Last month, five Toot Hill students entered the prestigious F1 in schools completion. It was the first time we had entered the competition, which is open to all years including sixth form. We came second in our class, a remarkable feat considering we were in our rookie year and were up against teams who had been established for a number of years. On top of this we were awarded ‘Best sponsorship and Marketing’ at the event. I as a member of that team, I would like to share my experience with you and give you of sense of what an amazing opportunity, the school is offering in the form of these competitions.

First, let me give you some background information about the competition .The challenge is to design, develop, manufacture and present a miniature Co2 powered car to race at more than 60kph. Cars race side-by-side along 20-metre straights. Teams are judged on car speed, the supporting evidence of their design, verbal presentation and marketing display stand in ‘‘the pits”. Teams compete regionally, nationally and internationally for the Bernie Ecclestone F1 in Schools World Championship trophy. Over 12 million students in 34 countries compete.

Our entry – ‘Fuelled Racing’, consisted of five Year 9 students George Clark, Nic Beaumont, James Grant and Joe shin and myself Archie Hunter. We had high aspirations for the competition, being no strangers to school competitions, recently winning a large sum of money for our school at the Newark County Fair business challenge.

We first met as a team last March since then we have had to develop strong team working skills, perfect our knowledge of engineering, marketing and business planning. I can’t lie to you at times it’s been tough, we’ve had to balance this and other commitments, keep focused and learn to trust in each other as team members. All in all I now feel much more confident at taking on a complex project, I’ve learned how to manage a team and get the best out of them and myself and most of all I’ve had a lot of fun on the way.

There were low points. I was trying to manage a team that with a week to go still hadn’t finished the car, the team kit wasn’t printed and the pit display wasn’t finished, all while having the flu. After many days of hurried emails from my sick bed, we finally felt we were nearly there.

The feeling of standing there on the day with matching team kits having the time of our lives, it defies words. We even got the opportunity to visit one of our sponsors, at their global headquarters. It was an amazing opportunity and one we shall never forget. They showed us round various aspects of their business, including their awe inspiring scanning technology and their advanced computer systems.

Furthermore I feel my verbal skills have come on leaps and bounds during our journey. As part of our campaign for sponsorship we spoke at the Bingham Business club, a networking event for local business men. Further highlights included getting our cause reported on in the local paper.

I couldn’t recommend anything more fervently than participating in the same life changing experiences that we experienced over the past months. It has been well worth the effort and further progression in the competition next year is defiantly something we are aspiring towards. We also hope that there will be many more teams from Toot Hill entering in the future.

Archie Hunter

Team Manager