

Date of birth- 23rd January 1986

Age- 23

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First race on a road bike- October 2005

First win- November 2005

## Career Highlights

**2004-** British under 21 motocross champion.

**2005-** Rode a road bike for the first time in October.  
And won my first race a month later.

**2006-** Finished 4th in the virgin mobile cup, taking 3 race win.

**2007-** Spanish Supersport champion, took to the podium 5 out of 7 races.  
11th in my first World Supersport race at Vallenga, Italy.  
Set the fastest ever lap around Spanish circuit Albacete on a 600.  
4th in my first 24hour endurance race.

**2008-** 5th place in the 24hr Boldor world endurance race.

**2009-** Rode in British superbikes for Rob McElnea, regular top ten finishes in my rookie year.  
12th place in the suzuka 8 hour endurance race.  
2nd place in Moto2 at Valencia.

# Where it all began?



My first bike was a Honda QR50 when I was just 3 years old, I would take it to enduro races and ride in the woods whilst my dad competed. When I was aged 6 I competed in my first ever motocross competition on an automatic Malagutti, this was to be the start of a roller coaster career.

I won many races and championships as I climbed through the ranks of the automatics, 60cc, 80cc, 100cc and 125cc classes at Club, National and International levels. Experiencing all the highs and lows which are all the characteristics of racing, I often sustained the usual injuries common with the sport, some more serious than others and each time I returned a stronger, more determined, motivated and committed rider.

I took my first British Championship race win in 2001 in the 125cc class, on my return to Britain after having ridden for Team Great Britain in the FIM Junior Motocross World Cup which was held at Talavera in Spain. I was then asked to join the newly formed ACU BYMX Elite Academy in 2002 along with 11 others. The academy offered nutrition advice, fitness routines and riding skills all of which I still use today.

As I had finished 3rd in the 2001 ACU British Youth 125cc Motocross Championship, I took the option to move up to the adult British Championship class at 15 years old. Over the next 4 years I competed in the British Under 21 Championship, Maxxis British MX2 Championship and selected European rounds.

In the autumn of 2003 I left my family and moved to the Midlands, where I could focus totally on my fitness routine and be nearer the tracks to improve my riding skills with my trainer Paul Malin. (ex Grand Prix winner)

It was 2004 which saw me take my first ever adult British title, the ACU British under 21 Motocross Championship. I dominated the championship by taking 7 wins out of 12 races and being on the podium at every round despite riding the final two rounds while suffering from post viral fatigue due to overtraining.



# Taking to Tarmac



2005 saw me out of action for most of the season with a broken collarbone and later a shoulder injury, it was at this point I decided to try my skills elsewhere. So I turned my attention to road racing, having become infatuated by playing Moto GP on my playstation whilst recovering from my illness in 2004.

So I decided in August 2005 to go to the Ron Haslam race school to see if this was the career path I wished to take. Despite riding a road bike with road tyres on, on a very wet Donington Park circuit, I fell in love with the sport. I returned a week later to ride again but this time in dry conditions before making my final decision.

## My First Race

My decision was made and I knew road racing was for me, so my dad and I purchased a written off 2003 Yamaha R6 and made it into a race bike. Two weeks later I turned up with my family to compete in my first event at Elvington, on a bike with the tyres it came with, no tyre warmers and very little experience. The first session was wet but I made good progress throughout the day and took a 2nd place in race 3. I took my first ever road race win at Croft only 4 weeks later.

I managed to compete in 9 meetings before the end of the season and then I decided my aim was to take part in the 12 round one-make Yamaha Virgin Mobile Cup series. The cup meant the bikes were identical, using road tyres and the only adjustment allowed were different clicks on the forks and shock, with the ultimate prize being a Superbike or Supersport ride with Virgin Yamaha. I knew it was ambitious but I love a challenge.



# 2006: My First Full Season

## And winning races

I secured some sponsorship from M&S Motorcycles and despite still being a novice rider I managed to join the 2006 Virgin Mobile Cup series, the support class to the British Superbikes. The cup is a high profile series which is televised on Sky TV and had its own documentary showing riders behind the scenes, televised on Channel 5. This was a huge new experience for me as although I had been on TV before, I was suddenly in the spotlight as here I was an experienced motocross rider, an inexperienced road racer intending to make a huge impression on the road racing circuit against vastly experienced riders.

The first round was at the Brands Hatch Indy circuit and despite racing against riders with 3 to 4 years experience; I took a well earned 4th place. Although I was inexperienced I was constantly in the top 8 during the next 7 rounds and at each event I developed new skills which I could take to the next meeting.

At the mid-season point I decided to do more club racing to learn more race craft and by the time the final 4 rounds of the Virgin Mobile Cup started I was at my best.

I headed to Croft with a new found confidence and took pole position, the holeshot and the largest first lap gap record of over 2 seconds since the series began in 2003. I took the win by almost 6 seconds and my first podium of the series. My next win was at Cadwell Park two weeks later and I took the win by over 14.5 seconds, the biggest winning margin ever in the series.

My 3rd win was at the final round at the Brands Hatch GP circuit, my first ever ride on the full circuit, in atrocious conditions when I made a daring pass in the final corner.

