

Motorcycling with John Savage

Cummins and Martin for Suzuki

Popular Manxman Conor Cummins will partner Lincolnshire's Guy Martin in the Tyco Suzuki team in this year's international road races, after 25 year old Cummins put pen to paper with TAS Racing last Wednesday.

Father and son Hector and Philip Neill's Moneymore based team will again spearhead the official Suzuki campaign in this year's three international road races - North West 200, Isle of Man TT and Ulster Grand Prix - together with the British Superbike Championship.

29 year old Martin rode for TAS Suzuki in Relentless livery last year and at the Adelaide Enkalon Irish Motorcycle Awards in Belfast last Friday evening, Hector Neill confirmed that the most colourful individual in road racing has re-signed for the squad, which this term will run in Tyco Security colours.

Martin will race Tyco Suzukis at the three international road races, together with selected road races.

Cummins courageously returned to action last year, after he sustained critical injuries in a much publicised, high speed, life threatening crash during the Isle of Man Senior TT race in 2010.

Travelling at around 150mph, Cummins leaned his Kawasaki ZX10-R superbike into one of the four consecutive right hand corners that lead onto The Verandah on the mountain section of the 37.73 miles Snaefell mountain circuit, lost control and tumbled some 200 yards down the side of the mountain.

He broke his back in five places, dislocated a leg, destroyed a knee, broke an arm in four places, fractured his pelvis and left shoulder blade, and underwent months of surgery and rehabilitation.

Cummins, who has long associations with Irish racing, raced for Dungannon man Winston McAdoo last year, and the Ramsey rider beamed: "This is the ride I've been wanting for three or four years. I'm thrilled to have been given the chance to ride for a factory supported team in Tyco Suzuki and to be working with the boys at TAS Racing."

Conor, who will also contest a number of British National Superstock 1000 Championship rounds, plus selected road races, including the Southern 100 in the Isle of Man in July, explained: "I've been training hard with gym sessions and out on the

pushbike and mountain bike over the winter, so I'm relishing the thought of getting aboard the team's GSX-R1000 superbike in testing.

"I'd say I'm not far off being as fit as I ever was and having been over to the workshop to meet the boys in Northern Ireland and have a look at my bikes, April can't come quick enough to get racing."

Team manager Philip Neill enthused: "After months of speculation and negotiations, it's great to finally welcome Conor Cummins to our team for the 2012 international road racing season.

"It's fair to say there has been a little bit of pressure to return to a two rider team on the roads, so once we'd reached that decision, Conor really was the obvious choice. I've always been hugely impressed with Conor and his riding skills were evident to all after those blistering lap speeds at the 2010 TT."

Neill underlined: "Probably more impressive is the determination he has shown in his comeback from injury and, for me, that was more than enough to justify a factory supported ride with us at Tyco Suzuki. I'll be looking forward to working with Conor both on and off the track this season, as he has the attitude and personality I was really looking for in a rider."

Team owner, Hector Neill, added: "It's no secret the Isle of Man TT is the highlight of the racing season for me and with that in mind it was important to have a two rider line up. It's also widely known that my number one desire in racing is to again win a Senior TT trophy, so what better way than to win it with a Manxman on board?"

Carrickfergus man Alastair Seeley and Australian Josh Brookes will head up the Tyco Suzuki challenge in the British Superbike Championship, while Seeley, who has carved out a reputation as one of the men to beat at the North West 200, will join Cummins and Martin on Tyco Suzukis at this May's big event over the high speed Portstewart-Coleraine-Portrush triangle.



Guy Martin gets his first look at one of the Tyco Suzukis he will race this year.

Seeley is Motorcyclist of the Year

Alastair Seeley was announced Enkalon Irish Motorcyclist of the Year, at the Adelaide Motorcycle Awards in Belfast last Friday evening.

It's the first time the diminutive Carrickfergus man has won the coveted Joey Dunlop Trophy, which was inaugurated in 1976, and has previously been won by the great and the good of Irish motorcycle racing.

The award is so prized, because the winner is decided on a public vote and Seeley emerged top of the poll, ahead of Ballymoney's Michael Dunlop and World Superbike Championship star Eugene Laverty, from Toomebridge -

Dunlop was named Road Racer of the Year, while Laverty picked up the award for Short Circuit Rider of the Year.

The evening crowned another tremendous year for the TAS Suzuki equipe, which again collected the Team of the Year award.

2010 British National Superstock 1000 champion Seeley, who won last year's British Supersport Championship for the team, together with the only race staged at last May's North West

200, also won the accolade for the Race of the Year, following his epic duel with title rival Ben Wilson from Lincolnshire in the pulsating Brands Hatch Supersport finale.

TAS Racing team manager Philip Neill beamed: "It's always nice to be recognised for your achievements and the local awards are always special, as we never forget our fan base at home.

"Alastair had a great year in 2011, taking the British Supersport title and the Supersport race at the North West, but it's a team effort and these awards are as much for all our team members as they

are for my father and I. It's a great boost for Alastair before he kicks off his British Superbike campaign with the team at Easter."

Antrim's John Simpson, who won last year's British Supersport Cup Championship was adjudged Young Rider of the Year, while Keith Farmer from Clogher, last year's runaway British National Superstock 600 champion, and Fermanagh man Andrew Brady, winner of last year's Senior Manx Grand Prix, each received Merit Awards.

Dungannon's Ryan Farquhar received the Geoff Duke Trophy for winning the Duke Road

Race Rankings for the fourth time on the trot and for the sixth time in all, while Michael Rutter received an International Achievement Award in recognition of his record seventh Macau Grand Prix triumph last November and his illustrious North West 200 pedigree.

Bangor man Steven Cull was inducted into the Irish Motorcycle Racing Hall of Fame.

During his illustrious career, Steven won two Isle of Man TT races, scored six North West 200 wins and won three times at the Ulster Grand Prix, together with 44 Irish road race wins.

Ardsman Kirk Jamison, who was one of the 15 nominees for the Irish Motorcyclist of the Year award and finished sixth in the voting, was also amongst the silverware recipients.

The Greyabbey based rider enjoyed a phenomenal 2011 season, during which he won both the Irish and Ulster Superbike Championships, the Irish Superstock crown and the Adelaide Mondello Masters series, and he received the Masters trophy at the awards.

Special guest, British Superbike champion Tommy Hill, was presented with an Outstanding Achievement Award.



Alastair Seeley, flanked by Philip and Hector Neill. Steven Davison/Pacemaker Press International



Steven Cull was inducted into the Hall of Fame by fellow former road race ace Phillip McCallen. Steven Davison/Pacemaker



Kirk Jamison had reason to smile after he received the Adelaide Masters trophy. Steven Davison/Pacemaker Press International