

Nothing's Going To Stop Our Jack

"I want to win the World Supersport championship"

{Words: Stephen English} Images: Stephen English



It's quite different to have a Southern Irish racer at this level, how did you get started in the sport?

My dad bought me a bike for Christmas one year, a little peewee 50, and from that it was motocross, minimoto, Superteen Aprilia and then over to the UK for the 600 Clubman championship before going to the British Supersport championship. I did five years in BSS before I was consistently at the front before I made the step to Rivamoto here in World Supersport and now I'm here with CIA Insurance.

How did you find coming from British championship racing to here?

It's a whole new level here and it's almost like starting again. You've a lot of work to do and in the British championship there was maybe ten people that you had to worry about being quick but here it's 15 or 20 and it could be anyone. In each session everyone ups the pace and if you don't do the same you get left behind. Everyone here is at the top of their game and the races are a lot longer as well which makes a big

difference. The heat of racing in these countries also comes into it a lot. So when you've got the faster pace, longer races and the heat, it's a lot to take into account, but I'm used to it now.

How long did it take to get used your physical fitness to the right level?

I think that the more races that you do in this heat and at that distance is the only the only thing that can prepare you for it. There's only so much swimming, cycling, running and circuit training at home that you can do but nothing prepares you like racing and getting used to it. That's also a reason why in every session I try and do as many laps as I can, about 20, so that the more that your body gets used to it the more prepared you are for the race.

You seem to do a lot of your running on your own as well in practice sessions, is that a conscious decision?

Yeah, I try to do it because a lot of people look for a tow and

that's all good because it might get you up there on the grid but it's no use for a race because you don't know what the bike will do after ten laps in a race. So I try and do it on my own and get a good understanding of what the bike is going to do and get some good information for the guys to work off. It's a thing for my mind as well though, if I do a lap and I know that I've had a tow I don't feel as confident but if I've done them all on my own and I've done a load of laps it's a much better feeling for me.

Obviously here in the World Superbike paddock there's a few Irish riders, how much advice do you get from them?

Eugene helps me out a bit and sometimes we'll go round the track on the Thursday on the scooter and he'll give me a few pointers which is a great help because he's obviously got so much experience and he's at the front of the World Superbikes grid. Eugene would probably be my closest friend out of all of the WSBK riders and he gives me a bit of help.

At the start of this year the expectation for you was that you'd be further up the grid and challenging for wins. Other than racing at the front in Portimao how have you viewed the season as a whole?

It's probably been a little bit of under performance from me and from the team but starting the year in Australia we started really well in testing and I was running up and then I had a crash after hitting a false neutral into turn two and I fractured my talus bone and that put me on the back foot. I had the operation on the Tuesday and was passed fit to race on the Saturday night and we were on pace for a top ten finish but then the engine failed on the bike. So Australia couldn't have gone any worse but coming back to Aragon and the races after that it was just about getting fit again but the ankle just wasn't up for the pressure that you have to put on it through the footpegs. We had a little bit of bad luck but with the injury it took time to get back on track to where we want to be but Portugal was a brilliant race. That's where we need to be and that's where we want to be. It's taking us time to get used to our new suspension as well but we're getting there.

How's the relationship with the team?

It's good; there are four riders in the team so it's a busy team! But there's not

much pressure on you because of that so it's good and everyone works as a team to get everybody up to the front, which is good.

And how's your relationship with Simon?

Some people don't like Simon because he can be a bit sarcastic but that's just the way that he is and once you get to know him he's good craic and obviously he loves to get good results, who doesn't, and I've got no complaints about him and he's a good team manager.

Have you signed anything for next year yet?

There's nothing done yet and a lot of it will come down to what Simon is doing. He doesn't know if he's staying in this championship or going to British Superbikes so a lot of my decision will ride on that and what he does. At the minute he's not sure what he's doing but hopefully we can talk to a few other teams out there about next year as well.

Would you be looking to stay on a Supersport bike or would you go to British Superbikes?

Ideally, I'd like to stay with Simon or with a top team in Supersport. I want to win the World Supersport championship but if a better opportunity came in World Superbikes then I don't see why I wouldn't look at it.

Is Moto2 something that you're looking at as well?

No not at the minute. It's such a hard and fast class and the chances of getting on a good bike and a good team are so slim that I'll have to wait until I'm doing better here, first or second in the championship, and then get a better opportunity in Moto2 then. I don't want to go there and run around at the back and be forgotten about over there.

What's the target for you for the rest of this season?

I want to continue the form that I had in Portugal and be dicing for the lead in each of the races and get some podium finishes. The better the results that I get the more it will help me for my decision for next year and good results won't do any harm!



STEVE ENGLISH TALKS TO JACK KENNEDY

INTERVIEW