larger. If we can both race together on a level playing field that's the key; I'm over the moon with that. I can see other smaller European countries maybe taking it on [too], Portugal for instance. The future for the Trophy is as bright as anything. It shows how good this country is at developing things."

Photos: RWillmore Photography, Jakob Ebrey, Euroformula Open



UK series "made larger" by move

RACE WINNER PEARCE BACK FOR MORE MINI TROPHY GLORY

Mini Challenge Trophy race-winner Lee Pearce has confirmed he will continue in the championship in 2022 with Motorwise Motorsport and is looking for regular silverware.

It will be 38-year-old Pearce's third full campaign in the contest. Last year he took a dramatic photo-finish victory in Snetterton's opening meeting, then ended a tough run of mid-

season form by winning again during the year's penultimate meeting at Thruxton. That made Pearce one of only four drivers to win multiple Trophy races last season.

Pearce said: "Last season was one of ups and downs for me, and unfortunately we had a run of bad luck. However [the wins] showed we have the pace to be at the front."

Jonny Sargeant has also confirmed he will continue in the Mini Challenge Trophy this year, in his case with Excelr8 Motorsport for his second season.

The 23-year-old said: "Excelr8 offered me a huge amount of support last year, and I was able to learn a huge amount. My aim [for 2022] would be to try and fight towards the middle of the field."



Mini Trophy racer Pearce has pace to win in third year



Monza podium finisher Mansell (l) steps up for a full-time Euroformula effort in 2022

MANSSELL GOES AND GRUNDTVIG STAYS IN GB3

GB3 race-winner Christian Mansell will step up to a full campaign in the Euroformula Open this season with the CryptoTower Racing Team run by Motopark.

The 16-year-old Australian finished third in GB3's standings last season with two wins for Carlin, and also that year made a handful of Euroformula appearances, split between Carlin and Motopark, taking a best finish of second at Monza.

Mansell said: "Joining them [CryptoTower Racing] for the coming season was a no-brainer. Stepping up to Euroformula Open full-time was the logical next step for me. With a solid pre-season test programme there is no reason why we shouldn't hit the ground running and be in the mix for the title."

Meanwhile Mansell's fellow 2021 GB3 race-winner Mikkel Grundtvig is remaining in the British contest this year for a

second season with Fortec Motorsports.

The 19-year-old Dane also claimed two wins last year, following a season racing in his homeland due to Covid restrictions, wherein he became Danish Endurance champion.

Grundtvig said: "2021 was a crazy year in all aspects but the most I've learned in my career so far. I will take all my experiences with me and even more for this season."

FOSTER GETS INDY PRO 2000 RIDE WITH CHAMPION TEAM

Rising British star Louis Foster will race full-time in America this year in Indy Pro 2000 with champion team Exclusive Autosport.

The 18-year-old finished second in the Euroformula Open championship last year in his first season outside the UK, and during 2021 relocated Stateside for his studies and racing.

The Indy Pro 2000 series is the second rung on the Road to Indy ladder climbing to IndyCar. Foster, with Exclusive Autosport, set the quickest Indy Pro 2000 time in last year's post-season Chris Griffis Memorial test on the Indianapolis road course, and he now joins the team to fight for the

2022 title. The campaign will also involve Foster racing on ovals for the first time.

Exclusive Autosport won the Indy Pro 2000 teams' championship last year and its drivers placed second and fourth in the standings.

Foster said: "I'm really happy with how the Indianapolis test went and if that's a reflection of how our year could go, I'm really looking forward to the challenge."

"The team is really friendly and well organised, and I'm excited to work with them more in the off-season to build on what we've achieved already."



Foster: American dream