

Motorcycling with John Savage

Jamison is Masters champ

Eight days after he clinched the Irish Superstock and Ulster Superbike Championship titles at Bishopscourt, Ardsman Kirk Jamison was crowned winner of the Adelaide Masters Superbike series, at Mondello Park on Sunday.

Backed by Adelaide Insurance, the €50,000 Masters series kickstarted at the beginning of April and was staged over four rounds and a dozen races, which culminated at the Co Kildare circuit last weekend.

31 year old Jamison also has one hand on the Irish Superbike Championship, the title he most covets, as he will go into the final two races at the Sunflower Trophy meeting at Bishopscourt on Saturday, October 22, with a 36 points cushion over Randalstown's Matt Percy, which puts the Greyabbey based rider firmly in pole position.

Effectively the duel for the Masters title came down to a shoot-out between Jamison on his Jim Angus Contracts BMW S1000RR and Dubliner Damien Byrne astride his SB Maintenance Honda Fireblade CBR1000RR.

Kirk said: "To say it was a stressful weekend is a major understatement. I arrived at Mondello with a slender 27 points lead over Damien, a Mondello track specialist, and just for good measure the conditions all weekend were awful.

"I decided before I went down that I was going to have to resist the temptation to go for wins and ride with my head to make sure I brought the title home and in the end it turned out to be the right decision."

Last Saturday's first Masters race was staged in very wet conditions, after marshals and officials spent two hours dealing with an oil spill which ran the entire 1.85km length of the Mondello National circuit.

Reigning champion Marshall Neill ran away with the six laps race, astride the GR

Aprilia RSV4 the Portadown man has been campaigning in the British National Superstock 1000 Championship.

Neill took the win by an impressive 13 seconds from Jack Kennedy, the young Dubliner, who has been a regular front-runner in the British Superstock 1000 Championship, the final round of which will be staged at Brands Hatch in Kent this weekend, where Carrickfergus man Alastair Seeley will bid to secure the title on the Relentless TAS Suzuki GSX-R600, after his season long tussle with Lincolnshire's Ben Wilson.

Byrne was a further 12 seconds back in third, a couple of seconds in front of Ballymoney's Gerard Kinghan on his BMW, while Jamison kept a close eye on his pitboard and rode to a safe seventh.

Kirk recounted: "I took it very easy in the first few laps, just trying to gauge the grip levels, but that meant I dropped outside the top 10.

"Damien was dicing for third, so I had to push on in the latter stages and pulled myself up to seventh. Damien managed to get third, so he took seven points off me, which brought my lead down to 21. But I had a faster lap than him, which showed I could take the fight to him if need be, but points were the order of the day."

Sunday's first five laps race was also held in very wet conditions, but it was a much closer affair, with the leading trio separated by less than two seconds, as Kennedy took the win on a Yamaha YZF-R1 recently acquired by the Ballymoney based JMF Millsport team, and Byrne made sure he took the battle for the title down to the last race, when he out-sprinted Kinghan to claim the runners-up berth by 0.017 of a second, with Jamison eight seconds back in fourth, less than one second ahead of his ISB rival Percy.

Kirk analysed: "Jack Kennedy broke away and by the time I pushed through to fifth the fight for second had also broken me. I just kept consistent, but then a mistake by Percy let

me past into fourth. Damien was again taking the fight to me, as he battled for second place, so I put my head down in the last two laps to try and fend off Percy.

"I posted the fastest lap of the race on the last lap, again proving I had the pace to be at the front had there been no points to play for, and held onto that fourth place."

With Kennedy a non-starter, Neill, who finished a disappointing 10th in Sunday's first race, returned to winning ways in Sunday's second five lapper, which he won by 13 seconds from Percy on his VSK Yamaha R1, with Dubliner Paul Swords under two seconds back in third aboard his Suzuki GSX-R1000.

The championship finale was run in drier conditions, and Byrne wasn't quite on the pace of the leading trio and had to settle for fourth, while Jamison kept his title rival firmly in his sights to follow him home, with Kinghan sixth.

Jamison related: "If there is ever a way of ensuring I have a rubbish result it is when conditions are mixed: damp and greasy. I usually select reverse and keep it there until I finally take the flag, so it was sod's law that my championship deciding race would be in those exact conditions.

"I was determined not to lose out like that though, so after another bad start I made a bold move down the outside of everyone at turn one, before I pushed past another couple of riders before the end of lap one. Damien was again in second, so I knew if I dropped it he would be champion — talk about pressure!

"I was lying fifth and as long as I stayed there the title was mine, so that was the plan. I could see that Kinghan and Percy had past Damien, meaning the pressure was off. Straight away I got the confidence to push on and actually caught Damien on the last lap. I just sat there, followed him over the line and it was all over."

Looking back over the weekend, Kirk pointed out: "It was a pity about the weather, as it made it very difficult to know how hard to push, but I was

getting good boards all the time."

Father-of-four Kirk beamed: "My ever growing band of supporters were there to cheer me in with a championship winning t-shirt, cheers, and champagne spraying.

"It was an incredible feeling and I am so happy for everyone who has worked so hard and given me such great support all year long. I have to thank each and every one of them, though I should probably apologise to everyone for having to put up with me stressing all weekend.

