



FORMULA RENAULT

Palmer secures FR2.0 move

MCLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC AWARD WINNER
Will Palmer is to compete in the Formula Renault Eurocup and Northern European Cup this year after securing a deal to race with the French ART Junior Team.

Palmer, who dominated the BRDC Formula 4 Championship last season with 12 wins from 24 races, will contest 14 Renault 2.0 race weekends, including the Eurocup round supporting the Monaco Grand Prix.

The 18-year-old has already made his FR2.0 debut, when he raced with ART in the Eurocup round at Silverstone last September (pictured above).

"I think by doing both campaigns I get a lot of racing so that's a lot of time to learn and improve – and also just to learn a lot of European circuits," Palmer told *Autosport*. "By doing NEC as well, between the two series I'll be doing pretty much every European F1 track, which will be helpful for whatever I do in the future."

"I've known ART since I did the wildcard round at Silverstone when I did the Eurocup, and I got on really well with them then. They seemed like a great team and we've been having discussions over the past couple of months for 2016 and in the end it turned out to be the best option – they've got a very good engineering base and they're a great team of people. I'm sure they'll be able to provide me with a car capable of fighting for wins."

Palmer tested for Carlin's European Formula 3 team at Valencia last month, while he also sampled the GP3 Series – again with ART as well as with Arden and DAMS – in the post-season Abu Dhabi test, with one of the days part of his prize for clinching BRDC F4 honours.

Pointing to the domination of Prema Powerteam in Formula 3 in recent years, Palmer felt that his Formula Renault move was a more prudent one in the interest of his career prospects.

"The main thing for me is looking at the long-term picture," he said. "Realistically, doing Formula 3 you need to be with Prema to win it, which does make it difficult to move into a series like that when these seats are so hard to get – and it's so expensive as well."

"I think it's better to do a championship where I can really fight for victories and for the championship straight away, which I wasn't sure I'd be able to do in Formula 3 given the situation with teams."

"It's a very tough championship for rookies so I felt that given the extra racing I get with Formula Renault, it's a better platform to launch into other series."

Palmer will line up against fellow Briton Lando Norris, who won the rival MSA Formula title last season. The 16-year-old reached an agreement last November to race with Josef Kaufmann Racing.

CARRERA CUP GB

SCHOLAR EASTWOOD OPTS FOR REDLINE

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB scholar Charlie Eastwood will drive for the championship-winning Redline Racing team this year.

The 20-year-old was selected as the 2016/17 scholar last November and follows the path taken by previous winner Josh Webster, who also raced for Redline in his rookie season.

Eastwood tested with three teams at the end of last year but decided that Redline – whose drivers have won the title every year since 2010 – was the right team to race for.

"It's the best possible position to be in," said Eastwood. "I wanted to give myself the best chance to try to do something this year, and I feel that's with Redline."

"I've only tested the car in the wet but I was on the pace; it's still the same car, just with wets on it."

While Webster won the championship in his first year in 2014, Eastwood is likely to face a much stronger grid in his maiden season following the series' rejuvenation last year.

"I will focus on trying to win the rookie championship this year, with it being a two-year scholarship," he said.

Eastwood joins reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Tom Oliphant in Redline's Pro driver ranks.

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