



GOING FOR GLORY: Tim McNulty

## McNulty top seed in Cork

**TARMAC RALLY**  
Ian Lynas reporting

THE final round of the 2011 Irish Tarmac Rally Championship – The Orchard Motorsport Cork 20 Rally – takes place this weekend and the event will decide who takes the title.

Tim McNulty is the top seed with his Subaru WRC and the battle for top honours in the series will be between McNulty and Kevin Barrett (Subaru WRC).

Daragh O’Riordan will start at number three in his Subaru WRC with Robert Barrable at four and the highest seeded Ulster driver is Fermanagh’s Gary Jennings, he starts at five.

The event will also feature the final round of the Irish Citroen Racing Trophy.

Scott McElhinney has already the title safely in his grasp, with the battle still on for the minor placings.

The 100th anniversary Cork 20 event, starts at 6pm tonight with a spectator stage in Fermoy, before a midnight halt and a 6.30am restart tomorrow, returning for a 3.15pm finish in Cork.

A record-equalling 29 car grid is set to contest this weekend’s Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship round on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit in Kent.

Seven drivers can still win the 2011 BTCC title.

Honda Racing team-mates Matt Neal and Gordon Shedden are tied for the championship lead followed by Jason Plato (Silverline Chevrolet Cruze), Mat Jackson (Airwaves Racing Ford Focus), James Nash (888/Collins Vectra), Andrew Jordan (Pirtek Vectra) and Robert Collard (WSR BMW).

Some 102 points cover them with a possible maximum of 104 still up for grabs, 52 apiece from Brands Hatch’s three races and then Silverstone’s ‘triple-header’ title showdown a fortnight later.

□ The battle for the 2011 British Touring Car Championship enters its penultimate round this weekend at Brands Hatch with all to fight for at the top of the leaderboard.

Honda team-mates Matt Neal and Gordon Shedden are locked together on 204 points at the top of the standings, but there are still seven drivers in total who still have at least a mathematical chance of claiming the crown – albeit with prospects ranging from the hopeful to the highly unlikely.

# CAPTAIN KIRK ON MASTERS MISSION

**MOTORCYCLING**  
By Staff Reporter

IRISH Superbike title favourite Kirk Jamison hopes to move another step closer to securing his maiden ISB crown at this weekend’s Adelaide Masters series finale at Mondello Park.

Jamison has already won the Irish Superstock and Ulster Superbike titles, but it is the Irish Superbike Championship he craves most along with the big money Masters trophy at the County Kildare circuit.

The Greyabbey man, who has been in terrific form this season on the Jim Angus Contracts BMW S1000-RR, is fresh from a double victory over key title rival Matthew Percy last weekend at Bishops court that has given him a lead of 45 points at the top of the table.

And with a host of overseas riders and factory machines set to dominate at the final round of the ISB Championship at next month’s Sunflower Trophy meeting, this weekend’s races at Mondello are crucial to the outcome of the title race.

Jamison said: “The bike is working so much better now after we made some changes to it and I can’t wait to get back on it because I’m feeling so comfortable on it again.

“At Bishops court last weekend I just knew I had the pace to win and after I made my usual poor starts I worked my way up through the pack and got into the lead.

“At the Sunflower next month a lot of the points in the Irish Superbike races are going to go to the British Superbike riders, so this weekend is really the most important in terms of the title,” he added.

“I’ve always had bad luck in the past but hopefully this is going to be my year.”

Jamison is also leading the Adelaide

Masters series which will be decided tomorrow, when the feature ‘Race of the Year’ carries a top prize of 3,000 euros.

His opposition includes Marshall Neill, who has been competing in the Metzeler National Superstock 1000 Championship this season, plus Dublin’s Jack Kennedy, Gerard Kinghan, Brian McCormack, Damien Byrne and Percy.

A full programme of Irish championship races will be catered for and is complemented by the final round of the British F1 Sidecar Championship.

The main ISB and Masters races are scheduled to get under way tomorrow from 2pm, with practice and the first of the weekend’s races taking place today.

Admission on both days is just 10 euros with children under 16 admitted free.

Meanwhile, next Saturday’s Irish Clubmans meeting at Kirkistown has been cancelled.

A statement issued by the Killinchy Club and the Motorcycle Road Racing Club of Ireland (MCRRCI) revealed the decision had been taken due to a lack of entries.

“We have been left with no other choice but to cancel and inform all personnel who give up their time to help run these events,” said the statement.

“This has also spoiled an excellent championship where several classes had to be decided next week.

“Measures will have to be put in place by the MCUI to prevent this happening again in the future.”

Only 63 entries were received, falling way short of the 120 entries needed to ensure the financial viability of running a short circuit event.

□ BELFAST’S Paul Gordon, who was involved in a serious crash at Bishops court last weekend, is said to be making “progress in the right direction” in hospital after suffering critical injuries in the incident.



AIMING HIGH: Kirk Jamison is bidding for glory on two fronts at this weekend’s Adelaide Masters meeting at Mondello Park

PICTURE: MATT MACKEY/PRESSEYE

## Classy Laverty sets out his stall in France



DOWN TO BUSINESS: Eugene Laverty

EUGENE Laverty underpinned his scintillating pre-season practice pace at Magny-Cours in France by taking provisional second place on the grid at the French venue for tomorrow’s penultimate round of the World Superbike Championship.

Laverty was a minuscule 0.012 seconds behind Spain’s Carlos Checa (Althea Ducati), who is on the cusp of securing the world crown this weekend.

Sylvain Guintoli (Ducati) was third fastest on the time-sheets ahead of Kawasaki’s Tom Sykes, Jakub Smrz (Ducati) and Castrol Honda’s Jonathan Rea, who won the first race at Imola last weekend.

Laverty, who topped the practice leaderboard in an end of season test at Magny-Cours in France last October, said: “It was a

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really good first qualifying session, finishing second in the time-sheets is the highest I have been all year.

“The closest I have been to this at such an early stage in the weekend was at Monza when we were third, so hopefully that is a good omen,” he added.

“We did two long runs to get a lot of work done on race distance.

“We are struggling a little with rear grip, having a lot of spinning but we made a step mid-way and again at the end which gave us a clear direction of what we need to do, so hopefully we can continue working towards

making further improvements tomorrow.”

Laverty can overtake reigning champion Max Biaggi to secure third position in the points table tomorrow with just one round of the series remaining.

Meanwhile, Ulsterman Rea, who proved he was back to his best following a long injury lay-off at Imola last weekend, said yesterday’s qualifying session had given him plenty of food for thought for tomorrow’s races.

“It was quite difficult this afternoon because I was in and out of the garage quite a lot, trying to sort out little issues.

“We found a bit of rhythm towards the end of the session though and the bike felt okay, although we’re still struggling a little in one sector,” Rea said.