I finished 4th in the championship but I had equalled the number of wins in the series with both the winner and runner up and proved all the doubters that it was possible to go into such a high profile series and be a serious contender so early in my career.

In November 2006 I was given the great opportunity to go out to Spain and take part in three races with the Honda Joe Darcey Team. This was another new experience as I had never ridden a Supersport bike, let alone race gear change, quick shifter, good brakes, race tyres and I was to ride tracks I had never even seen before.



I flew out and met the team and we headed straight to Valencia where I took part in the Catalonian Championship. I took 6th in the race and posted a best time of 1:41.480. I then competed in the final 2 rounds of the Spanish CEV Championship, the first of which was held at Valencia one week later. I was running in 8th place with a lap time of 1:39.711 before I crashed, but was able to remount and finish 25th. The following week I competed at Jerez, this was my first visit to the circuit. The weather was wet on Friday and Saturday for practice and qualifying but the race was dry, so I was in unknown territory but I managed to finish 10th.



# 2007: Spanish Supersport Champion

This was enough for the Honda Joe Darcey Team to offer me a full time ride with the team for 2007. I was to compete with Joe Darcy in the CEV Championship and other selected European rounds. The season got off to a great start, when I managed to claim pole position at the first round at Albacete. I finished the race in 3rd position, which was actually the team's aim for me towards the end of the season. The next round at Catalunya saw me qualify down in 10th but the race was awesome, the closest and most exciting of my career so far. I was in a seven rider battle for the final two podium positions and I crossed the finish line in 3rd place. The third round of the Championship saw me on the podium once again, this time with a 2nd after a hard fought race where positions constantly changed and a lap time which was over three seconds faster than when I rode there in November 2006.



Valencia hosted the 4th round and there was an influx of World Supersport riders, but I was still able to qualify on the second row in 6th with a time just 0.4 seconds off pole. The race didn't go so well after nearly going off the track twice, though I still managed to get 5th place. The next round took us back to Albacete and I took pole position after breaking the fastest ever lap record on a 600. The race started perfectly when I got the holeshot and led, but then the red flags came out and the restart was a disaster. Unfortunately I messed the start up and then ended up in the gravel and rejoined in last place. Having had a ride through penalty for a jump start, I fought my way round the track to finish 7th and those 9 points proved to be vital.

The final two rounds saw an influx of World Supersport riders yet again, but I was running their pace. At Valencia I qualified 3rd before finishing 2nd, passing Josh Brookes in the race. I headed to the final round at Jerez, leading the Championship by six points. I took my third pole position at Jerez and brought home 2nd in the race behind my nearest Championship rival. The season was over and I was crowned 2007 Spanish Supersport Champion, the second foreign rider to accomplish this and the first Brit.

During the summer break of the Spanish Championship, I was a replacement rider for Team Benjan Motoren in 3 rounds of the World Supersport Championship. I scored my first world points at Vallelunga, where I finished 11th. I also competed in my first endurance race when I rode for Catala Motors in the 24 hour Endurance race at Catalunya, where despite a pit lane start in 73rd place we finished 4th after a gruelling 24 hours.

The 2008 season saw me step onto the world stage in only my third season; I was to contend in the World Supersport championship. The highlights of the year was scoring points in the second race of the season at Philip island also running in 6th at Valencia ahead of Johnny Rea, but unfortunately a mechanical problem brought an end to my race while running in the top 6.

I went on to compete in an 8 hour world endurance race at Oschersleben. I rode for the former championship winning team Phase One on a superbike, we narrowly missed out on a podium. I went into the meeting as the least experienced of the three riders, especially on a 1000, but I posted the fastest lap time of the team.



# 2009: British Superbikes



They say everything comes in three's and that was certainly true of my 2009 season. I rode for Rob Mac Racing, Phase One Endurance and FTR/Joe Darcey Honda taking me to ride in Japan and Spain and the UK. I rode in British Superbikes, Suzuka 8hour world Endurance and Spanish Supersport on a Moto 2. This year I also suffered with a broken scaphoid, a broken collarbone and a big toe. I only had 3 DNF races, 2 were down to mechanical problems and the 3rd was my crash at Oulton Park, where my bike took flight and landed distinctively in the lake!

I signed to ride for Rob McElnea's British superbike team on the new Yamaha YZF R1 alongside Chris Walker and Michael Rutter. I had an impressive start to the season at Brands Hatch qualifying on the second row ahead of both teammates. Come the race I finished in 9th position, My times were strong and I was confident but unfortunately in race two I was suffering with rear grip problems and chatter from the outset but managed to get into the points. Round two at Oulton Park was a weekend of

highs and lows, I ran consistently in the top ten during practice however crashed heavily in the first race for pole, resulting in a broken collarbone. I was gutted for the team and gutted I was unable to take any further part as it was looking so promising for qualifying and the race. I now faced a race back to fitness with less than three weeks until the next round. I underwent laser treatment to speed up the rate of recovery to my collarbone though as round three grew closer I knew I wouldn't be back to full fitness. I experienced the fastest crash of my entire career during qualifying at Donington Park. The crash was due to an engine failure; remarkably I didn't aggravate my collarbone or suffer any new injuries during the 140mph crash at Starkey's bridge. Despite the crash I finished with 10th positioning in race one and two holding off BSB champion Leon Camier in the final lap.

