

Rowan Cambell-Pilling: Aspiring racing driver giving back to good causes

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Going places fast, on the track and in terms of raising cash for The Children's Hospital Charity in Sheffield, is Rowan Cambell-Pilling. George Loveridge reports...

(Images and words by George Loveridge ©Driving Around for Wheels Alive).

Fresh out of the exam hall, Rowan Cambell-Pilling is a 16-year-old GB4 driver, a hard-working young lad both on and off track. But who is he, what does he race, and what has he



done for his local children's hospital?

Across the UK, it is a fair bet to say that most Year-11 students will be kicking back, partying, and generally enjoying their post-exam lives. However, Rowan Cambell-Pilling is preparing for a season in the BRDC's new championship, GB4. Prior to this, Rowan, 16, has been fast for as long as he can remember.

Having started on trial bikes at 5-years old, Rowan got a sense of speed, agility, and two-stroke smoke. A year of this enthused a passion for motorsport, and subsequently every Wednesday after school, for many years, Rowan would fly around his local go-kart track in Pontefract. As the years and laps piled on, it was clear that he was a cut above the rest of the paddock. Competing in various races and competitions, levelling up to faster karts as he got older - he was on track to getting somewhere serious. Further accolades included plenty of race wins in Kadet Championships.

Now that he is old enough to reach the pedals on some actual cars, Rowan is currently testing for a new motorsport series, called GB4. Sitting in a niche club of less than 40 young drivers, GB4 runs closely with MSV's popular GB3 series. Essentially, the program is a 'cheaper' way for younger drivers to get into motorsport competitively. In the series, prices range from £120,000-£150,000, depending on what sort of package you go for with a respective racing team. Each racing weekend consists of a 15-minute qualifying session followed by three 18-minute race sessions. The winner of the championship will receive £50,000 towards the next year's season.



Each driver must be a minimum of 15 years old to compete. Therefore, Rowan has just got in this year. What will Rowan be driving then? Rowan's car is a TATAS T 014, it doesn't exactly flow off the tongue, does it? Nevertheless, this 570 kg, carbon fibre race car produces 160 bhp from an Abarth-derived turbo-charged engine. Most family hatches have around this power, but we must consider that the car is fully race prepared with an aero package, Pirelli racing slick tyres, and twin wishbone suspension with pushrod actuation. All of which is fully adjustable, making for smarter and faster lap times. With Rowan behind the wheel, the car will lap a 2.5-mile-long circuit in just over one minute!

Rowan works hard physically and mentally to prepare for races and test sessions. As you'd imagine, the tub in these GB4 cars isn't exactly cavernous, therefore Rowan ensures that he is in peak physical condition to stay trim and cope with fast corners and harsh braking zones. Furthermore, focus is extremely important for Rowan, being in control of a 150 mph 'weapon' requires immense concentration and control. Happily, he uses both of those attributes on and off track.



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Following a dedicated stint at school and completing his GCSEs in June 2023, Rowan has been offered a full scholarship at a local sixth-form college, in Sheffield, for his A-Level studies. This was awarded based on his outstanding sporting, educational, and charitable achievements.

As a very young child, Rowan, unfortunately, spent some time in hospital due to a nasty chest infection. Conscious of their efforts, Rowan works hard to fundraise for The Children's Hospital Charity in Sheffield. He has raised several thousand pounds of the last few years! Notably, descending the Sheffield Hallam University, abseiling the 256-ft building. Raising a respectable £3,670 on this one occasion. At this rate, Rowan endeavours to become a Children's Champion for the cause, contributing a further £6,000 a year. Hopefully, this funding can go towards kidney dialysis machines in one of the children's wards.

What's next for Rowan then?

Initially, a good set of GCSE results, and apply for his car theory test and eventually a practical exam! A successful season in the GB4 championship will extend Rowan's profile as a successful young driver. The end goal is to end up in the most prestigious series of them all, Formula 1. Having visited 'Ice Drive Sweden' earlier this year, Rowan drove a BMW 130i on a frozen lake with Tom Canning from Aston Martin Racing. In addition to go-karting wins and formula series races, Rowan is really following in the footsteps of other motorsport heroes, such as Valtteri Bottas and George Russell.

Presently, Rowan's biggest fan and supporter is his father, Rory. They have an extremely strong bond, and when Rowan's not in the car, he'll be in the paddock with his Dad. After all, he is still only 16. Watch out for this name either on the honours list for charity work, or on the grid at Silverstone in Formula 1.

Further Information:



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