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## **SACU CB500 NATIONAL CLASS STATUS ANNOUNCED FOR 2018**

With the announcement of Scottish national status by the S.A.C.U for the CB500 class in Scotland, there are already predictions that a situation we have not seen in Scotland for a very long time may take place. The idea of full grids even necessitating the use of heats to qualify at some point during the year may actually take place, judging by upwards of 25 riders racing this year. This last time this happened was in the now defunct 400cc production racing well over a decade ago.

The move by the S.A.C.U and race committee has to be seen as commendable and is seen as a just reward for the riders who have championed the class over the last few seasons. An 8-round series split between Knockhill and East Fortune is to be confirmed and dates still to be announced but the class will run in its own guise.

If you want to look into affordable racing, the only one class certainly in Scotland that can lay claim to this moniker and that is CB500 racing.

The term “shopping bike”, “pizza delivery bike” has been thrown about for quite some time normally with a nod to Supertwins racing. It is also true that the terminology has been banded about freely by top TT regulars and suchlike when the talk of Supertwins enters conversation in drawing comparison to their faster Supersport and Superbike machines.



For sure there is the possibility that some were originally used as commuter/delivery transport fleetingly, but they could not be more farther removed from the original when built up into race bike trim. Bikes throwing out 90bhp plus depending what dyno you read and the use of proper race parts and ancillaries do not make for an affordable class when you hear of upwards of five figure sums being spent on machines, however spectacular the actual racing is nationally and internationally for your average club or national runner you are going to be limited securing a competitive budget.

CB500 racing however does actually deliver what is the nearest to affordable motorcycle class racing in recent times, and we will explore the reasons for this and breakdown just how wallet friendly the class can be.

The term CB500 firstly has to be opened up a little, as GS500 and ER500 derivatives are also eligible for racing, of which a smattering has appeared at Scottish circuits over the last couple of years.

The humble CB500 is no new kid on the pizza delivery block, it has since the late 90s been around as a race class and spawned the likes of James Toseland, James Ellison and Richard Cooper who have all went on to international success in MotoGP, WSB and BSB respectively.

Perhaps the appeal of the class has always been, no tuning, no skullduggery and plain and simple close racing. Also, it has an appeal for the newbie or returning racer in that the effect of crash damage is more often than not minimal, often no more than not a footrest, lever or handlebar will take the brunt of an encounter with terra firma or a run off area.



A look at the lap times of the front runners to the rear runners who are racing up here indicate a difference of 9 seconds throughout a twenty-five rider plus field. You only have to look at the mid field runners to see that as many as 8 riders can be squabbling for a top ten placing with no more than a few seconds covering the riders at race end, and that frankly is what racing is all

about.

There has of course been a plethora of one make series stretching back to KH250 and LC racing of the 70s and 80s and controlled series such as CB500 at BSB level, but the beauty of this class is that there are still a glut of cheap donor bikes around on eBay and Facebook groups that can be had for spares and repair, keeping the cost down even further without having to use designate suppliers.

With the racing so close throughout the field everyone out racing has someone to hunt or be hunted. This not only improves race craft it also improves the experience for the spectator as there is quite literally always something going on.

The level here in Scotland is a very good indicator of where the class is nationally with Jodie Chalk and Roddy Taylor regularly up at the sharp end in the UK Thundersport series as well as here when they return to Scotland.

Here is what Roddy had to say about the class **“Never laughed so much or had as much fun racing a bike. For those that think it is just a fun class think again, the front runners are pushing to and beyond the limits and are as good as any I have come across. ”**

Taylor took a twenty-eight-year break from racing and had raced Internationally against the best riders in 250 and 350GP racing. **“I have raced against and beat World Champions and the CB500 class in not lacking in talent and that goes for the future or the past”**

Look a little further down the road and the class has a natural pathway to the top circuits in the UK. The same machines can be used at national level and the opportunity to compete with the best exponents in the class are just a motorway journey away.

Coupled with another feature of the class in that there is regular Thundersport TV channel coverage on You Tube with slick camera work, all really aiding riders who want a step up nationally and also offering new and existing partners valuable media exposure should you want to venture South.



## HOW MUCH?

There are two routes to the race bike, one is buy a road bike and the other is buy an already raced machine. You will be able to pick up a good race bike with all the mods for £1500.00. The alternative is build your own and source parts.

I chose the latter, and now that the bike is up and running it has been worthwhile, as well as giving an idea of what can go wrong it seems like the way forward race wise for me.

Make sure you have access to a good engineer or the right kit for the job as things like engine mount bolts and exhaust studs can really set you back when attempting a build. Below are some of the costings, it should give you an idea of what you need to get hold off before you get out on the grid.

CB500 Honda 2000 (S/H)	£580.00
Replacement Forks and Stansions	£220.00
Hagon Progressive Front (S/H)	£80.00
Rearsets (S/H)	£80.00
Wet Tyres (S/H)	£60.00
Dry Tyres (S/H)	£60.00
Chain and Sprockets	£100.00
Pads and Brake Lines	£100.00
Radiator	£95.00
Bodywork, Belly Pan and Numberboard	£45.00
Oil	£24.00
Bars, Grips and cables	£60.00
Caliper and Master cylinder (S/H)	£70.00
Misc Cables, fasteners	40.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1654.00</b>

These are just the machine costs, I have been very fortunate to have race partners who have taken care of engineering jobs and supplied things like exhaust systems, race looms, carb cleaning and engine removal etc, all of which would amount to a considerable expense. Things like paddock stands and tyre warmers will add another £200.00 to the equation, as well as £500.00 for riding gear, but you may already have all of that in the lock-up or garage.

Adding all of this up you are looking at having a competitive race package for 2018 and Scottish National Status Championship for the sum of £ **2354.00** or less.

I am sure there are plenty others that have managed to do it a lot cheaper, and the very best of luck if you can. The build that I undertook was somewhat naive but was fortunate to glean a lot of information along the way from the Scottish racing community and the specific facebook pages associated with the class.

#### **WHAT THE RIDERS SAY:**

Scott Young **“I think because everyone in the paddock is on a similar machine and it is all about the rider there is no need for a ten-grand bike. The riders I race with are awesome and when I had a crash the whole CB paddock rallied round to get me back out. That in itself shows how good the class is and how friendly the people are.”**

Allan Brookbanks **“Please advise people to think very hard before entering this class! They will undoubtedly enjoy it so much it will rob them of all rational thought, jabbering excited nonsense every time they finish a race about elbow to elbow dices, dodgy passes on the brakes, near misses, slipstreaming, close racing etc. This gibberish generally lasts until the nerves set in 10 minutes before the next race. A health and sanity warning should/ must be issued!!!”**

Garfield Chalk **“I have been racing for a million years now, and I can honestly say, I don’t think I have seen such enthusiasm and goodwill amongst any group of racers. This CB500 class will go from strength to strength. However, we should also be aware of all the hard work that has gone into this from the Melville Club, David Paton and especially Diana Dyce, as well as people like Alan Brookbanks, Colvin Denholm and Jimmy Shanks.”**

Colvin Denholm **“Having raced at places like the TT over the years, all I can say is that is the best fun and an affordable class for just about anyone, every meeting just gets better and better.”**

Chris Richal **“The best fun you can have with your clothes on.”**

#### **WHAT ARE THE RULES:**

[Thundersport 500 Regulations](#)

#### **USEFUL CONTACTS IN SCOTLAND:**

[Scottish Auto Cycle Union](#)

[Melville Motor Club](#)

[Knockhill Circuit](#)

[Ride Scotland Magazine](#)