

# I'm feeling just champion

Mike Conway clinched the British Formula 3 Championship in style last weekend. In his latest exclusive column for Kent on Sunday, the Sevenoaks racer reveals his emotions of the weekend and his hopes of moving up the ladder to the F1 paddock



## Inside view

with MIKE CONWAY

I KNEW all we had to do was finish in the top six in one of the races at Silverstone last weekend to win the Championship.

To do it with two poles, two wins and two fastest laps was just the perfect way to clinch the title.

It feels as good as I thought it would; a similar feeling to winning the Renault Championship when I crossed the line, but it was even better to do it with a win.

I wanted to get at least one pole because when you are first on the grid you expect to win and when I managed to get both it made it a lot easier and set up the weekend nicely.

I slept a lot easier on the Saturday night, that's for sure.

Sunday morning, I woke up to miserable weather – but it didn't bother me too much, I still had the two poles. And from there the weather cleared up and it was a beautiful day.

I got two good starts, then taking it pretty hard for the first few laps before just playing it safe to make sure I got the wins.

In the first race, coming through Priory with two corners to go on the final lap, I was trying not to think about it. Then through Brooklands. Then coming out of Luffield I thought 'this is it, I've done it'.

### Speechless

As I came around that final curve, just before you go over the finish line, my hand was up there, punching the air, I knew it was done. I drove past the pit wall really close just so I could see the team.

It was just a great feeling. I don't get too emotional normally but it was quite something going over the line. All the hard work paid off; I got what I wanted all year.

I couldn't really talk to the team on the radio, they were trying to get a few words out of me, but I was just speechless.

I drove in to the pits slowly to give myself a chance to regain my composure. I didn't want to get out of the car and not be able to put a word together. So I just slowed it right down and soaked it right up and was late to come in – there was no rush, I just wanted to enjoy the moment.

My dad hugged me and my mum caught me just as I was going up to the podium – it was an emotional moment.

It was such a nice feeling to have everyone at Silverstone. My friends, family, sponsors and managers were all there to enjoy it and it was especially nice to do it with a win.

That night I had dinner with some



NUMBER ONE: Mike Conway clinched the British F3 title after a dominant performance at Silverstone last weekend

friends, had two bottles of beer and was struggling to stay awake – I was too tired and was in bed before midnight.

I just switched off for eight hours and that did me the power of good.

During the week I went back to my prep school in Sevenoaks, where they held an assembly for me and the reception was really special.

My old headmaster Mr Oatley was there for the week and he presented me with a piece I had written on karting when I left the school at the age of 13.

He said: "It was the only thing I managed to get out of him about his racing."

The title means I'm one step

closer to F1, but we've just got to concentrate on what's available to us.

That's all I want to do, just drive F1 and win races.

It puts me in good stead for next year for GP2; the series shares almost the same calendar as the F1 races in Europe and is watched live by the F1 paddock, so it's a great platform to compete in as British F3 champion.

I have even more drive and determination now I have achieved this goal. I'm setting new ones and will be working really hard to get there.

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# Sky the limit for good walk spoilt

MOST of the golfing world's attention was probably focussed on a little grudge match in County Kildare last weekend.

But most of the world probably missed the real action, which took place only days earlier in the regal surroundings of the Hampton Court Golf Club.

If your version of golfing action includes flying golf clubs, disgraceful language and record golf ball sales then the Sky Sports News versus Sky News version of the Ryder Cup was the place to be.

The tone was set by star news presenter Jeremy Thomson who claimed a 24-handicap and promptly drove the green at the first.

### Optimistic

I did likewise but my handicap was all too genuine. In fact it proved a little optimistic as I hit the first of 18 drives hard left into the African savannah that passed for rough.

This stuff was so deep that you spent five pointless minutes looking for your ball and then another five trying to find your bag.

I have much better excuses but anyone who plays at my level will have heard them all before. Suffice to say I lost my match and the sports experts – hypocrites to a man – lost the tournament.

But half of them were still in the bar four hours later where no doubt they won seven and eight in another competition.

LORENZO'S WORLD



with Sky Sports' MATT LORENZO

Enthused by the Ryder Cup, my so-called mate Eamonn Holmes announced last Monday that he was going to get back into golf.

He said: "I'm going to ring Matt Lorenzo up and fix up a game. It'll be good to start with a win."

And so Eamonn missed out on the spare ticket I had for the Arsenal v Porto game on Tuesday night. I took Renton Laidlaw instead, the doyen of golf commentators and great company, despite his mania for all things Arsenal.

It was my first visit to the Emirates Stadium and I have to admit it's a breathtaking sight, rising as it does, like something from Close Encounters, from the tightly-packed streets of north London.

And once inside, the spaceship theme continues with the modern and glassy hospitality areas more reminiscent of Terminal Four than the Clock End.

In fact, so dramatic is the interior it is even harder to believe you are in N5 and not Barcelona or Milan.

Of course, the traffic on the drive home reminds you of exactly where you are.

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