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Marvin Kirchhöfer: Interview with the champion

- Marvin Kirchhöfer has won the Formel ADAC title in his debut year
- Fifth champion in the history of the series
- Kirchhöfer: “My ambition is to drive in Formula 1 some day”

Marvin, what were your first thoughts when you realised that you had won the Formel ADAC championship?

Marvin Kirchhöfer: It was an overwhelming feeling. I had to get a night's sleep before it sank in that I'd really done it. I didn't sleep all that well, though, because the thoughts kept going round and round in my head – I hadn't expected to wrap up the championship ahead of time. Going into the penultimate race weekend at the Nürburgring, I was quite some way behind Gustav Malja in the standings, so winning the title on the home straight was like a dream come true.

How have people reacted to your title win?

It's been incredible. When I checked my phone after winning the championship, I'd already received more than 30 text messages. My phone was red hot – after an hour, the battery was flat. During the day, I received an amazing number of calls, text messages, e-mails and Facebook messages. It's great to see so many fans of the Formel ADAC taking an interest in me. Thanks for all the good wishes and the great support during the season.

After the Lausitzring weekend, the gap between you and the then leader Gustav Malja was 25 points. Did you think that you were still in with a chance of the title at that stage?

I knew that there were still 130 points up for grabs on the last two weekends at the Nürburgring and at Hockenheim. As long as it was mathematically possible, I intended to put everything into the final sprint.

Did you have a specific strategy worked out for the season finale at the Hockenheimring?

No, I wanted to tackle the closing race weekend of the season just like all the ones that had gone before, namely to qualify as far forward as possible, hopefully securing the double pole, and then to drive two clean start-to-finish victories. And that's what I did. The two wins on Saturday were particularly important, because Gustav was very fast on all three days and also got onto

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04/05/12 – 06/05/12

Sachsenring
08/06/12 – 10/06/12

Nürburgring *
13/07/12 – 15/07/12

Red Bull Ring (A)
10/08/12 – 12/08/12

Lausitzring
24/08/12 – 26/08/12

Nürburgring
14/09/12 – 16/09/12

Hockenheim
28/09/12 – 30/09/12

* same weekend as
ADAC Truck Grand Prix



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the podium in the first two races. So the fact that I was also able to win the final race of the year was simply the culmination of a perfect weekend.

You succeeded in winning five of the last six races. How do you explain this late surge in performance towards the end of the season?

I admit that I probably put myself under a bit too much pressure midway through the year. I had to keep reminding myself that this was my debut season in the Formel ADAC and that I still had a lot to learn. I also had to understand that I couldn't expect things to go as smoothly for me as they did for the other drivers who were already contesting their second year in the series. So I tried to take the pressure off completely and just focus on the race weekends. Together with my team principal, Timo Rumpfkeil, I went to watch the Formula 1 race at Spa-Francorchamps. I saw how the drivers coped with the weekend – on and off the track – and I learned a lot.

Apart from the champion in the inaugural year of the competition – Armando Parente in 2008 – you are the first driver to have won the title in his debut year. Does this make the achievement all the more special?

It is definitely a special feeling to finish top of the table as a rookie. Formel ADAC is a highly competitive series; the fact that we've had ten different race winners over the course of the season proves how well matched we are. I wanted to give my best right from the start and to be competing for podium places, but I never dreamed of winning the title before the start of the season.

Tell us about the contribution made by your team, Lotus.

First of all, I want to say 'thank you' to every member of Team Lotus for their support during the season; without them, none of this would have been possible. Congratulations are also due on winning the team championship; thanks to a magnificent team effort, we managed to prevail against strong competition. Ever since I took my first steps in single-seater racing, Lotus have been like a family to me. For a young driver starting out on his career, it is incredibly important to feel at ease in your team, and that was certainly the case with Lotus.

Do you already know what you'll be doing next in motor racing?

I'm planning to make the step up to German Formula 3 racing next season. Formel ADAC is the perfect springboard and excellent preparation for a successful career in motor racing. In a Formel ADAC powered by Volkswagen, you learn all the most important basic skills of the sport; I want to build on that and go forward one step at a time. My greatest ambition is to drive in

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Formula 1 some day; after all, I've laid the foundation by winning the Formel ADAC title. Star names such as Sebastian Vettel, Nico Rosberg and Nico Hülkenberg also reached the pinnacle of the sport via the various ADAC junior series.

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