



ELLWOOD

Winning one championship in UK motorsport is a feat to be celebrated, but when it comes to Jamie Ellwood, he has a decade's worth of titles to his name – and all of them have been secured while competing under the Caterham Graduates Racing Club banner

Regarded as one of the most competitive single-make categories in the country, the Caterham Graduates Championship has become a must-see attraction at British Automobile Racing Club events, with Ellwood more often than not at the forefront of the action.

This year, the veteran racer – who is aligned with the hugely successful Alpha 7 Motorsport – tallied another championship triumph. It was the latest chapter of an illustrious career that was forged watching legendary names racing at the pinnacle of motorsport.

“My love of motorsport stems from watching Formula One as a teenager,” says Ellwood. “The memories of Mansell, Senna and Hill really stand out for me.

“I didn’t get into the sport through karting. I went straight to the Jim Russell Racing Driver’s School at Donington Park in my early 20s and spent my time on a week-long course learning race craft in single-seater Formula Vauxhall Juniors.”

Having been bitten by the racing bug, it wasn’t long before Ellwood began to map out how he too could race – cue the Caterham Graduates contingent.

“I soon found that the budget needed to carry on in single seaters was a step too far

for me. That's when I came across a Caterham race on Sky Sports. At the end of the programme, there was a number to call if you wanted to get into Caterham racing. I called it and four months later I was sitting on the grid for my first ever Caterham race at Mallory Park – and I've never looked back.

"The huge appeal of Caterham racing for me is the identical cars, great competition and close racing. It makes the battles super close and tactical. What is especially appealing about the Graduates is the friendly club atmosphere that you get year-on-year."

Given the countless podiums, race wins and championship titles that Ellwood has secured down the years, you'd imagine it would be hard to pick out one standout moment in his career, but he doesn't struggle: "It has to be winning 2013 Caterham Mega Championship in the last race at Spa-Francorchamps from 60th on the grid in a borrowed car, making up 52 places to win it by a single point. In a wet first race, my car was damaged beyond



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAKOB EBREY



repair when a competitor spun into me. So, it was an early bath and championship disappointment until another competitor went beyond the call of duty and offered me their car to compete in the final race. Race control allowed it, but I would have to start from the back of the 60-car grid. About 20 minutes of racing later and on the last lap of the last race of the season, I passed the car I needed to get enough points to clinch the championship. It's the only time I've travelled home with a very damaged car, but a big smile on my face."

So, with yet another title to add to his collection, many would ask what the motivation is for Ellwood to continue testing himself at the highest level?

"It's all about the challenge," he admits. "I've been racing now for half my life (quarter of a century) and I'm racing competitors who weren't even born when I first stepped foot in a Caterham. As long as I'm still competitive, I'm still getting the buzz out of racing. But one thing that has changed is, after 15-odd years of spanning and transporting my own car, I now have a fantastic team looking after me. The great team at Alpha 7 have enabled me to continue racing while also having work and family commitments." ♦