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Auckland teen's need for speed

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By Andy McGechan

There will be some testing times ahead for New Zealand motorcycle road-race sensation Avalon Biddle.

The Orewa girl has passed the first selection stage and is now getting ready to step on to the European stage this coming season.

Biddle will be travelling to Europe to take part in a rigorous selection test that she'll need to pass if she's to race in the Red Bull MotoGP Rookies Cup competition in 2010.

She survived the initial elimination process – thanks to a stunning career CV from her racing in this part of the world and also thanks to Palmerston North-based Moto Academy New Zealand manager Steve Bagshaw putting in a "few good words" on her behalf – but now the really hard part begins.

This weekend she flies out to northern Italy with her father (Keith), to pit herself against the world's cream of teenage road-racers, at the Adria circuit, just south of Venice, on October 6.

Only a very small number of riders at that test day will be invited to join the Rookies Cup competition for 2010.

"We're just coming out of our winter ... when the race scene here is pretty quiet ... and after she's been out with a broken leg for a while, so that's not good," said Keith Biddle.

"But it's an exciting opportunity for her. It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

Biddle finished fourth overall in the 125GP class at last season's New Zealand Superbike Championships – despite crashing and breaking her leg in the day's first race at the final round.

She impressed throughout the series with her ability to challenge for the title.

The teenager also raced her Honda RS125 to victory in the 125cc Grand Prix at Ruapuna Park, in Christchurch, earlier in the season, becoming only the second woman in the sport's history to win a GP title.

The first woman to win a GP title in New Zealand was Nelson's Karel Pavich (Yamaha), who took the 250GP title in January last year.

"I'm really excited about going to Italy," said Avalon. "It's pretty special and a great opportunity. It may open so many doors for me.

"I'll certainly be giving it my best shot."

Christchurch rider Nick Cain and Wellington's Luke Jamieson completed these trials last season but were not fortunate enough to make the final selection.

The calendar for the 2010 Red Bull MotoGP Rookies Cup has yet to be finalised but is due to start next year in Jerez at the Spanish Grand Prix.



Hopeful: Avalon Biddle is set to test the waters in Europe.
Photo / Andy McGechan, BikeSportNZ.com