

SKETCHY BY NAME

BUT NOT BY NATURE

Words: Glen Williams Pics: Dallas Alexander & Glen Williams

Glen Skachill is one of a new breed of road-racers coming through the system. In his short career thus far he has had some big results and made an impact at club level and recently at national level. We asked Glen Williams to have a chat with this rising talent and get the low down on his current and future plans.

I didn't know much about Glen Skachill aka 'Sketchy', until this past year's national road race series where I got to race against the lad himself in the Formula 3 class. It was plainly obvious that he had a talent to ride a bike quickly and consistently, so it was good to catch up with him again at a recent Victoria Club's race winter series race meet on a cold damp winter's day and check up on his progress.

Glen's dad (Malcolm) is a motorcycle enthusiast and owns a road bike – but his mum was not keen on them

so in the early days this motorcycle racing lark was a moot point within the family. This did not quell the enthusiasm of Glen and at the age 15 he managed to acquire himself a bucket racer after his mate Bayden took him to a local race meeting and thus his journey began. "We used to all head off to the General Motors car park in Upper Hutt, Wellington mostly and race buckets whenever we could, it taught me a lot about racing in close proximity to other riders and how to be smooth and maximise what little power we had to play with."



He stuck with the bucket racing for a couple of seasons and at one of these meetings Doug Juggins offered him a ride at Manfeild on a Suzuki RG150 streetstock bike.

He loved it and not long after he had his own Kawasaki 150 road bike converted into a race bike (after crashing it on the road a bit too much). He completed the winter streetstock series that year on it.

"The 150 was cool and riding on a proper racetrack was clearly the way to go." The only problem is that if he was to persevere with racing he was going to have to pay for everything himself and thus pretty much every cent he earned went into his racing passion. He won the 150 Streetstock Championship in 2006 and finished second in the 250 class on the same bike.

At the end of 2006 he really wanted to move up to a proper race bike as Glen explains, "I got all of my stuff together and sold literally every single thing I owned, including some stuff I didn't really own as well (laughs). This

QUICK FIRE STATS:

Age: 19
 Weight/Height: 65kg/178cm
 Marital Status/Children: Taken, and certainly not old enough to be a parent!
 Occupation: Engineering Apprentice
 First bike: Kawasaki KH100
 Home base: Kapiti Coast
 Favourite track: Ruapuna
 Favourite band/music: Old School Rock.
 Favourite Movie: Is a MotoGP race a movie?
 Other hobbies: Bucket race bike building, two-stroke engine tuning
 Most respected road racer: I can't choose, there's so many top guys' out there!
 Dream broolly dolly: Only one???? I can't pick...
 Best race advice given: To finish first, first you must finish.
 Best race advice to give: Just get out there and give it your best!



gave me just enough money to purchase a 1997 Honda RS125 GP bike that was in running order. It was a pretty good bike - but my mechanical skills were atrocious and it was a big learning curve for me to try to keep the thing running.

"I only ever used second hand parts and old tyres, and it was really hard to keep the bike competitive with that sort of gear." One thing it did teach him though is to maximise the use of what he did have and to ride the bike darn hard to stay at the pointy end of the field. "I did have some good results on that bike and this included finishing second in that year's Taupo Road Race spectacular event.

Then he took the 125 bike to the following year's Victoria Club winter series in 2007. "Unfortunately I had a huge crash coming onto the front straight of Manfield, me and the bike ended up running into where the pit wall starts and, I kid you not the only

item we salvaged from the bike was the carburettor! Every other piece of the bike was broken, frame, wheels, forks, even the motor cracked in half." Glen didn't fare too much better as he smashed both kneecaps (ouch). "I had some "Forest Gump walking frames on my legs for quite a while after that one."

Five months later he purchased a bit of a ratty 1994 model Honda RS125GP bike - and managed to win the 2007 Taupo spectacular event on it, but after that it was time to sell everything again which he did and decided become part of the Steve Bagshaw run Moto-Academy rider development program. "This went really well and Steve and the guys were really good to me, even letting me ride the 250GP bike for the 2008 Victoria Club season - which was great fun and a good stepping stone toward me and a mate (Jason McCamish) purchasing a GSXR600K4 production bike." Glen and Jason managed to win the three-hour endurance race at Taupo on that machine in late 2008 from the likes of experienced campaigners Hayden Fitzgerald and Jeremy Holmes.

A call from Chris Osborne to come and test his special three cylinder Ozzy 450 was the next opportunity that became available and this resulted in Glen getting to ride that bike in the North Island rounds of the NZ nationals in the Formula 3 class earlier this year. The combination of Glen and the Ozzy450 was immediately successful with lap records at both Manfield and Pukekohe being set and three national race wins including the



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NZ TT title at Pukekohe.

"It was my first time at Pukekohe and the bumps and concrete walls were pretty intimidating." Chris Osborne was suitably impressed with Glen and comments, "Glen is a really nice guy and for someone of his age he asks intelligent questions about the bike and different riding techniques - he also listens well and

is a fast learner taking information on-board quickly." Chris noted that Glen is a rider that lays down very consistent lap times which is another sign of a good rider.

"I can personally attest to Glen's riding skills on the Formula 3 bike having shared the track pretty closely with him in that class, and he showed me first hand that he is a very tidy rider that keeps the wheels in line and learnt race tactics and race track layouts quickly."

This 2009 winter off-season has seen a further collaboration and mentoring with NZ seasoned racer Shaun Harris (Moto-Dynamix) and Chris Osborne helping set up the Suzuki GSX-R600K4 for him in the winter series. This teamwork appears to be having an effect, with winter lap times in the low 1min 10sec bracket at Manfield showing that Glen is indeed continuing his vertical learning curve of self-improvement.

The team is set to continue and they now have a 2008 model Suzuki GSX-R600 to campaign later this year which should hopefully see this 'Sketchy' racer step up to even higher levels and secure further top results. Check out Glen's race website and his supporters at www.skachillracing.co.nz