"It has been a simply fantastic year. I would like to thank all the team: Dad [Norman], Jim, Mum [Alison], Cliff and Lynsey, Uncle Jim, Derek and Linda, Ciara, Mark, Julie and the girls, Roy and Neil Biggerstaff for their support at the weekend, Feckin Whiskey, Paul Lindsay, Alan Finlay, Rodney Brown and all my other sponsors for their continued support."



Kirk Jamison clinched the Adelaide Masters Superbike title at Mondello Park on Sunday. Here he slithers past Paul Swords, as Gavin Johnston keeps a watching brief. Derek Clegg

He continued: "Bridgestone Tyres have given me superb support this year and the boss, Peter Dickson, treated us all to a slap up meal and a few drinks in Dublin on the way home. I ended up sleeping before we got home, out of pure exhaustion and relief, and probably due to the celebration drinks as well!"

Jamison completed just two laps of the eight laps Race of the Year before he decided to park his title winning BMW, and Marshall Neill went on

to complete a hat-trick, when he took the honours by 12 seconds from Percy, with Kennedy third.

Kirk explained: "It was a rush to get out in the last race of the day, as I was too busy posing for photos and unwinding, but we headed out anyway.

"The conditions were so mixed it was a lottery for tyre choice. I decided on the grid to change my rear wheel and go for a dry tyre, which was a risk as there were some really greasy parts on the track.

"I didn't get away

well and was getting some major slides on the damp parts, so I just decided to come back in and celebrate with a bottle of champagne, rather than an ambulance ride."

With his sights now set on capturing the ISB crown, Kirk concluded: "What a weekend and what a year! I am now the Irish Superstock, Ulster Superbike and Adelaide Masters Superbike champion for 2011 and I'm not done yet.

"I now have a 36 points lead in the Irish

Superbike Championship with only one round remaining. Barring disaster, I should clinch that at the Sunflower meeting and make it the perfect year with a clean sweep of every National 1000cc title available, having scored points in every single round of every championship."

Even triple champions have to come back to earth and Kirk was back at work as commercial manager with H&J Martin in Belfast on Monday.

Thompson takes Ulster crown

Cloughey's Scott Thompson has been confirmed as the inaugural Ulster Pre-injection champion, after the cancellation of the final round at the series, which was scheduled to take place on Saturday.

Bishopscourt was due to host the last two races in the series, however, as 120 entries were needed for the meeting to break even, and only 63 were received, the organisers had no option, except to call the event off.

23 year old Thompson has led the championship from the outset, and no one can deny he is the worthy champion.

With a handsome 43 points cushion over his nearest challengers, he required only a ninth place finish at Bishopscourt to secure the crown, and with four wins, a second, a third, a sixth and two seventh places to his credit, barring a spectacular disaster, that would have been elementary, as one of his chief backers, Francis Watson of Cloughey, might have quipped!

Unfortunately, the duel for the runners-up slot in the championship would have been sorted out at Bishopscourt, as Mickey Fitzpatrick from Co Meath and Donegal's Ronan Kerrigan were tied on points, and Fitzpatrick will now take that accolade, as he won a race last time out at Kirkistown, while Kerrigan failed to record a win, but racked up points in all 10 races.

Kerrigan was quickly on the phone to congratulate Thompson on his championship success, such is the camaraderie within a class which has proved immensely popular.

Before the start of the season, Thompson, who scored four straight wins in the first two rounds of the series, made no bones about the fact that the title was his target, astride the Yamaha R6 he acquired, after he sold his Suzuki SV650, after two years racing in the Irish Supertwins Championship.

But with the title safely in his pocket, Scott admits it ended as something of an anti-climax.

"To get a phone call to tell you that you are champion was great, but it would have been nice to have taken a chequered flag to put the seal on it. It's not quite the same having it presented to you through a phone call."

Despite that, he admits: "I'm definitely well chuffed. I led the championship from the very

start and it wasn't a case of me leap-frogging someone in the last round."

The title coup is just reward for Scott, who came close to winning the Irish Pre-97 Championship astride a Honda CBR600 back in 2008, but ultimately finished third, when he was beset by ill fortune during the final rounds.

For the next year, at least, racing will take a back seat for Scott, who leaves with his mate George Calvert to tour Australia at the beginning of next month.

But he won't be completely turning his back on motorcycling, as a track day at the iconic Phillip

Island circuit, on the Melbourne coast, is top of his agenda.

And he hasn't ruled out a return to racing back home, after his year long Australian adventure is over.

Winning any championship doesn't come easily, and Scott acknowledges the backing he has received from family and friends, Watson's of Cloughey, Peninsular Bouncers and all his other sponsors and supporters.

He made particular mention of Steve and Lorna Baker, of Steve Baker Motorcycles in Millisle, as Steve's 'tender loving care' of his Yamaha allowed Scott to put his feet up between races!



Kirk Jamison clinched his third title of the season at Mondello Park on Sunday. Derek Clegg



Scott Thompson celebrates his Ulster Championship triumph with, from left, his father, Hugh Robert; Francis Watson, of Watson's of Cloughey; Steve and Lorna Baker, of Steve Baker Motorcycles, Millisle; and George Calvert. Adam Osborn