

POWER

SHELLEY JORY-LEIGH

Business woman and British Power Boat Champion Shelley Jory, from Hampshire, is one of the UK's leading powerboat racers and the top female in the world. In her spare time she runs a bridal business



On top of the world at 11



Photo: Nikki Drummond

AT 11 years old Ben Jelf has already achieved what most of us strive to do throughout our sporting careers.

In just three short years of powerboat racing Ben has secured multiple national and club heat wins and has two RYA British titles to his name in the 2010 National JT250 and JT250 National Sprint Championship.

If that wasn't already a phenomenal achievement in such a short career, only half way through the 2011 season Ben became Britain's youngest ever UIM World Powerboat Champion in the GT15 circuit racing class, joining the elite in the records books just two days after his 11th birthday.

But Ben from Maidstone, Kent, didn't stop there. Last month he was also declared the first ever GT15 European Champion at Estonia winning all of his four heats.

The formidable young man is the 60th British racer to enter the UIM world rankings with several holding multiple titles to their names and I'm sure it won't be long before Ben has many more international titles to his name like his father Colin before him.

Some people fall into powerboat racing but I think it's safe to say Ben was born into it! The Jelf powerboat racing dynasty started with Ben's Grandfather Ted Jelf who started offshore powerboat racing in 1966. He then moved over to circuit racing in 1976.



In 1977 Ben's uncle Owen started racing in the J250 class and three years later was joined on the race circuit by little brother Colin. In 2008 Colin made the history books for being the first driver to achieve the triple F2 World Championship. He has also achieved two British Sprint Championships in a row in 2007 and 2008, in addition to winning the 2008 Continental Championship, where he won three out of the four races.

2011 has also seen Ben's cousins Jessica and Bethany Stoneman begin competing together in the UKFFORC Offshore Series in the F400 Class.

But the family's love of powerboat racing doesn't just stop on the water. Ben's mum, Jeni is chairman of the RYA Circuit Racing Committee and is also a very well respected officer of the day and RYA commissioner running race events

and making sure the racing is as safe as possible.

Ben is like any normal 11-year-old boy, who likes Xbox, Lego, fast cars, biking and of course boats. He's a modest young man who knows the value of his achievements but hasn't let being world champion go to his head.

He has a fantastic racing career ahead of him but knows he's going to have to work hard to continue to remain at the top of the leader board.

I can't wait to see where Ben's powerboat racing career goes next and it's one I will follow closely as I'm sure he's destined for big things. Well done Ben and all of Team Jelf Racing you've done the sport and country proud!

Follow Ben's progress on the Jelf Racing Website www.jelfracing.com or on Facebook www.facebook.com/JelfRacing