

MOTORCYCLING



Local stars Glenn McCormick and Martin Barr are introduced



Local star Martin Barr

Thrilling Arenacross Tour breaks Belfast records

The first two rounds of the Arenacross Tour proved to be a box-office-busting sell out showdown at The SSE Arena, Belfast this weekend with capacity crowds filling the arena on both Friday and Saturday evening.

The gathered audience were treated to world-class racing from the aggressively competitive Pro 450 and Pro Lites, with French racers Greg Aranda and Cedric Soubeyras giving a master class of Arenacross racing.

The youth classes and, exclusive-to-Belfast All-Ireland Cup, also provided non-stop entertainment with some early championship contenders emerging across the groups.

The Fix Auto FMX crew were as skilful and flamboyant as ever in their endeav-

our to win the adoration of the excitable fans, with Arran Powley, recovering seemingly unscathed from a hard backflip landing crash, winning the biggest cheer of the night.

These guys are clearly made of the hard stuff as he was back out in the next set with his FMX AX family of Dan Whitby, Samson Eaton, Nez Parker and Petr Pilat.

Not only did Arenacross break box office records, but it also set the bar for the longest flowing Mexican wave as when, egged on by hosts Matt Crowhurst and Jeff Perrett, the Belfast fans simply couldn't sit back down.

On the racing front, the Pro 450s was all about Aranda. The uber-smooth Team Green Kawasaki rider remained unbeaten all day, from free practice right

through to the Main Event Super Final.

He had to work for his living in the final though as FRO Systems' Cedric Soubeyras tore off the start line, grabbing the holeshot and leading the race right up until two-thirds race distance. Back in fourth Aranda first picked off Buildbase Honda's Adrien Escoffier and then SR75 Suzuki's Valentin Teillet in his charge to the front.

He closed on Soubeyras and then charged through to the front. Behind him Soubeyras kept his cool to take second and with Teillet in third, placed two 250s on the podium. Brit Jack Brunell (Team Green Kawasaki) had a storming ride to finish fourth.

Northern Ireland's Martin Barr crashed earlier in

the evening and sadly, a broken hand ruled him out of continuing through to the final, he promised to be back at Birmingham and saying: "Despite the injury, I really enjoyed the whole evening. The crowd were unbelievable and I'm now concentrating on getting fit in time for Birmingham."

In the Youth classes, it was repeat business in all three classes with Ben Clayton powering past Josh Greedy in the Rookies to take maximum points, and the championship lead.

Alfie Jones performed the same feat in the Team Green Supermini Cup, as did Freddie Bartlett in the Youth 65. James Mackrel was again dominant in the All-Ireland Cup.



Martin Barr and Portugal's Diogo Graca in action during the heats.



Gregory Aranda took overall victory on his Team Green Kawasaki