

Motorcycling with John Savage

Jamison is ISB champion

Ardsman Kirk Jamison is the Irish Superbike Champion, despite a heavy crash in his first race at last Saturday's Sunflower Trophy meeting at Bishopscourt, which ruled him out of the remainder of the meeting.

Having already secured the Irish Superstock, Ulster Superbike and Mondello Masters titles, 31 year old Jamison arrived at the Bishopscourt finale with a handsome 36 points buffer over Matthew Percy from Randalstown, the only rider who could deny the Greyabbey based rider the most prestigious crown in domestic short circuit racing.

The destination of the title was resolved somewhat anticlimactically, when both Jamison and Percy crashed out of the first of Saturday's two ISB races, thereby ending their participation in the final race, therefore, the points advantage Jamison had amassed since the season began at the same venue back in April, proved to be decisive.

Jamison originally raced in the Irish Superbike Championship in 2006, and in his rookie superbike season he was pipped to the title by Carrickfergus man Alastair Seeley, who, of course, went on to win the British National Superstock 1000 Championship, finish as top rookie in the British Superbike Championship and won this year's British Supersport Championship.

Kirk has never disguised his ambition to win an Irish title, and follow in the tyre tracks of his father Norman and his uncles David and Brian, all of whom won Irish Championship titles in various classes during their careers, and he fulfilled that desire by clinching the Superstock Championship.

But the ISB title is the crown Kirk has always coveted and ironically last Saturday's races were the first he failed to finish this season, as he had been a model of consistency in the 17 races staged prior to last weekend, having scored three wins, five seconds and never finished lower than seventh.

Kirk said: "Every Jamison who has raced before me has been a champion and I am

proud to continue the tradition. My oul Granda would be sucking on his pipe with a smile on his face that another trophy is on the mantelpiece."

The father of four, who is commercial manager with Belfast based H&J Martin Ltd, beamed: "I don't think anyone has ever won all four championships in one season, so it is very pleasing to win the Adelaide Masters and the Irish Superbike title on a Superstock machine, using production based Bridgestone Battlax R10 racing tyres, especially beating riders using slicks manufactured by other companies. We pushed hard all year and can also boast four or five Superstock lap records this season."

Last Friday's qualifying went well for Jamison, who posted the fifth fastest time on the Jim Angus Contracts BMW SS1000R, campaigned last year by Scotsman Keith Amor, to line up on the front row of the grid, as Alastair Seeley claimed pole position, ahead of his temporary Relentless TAS Suzuki team-mate, Ian Lowry from Moira.

With the new 2.136 miles Bishopscourt International Circuit being utilised for the first time, Jamison's title rival Percy was running strongly in the first race, until he parted company with the VSK Logan Yamaha R1 on the fifth lap, which confirmed Jamison as champion.

However, a lap later Kirk also bit the dust, when he crashed at the high speed Brock's Bend.

Kirk recounted: "I knew heading into the Sunflower that I had one hand on the title, but anything can happen in racing, so I had to keep my focus."

"I got a crap start, before getting held up by an incident at turn one. I slipped past a few people after that to end up in eighth place, which was enough to clinch the title, as



Mayor of Ards, Councillor Mervyn Oswald, welcomed Kirk Jamison to the Ards Borough Council chamber on Monday evening to mark Kirk's quadruple championship triumph. With the Mayor and Kirk are, from left: Kirk's mum Alison; Kirk's main sponsor Jim Angus; Kirk's girlfriend Ciara Toner; Kirk's father Norman; Shirley Poots; and Derek and Linda Keenan. Philip Campbell

Matthew was running fourth. "I moved up to seventh and decided that was enough. It was a bit boring actually, as I knew I could go a lot quicker, but conditions were far from ideal, so it was what I had to do."

Kirk continued: "Halfway through the race, Matthew crashed, handing the title to me. I rode the next half a lap telling myself I was the new champion, before I realised I didn't have to mess about any more and could go for it."

"I could see a line of guys in front of me, all the way up to the podium in third, and knew I could have a go at it, so I put my head down."

"I set a new Superstock lap record, before making a

complete pigs ear of it on the next lap. I made another pass into the ultra-fast turn one, but as I did the front gave a major shake and threw me at the ground like a sack of spuds at about 120mph."

He explained: "I hit my head pretty hard and then endured what felt like a mile of cart wheels, every one a little bit more painful than the last. When I finally came to a halt, I felt like I'd broken every bit of me. The pain was pretty bad, especially from my left arm and shoulder and my right knee."

"I tried to get up and could start moving a few things, which is always a good sign! The medics, as always, were immediately on the scene and were absolutely superb."

Never was the adage of 'no pain, no gain' more appropriate, as Jamison began his championship celebrations in the circuit medical centre, before beginning his reign as ISB champion in the Accident and Emergency Unit of Dundonald's Ulster Hospital.

Kirk quipped: "I was fit to leave the circuit medical centre under my own steam - not much steam, but my own all the same!"

"It wasn't exactly the celebration it should have been, as I crawled back to the team, so apologies to them all for ruining the moment."

"If they felt bad though, I felt worse. As well as the pain, wrecked gear and motorbike, a medic cheered me up by giving me the all clear of 'no broken bones', but added I was lucky I was a big fella. I'm not a sensitive person, but telling someone they are fat when they are lying in pain is just

kicking you when you are down!"

Kirk laughed: "I ended up getting checked out in A&E, but luckily had no more than muscle damage to my arm, shoulder and knee, and a knee full of blood. So it was off to the post championship party, crutches and all, where I finally got to wear my championship t-shirt."

"We all had great craic and my injuries even seemed to ease for a few hours, although they came back on Sunday and brought a head injury with them, in the form of a hangover!"

Looking back on the season, Kirk admitted: "If someone had told me at the start of the year that I would win everything going I would have laughed at them, but it has happened."

"To have been so successful this year of all years means even more to me than any other year would have."

"Life is like racing; you come up against all kinds of opponents and sometimes, like on Saturday, you find yourself down on your ass."

"On Saturday I crashed hard, but dusted myself off, got up and walked away as champion with my head held high. That sums up my year."

He acknowledged: "I am lucky to have had massive support over the years and this year was no exception."

"To my whole family, team and Supporters' Club, I hope the wins made it all worthwhile. I cannot thank you enough."

"The same goes for the support I have had in the local community and from local businesses. Racing is a very

expensive sport and without all of the aforementioned I simply couldn't do it."

Kirk concluded: "Exactly what I am doing next year remains to be seen, but one thing is for sure: I am not finished yet!"

Dunlop is Ballygowan Club 'Rider of Year'

Michael Dunlop has been selected as 'Rider of the Year' by Ballygowan and District Road Racing Supporters' Club.

Dunlop was the choice of members who voted at last month's meeting, and the Ballymoney man will be presented with the award in the near future.

The club, which previously backed Michael Dunlop's elder brother William, has had an uneventful couple of years, but are hoping to get back on track next year and will be looking at several riders' plans over coming months.

The next monthly meeting of the club will be held next Thursday, November 4, at 8pm, in La Mon Hotel and Country Club, Granshaw, and all members are requested to attend, as important issues are to be discussed concerning next season.

As always, new members will be made most welcome - just turn up on the night and make yourself known to a club member



(C) Ryan Fegan photography

Kirk Jamison in action on the Jim Angus Contracts BMW at Bishopscourt last weekend.