My most successful weekend so far in the BSB came in round 6 at Knockhill. I had a great start in the race and for 22 laps I was 7th but the safety car was deployed due to a crash so the pace was slowed, gaps were closed and I finished 8th place behind Chris Walker. Race two I lost ground and dropped to 11th place but pulled it around to finish in 7th, it was a great battle and I was back to full fitness and ready for round 9. Mallory Park was a weekend of controversy for a few, I ran 8th for most of the race until a huge crash on lap 23 where I resulted in my first podium finish of the season.

After Mallory I headed straight to Japan to compete in the Suzuka 8 hour world endurance race for Phase One. The race is arguably the most competitive and most prestigious round of the endurance FIM world championship. I was the only British rider competing, alongside Australian Damo Cudlin and Spaniard Pedro Vallcaneras onboard a 2009 Yamaha R1. The team qualified 34th out of a strong field of 58 teams, I began the race and after a fantastic first hour I had gained nineteen places. I went out for my second stint, where the heavens had opened, a monsoon, the worst and most dangerous weather I had ever ridden in, the bikes were aquaplaning and we were down to 19th. After a gruelling hour and 23 mins I had the team back up to 14th position and a final solid 12th position was brought home by Damo for the phase one team.





On my return to the BSB I broke my toe in three places at round 9, regardless of injuries I had two top ten finishes and a qualifying time only 0.3 seconds of second position at Croft, round ten. Again due to a mechanical problem I was ran into the gravel at round 11 and my weekend was cut short after qualifying in 10th place. My overall finishing Championship position was a well earned 15th place, in a season that has more than impressed the establishment. I have not only had to learn how to ride a Superbike but also the UK tracks, as I had previously only competed one season in the UK on a 600. The year has been a strong learning curve and if it had not been for a few knocks and teething issues with the bike it would have been even better.

## Putting F-TR's Moto2 on the Podium

The year didn't end there, Joe Darcy has teamed up with fabrication techniques (FTR) to produce a Moto2 contender, which is the new class replacing 250's next year in Moto GP. I made my return to the Spanish championship to help develop the new bike. The penultimate round of the Spanish Championship was held at the circuit Jerez, where I finished an impressive fourth in the Moto2 class and thirteenth overall against a field of 1000cc Extreme bikes. This was the first full race for the FTR Moto2 machine, finishing just 3.5 seconds behind the first-placed Moto2 machine and ahead of current Grand Prix rider Joan Olive.

The final round of the Spanish Championship was to be held at Valencia, we were fully prepared after 2 days testing at the Almeria track and ready to race. The weekend saw an increased number of moto2's, with 11 entered including current and ex-grand prix riders such as Joan Olive, Shuei Aoyama, Roby Rolfo and Anthony West. I made a good start to what was an exciting race, the extreme bikes were getting the better of me due to the outright horse power on the straights, but I would re-take them by braking later into the corners. I was aggressive from the drop of the flag and passed under two extreme bikes into turn two and I was up to 14th place. In a dice with two

more extreme bikes plus moto2 rival Daniel Arcas, I went on to post my best lap time of the weekend 1:37.7, I pulled from Arcas and gapped the two extreme bikes. I began to close in on moto2 class winner Rivas by 0.6seconds a lap with 6 laps to go. I finished 12th overall in the combined class and an excellent 2nd in Moto2 with the 1st place Moto2 Daniel Rivas who was just in front in 11th place. Considering the machine only ran for the first time six weeks before Valencia and some of the other Moto2 machines had been running since January I think the future for the FTR machine is really exciting and helped me end my year on a high.



## **Steve Bones- FTR Director**

“An incredible focus on proving the potential of our Moto2 machine has been firmly achieved, but Graeme's performance here at Valencia could not have been better.”

“His performance was everything one could have hoped for from a talented and clearly determined and motivated young racer, Graeme did the perfect job this weekend and its credit to him and the Joe Darcey team.”

## **Russel Benney- Phase one team manager:**

“It's been lovely discovering a new British rider to our sport, Graeme has turned out to be a few tenths quicker than Damian Cudlin, which was beyond my expectations.”

“The revelation of the meeting for me was Graeme Gowland, Graeme posted the fastest lap of the team, I am extremely keen on working with him again.”

## **Rob McEInea- Virgin cup boss:**

‘It's great for Graeme to win here today; he deserves it as he is what the virgin mobile cup is all about. He has come from a motocross background and it's only his first season in road racing and he has beaten everyone else.’

“Graeme's confidence is on a high and he has the rest of his rival's worried! He needed the win at croft to give him self belief and now he's never looked back.”

## **Gary Pinchin- Motorcycle News:**

“The interesting thing is how long it's taken Rutter and Walker to get their heads around how the Yamaha delivers its power in a different way to anything they've ridden before, while BSB rookie Gowland, with no real preconceptions of how a superbike should feel, has virtually matched the times, track to track, of his more experienced team-mates.”