



GOODYEAR



Hawksworth 'over-the-moon' to be selected as McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist

Less than a month after being crowned 2012 Star Mazda Champion towards the end of his maiden campaign of competition the other side of the Pond, Jack Hawksworth has admitted that he is 'over-the-moon' to have been selected as a finalist for the coveted McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award.



Hawksworth wrapped up the Star Mazda laurels for Team Pelfrey with one of his finest victories of a record-breaking rookie season at Laguna Seca in early September. As a result of his outstanding stateside form this year, the talented Bradford-born speed demon has been invited to attend a six-driver shoot-out at Silverstone in November, where he and his fellow first-time McLaren AUTOSPORT finalists will be pitched against one another in a trio of cars representing the sport's three principal disciplines – single-seaters, tin-tops and endurance.

The sextet will be assessed by a panel of expert judges including ex-grand prix star and current British Racing Drivers' Club (BRDC) president Derek Warwick, two-time British Touring Car Champion Jason Plato, DTM ace and former award-winner Jamie Green, McLaren head of vehicle engineering Mark Williams, circuit commentator Ian Titchmarsh and AUTOSPORT journalists Kevin Turner and Marcus Pye.

Whilst out-and-out raw pace will clearly be a key criterion, in order to prevail, the successful candidate will also need to demonstrate an aptitude for consistency and feedback, a strong mental approach, excellent presentation and media skills and tip-top physical fitness. The judges are looking, in other words, for the complete package – and Hawksworth is determined to prove he is precisely that.

“I was delighted when I received the ‘phone call, absolutely over-the-moon,” confessed the 21-year-old BRDC Rising Star and TORGOEN Swiss brand ambassador. “It’s brilliant! Just to be given the chance to drive cars like that round Silverstone is something pretty special all in itself – and one that very few people ever get.

“I’ve not driven any of the three cars before and I’ve never driven any racecar with a roof on it so that will certainly be a different kind of challenge, but it will be really interesting to see what they’re like. They all look awesome pieces of machinery!



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“It should be a spectacular experience and I’m really excited about it all; it’s such a fantastic opportunity, and I’m proud to have been chosen as a finalist. If you’re competing in single-seaters – be it in Britain, Europe or the USA – the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award is the one thing every young British driver dreams of being part of, and I just want to enjoy it and give it my very best shot.”

The winner will be revealed at the glittering AUTOSPORT Awards ceremony in London at the beginning of December, and will receive £100,000, a McLaren-Mercedes F1 test, full BRDC membership and a TW Steel watch. Previous recipients of the accolade include four-time IndyCar Champion Dario Franchitti – in whose illustrious wheeltracks Hawksworth is bidding to follow – 2009 F1 World Champion Jenson Button, 13-time grand prix-winner David Coulthard and Indy Lights race-winner Stefan Wilson.



“In hindsight, at the end of last year, I wouldn’t have been ready for an opportunity like this, but now I feel a lot stronger all-round and I’m confident I can give a good account of myself,” asserted the highly-rated Cullingworth hotshot. “It’s funny; you think you know everything, and at this point in 2011, I certainly thought I was pretty clued-up on it all – and then it turns out a year later that I didn’t actually know anything!

“This has been a career-saving year for me, if I’m honest. It’s been absolutely key in that it’s really put me back on the map. Last year didn’t go quite the way I’d wanted it to, so to return to victory lane 12 months on is just amazing. When I look at everything I’ve learned and the amount of progress I’ve made, it’s been a complete transformation. I’ve matured a lot and improved in every single area – I’m a much tougher competitor now.

“I’m going to approach the test at Silverstone like I do every race weekend – to go there and do the best job I can. The prize is fantastic, and winning it would be awesome, a career-changing moment. I can’t even begin to imagine how unbelievable that would be – just out-of-this-world.

“It’s such a prestigious award and if you look at the drivers who have won it before, I think it opens a lot of doors. It’s probably one of the greatest things that can happen to a young driver and really generates some momentum behind the winner. I’ll give it absolutely everything I’ve got – and hopefully, that will be enough.”

You can follow Jack’s career at www.jackhawksworth.co.uk and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/Jackhawk91>



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