



-----PRESS RELEASE-----

PORTSMOUTH RACE TEAM NOT QUITE ABLE TO EMULATE JENSON

The international Formula Student competition has proved an invaluable learning process for an Elta Fans sponsored team from Portsmouth University, even if the team didn't quite manage to take the chequered flag and celebrate with the obligatory laurel wreath and shower of champagne.

Now in its 18th year, the competition started in America and was introduced to the UK in 1998 where it is run jointly by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE). It challenges teams of students to design, build and race a single seat racing car. The manufacturing facility of Elta Fans in Fareham has a long standing relationship with Portsmouth University, taking a number of students in the sandwich year of the university's Mechanical Engineering courses. One such undergraduate is Dave Hague, currently studying for his Masters in Mechanical Engineering, who was on a placement with Elta and is now working part time at Fareham until he finishes his course next year. Dave joined some 20 fellow Portsmouth students to form one of a record 105 teams from 23 countries who entered this year's competition.

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Portsmouth University Formula Student Team

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Elta sponsored the team by providing scrap metal and use of their cutting facilities, enabling them to save on manufacturing costs, a vital element of the competition which seeks to educate students into realising that a good design is worth nothing if it costs more to manufacture than people are prepared to pay. Dave comments – “Elta gave us free run of the scrap metal from the fan manufacturing process which went into building the car’s pedals and suspension, as well as being used in other general areas of the car. Elta also provided the material for the brake discs and cut them into shape using their plasma cutting machine.”

The competition has exacting standards, requiring the students to achieve success in various tests of the manufacturing process before being eligible to race. Although a timing issue with the engine meant the Portsmouth team were unable to take part in the racing at Silverstone from 16-19 July, they were heartened by the achievements that they did make. Dave continues – “Our car, affectionately known as ‘Jaws’, passed the scrutineering and the tilt tests but the engine failure meant that we couldn’t compete in the Class 1 racing. It was obviously disappointing that we didn’t get to line up on the grid but we made it through scrutineering, with only a few modifications needed – a big achievement for first timers. I was speaking with the winners – the University of Stuttgart – and they said that they didn’t even pass scrutineering in their first year.” Buoyed by this, Portsmouth are keen to enter the fray again in the 2010 competition. Dave is planning to join the team that entered into the Class 3 category of this year’s competition which requires only the design element to be completed (Class 2 requires the design and the car chassis to be constructed). His experience in Class 1 will therefore stand him in good stead to help the team step up to the actual manufacturing process.

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David Osgerby, MD of Elta Fans, said – “When Dave approached me about the sponsorship it took me back to my early days in engineering. I inherited my father’s passion for cars and was sponsored by Vauxhall Motors for my mechanical engineering degree at Leeds University back in the late 70’s from where I joined Vauxhall to work with prototype test vehicles. Competitions such as Formula Student are an excellent bridge between academia and business. It offers a real-life exercise in design and manufacture, teaching not only good design but also the business elements of automotive engineering. I do feel for the lads in getting so close but not actually having the chance to race but I am sure they have learned a lot which will prove invaluable when they take up the challenge again next year.”

The Elta Group is a £65 million family of businesses with operations in six countries on four continents which, together with a network of international distributors, provides quality fans and related air movement equipment to customers worldwide.

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