

Times news feature

Racing starlet to emulate namesake?

With a surname already synonymous with race wins, world championships and public adulation, Scott Mansell is striving to carve his own niche in motor sport.

Despite being no relation to 1992 World Champion Nigel, 17-year-old Scott is aware that his surname is something of a double-edged sword.

It was a weekend for record breaking for Tamworth's motor sport starlets Scott Mansell and Marlin Plowman who demonstrated their enormous potential by both making racing history. Neale Graham tracks the two teenage sensations

"The Mansell name is good in that it generates interest and people are always asking me about it but it does bring pressure too. But it's the sort of pressure I think I can handle," he said.

The young man from Clifton Campville, near Tamworth, is confident, no

doubt about it, and his belief that he is good enough to get to the top of the tree - F1 - is striking.

He raced in karts from the age of eight, having first driven one at four, and by 2002 he was ready for single seaters.

He needed a special licence which he could only obtain by completing a certain number of races. So he drove 16 Formula Honda and saloon car races in five months in South Africa and England.

When he returned, he piloted a Formula 3000 car in last year's EuroBOSS championship claiming victories in every race he finished and the overall title.

At the start of the year he had planned to move into Formula Ford, one of the bottom rungs on the ladder up to F1, with a new team but it did not materialise.

"It looked really promising and it would have been a good move for me but it wasn't to be. I do see this as a year wasted but I don't think not being in Formula Ford has particularly hindered my progress.

"I mean, I got into the Benetton at EuroBOSS and it all came back to me pretty quickly."

His drive in the EuroBOSS races at Donington at the weekend demonstrated his maturity and reaffirmed his ability to hand pressure.

"There were 100 guests from the main sponsor at the race and if I'd thrown it off the track I'd have looked

pretty stupid. I thought I did well."

Given the costs involved, the EuroBOSS event was a one-off. And to progress his career, Scott, who idolised Ayrton Senna as a child, needs investment.

He requires a budget in the region of £150,000 to fund a move into Formula Renault (from where McLaren title contender Kimi Raikkonen was plucked aged only 20) for next year.

And despite having the support of his father Kevin, himself an ex-racer and who runs his own motor racing team, Scott does not believe that is always to his advantage.

Mansell F1 record

Tamworth's rising racer Scott turned in performances beyond the EuroBOSS championship Park.

The 17-year-old A-level student Benetton-Judd to a pair of weekend when he made his youngest Briton ever to race.

He even had victory in his point when he led with a hard go.

But he was more than a third and a second and with it a partisan crowd and impress

After stepping out of his 199 Benetton, he said: "I'm amazed! But it was brilliant every minute of it.

"It was fantastic to drive th

