

19/10/2017 – No 64

**ADAC Formula 4 champion Vips:
“Consistency the key to winning the championship”**



- Estonian teenager “has learnt a lot as a driver”
- Vips: “Two great years in ADAC Formula 4”

Munich: It is now almost four weeks since the weekend at the Hockenheimring on which Juri Vips (17, Estonia, Prema Powerteam) claimed a first championship title and the greatest success of his career so far. In an exciting and nail-biting climax to the third ADAC Formula 4 campaign, the Estonian emerged as the new champion. Vips sums up his two years in the ADAC High-Speed Academy in characteristically pithy fashion: “I’ve learnt a lot as a driver.” Vips has already given clear evidence of how well he has learnt his trade in the ADAC junior formula series and that he is now ready to move up to the next level: in mid-October, he was invited to drive in a Formula 3 race.

Juri, let’s take another look at the final weekend of the 2017 ADAC Formula 4. It was the tightest there has been in this series. Has the fact that you won the title sunk in yet?

Juri Vips: “It took a while, but it now feels natural knowing that I won the 2017 ADAC Formula 4 championship. And of course, it feels fantastic – just amazing! All the hard work paid off. It was an incredibly intense year, with so many ups and downs.”

You’ve obviously been congratulated from many quarters, some of which will no doubt have come as a surprise.

Vips: “To be honest, most of the good wishes came from the people I’ve worked with during the year. The most surprising congratulations certainly came from people I haven’t talked to for years.”

You’ve been ‘Mr Consistency’ this season, scoring points in 20 of the 21 races. Where do you see your strengths and what do you still need to work on?

Vips: “Of course, consistency was the key to winning the championship. But in all honesty, it has to be said that we made some stupid mistakes in qualifying, which cost us good starting positions. But in the end, everything worked out fine.”

What thoughts were going through your mind when Felipe Drugovich of Van Amersfoort won the first race at Hockenheim and your own team-mate Marcus Armstrong qualified in pole position in Race 3, especially with them being your two main rivals for the title?

Vips: “Once again, the final race weekend did not start as well as we hoped it would. After Felipe’s victory in the first race, I knew that my chances of taking the title were very low. But then I had a stroke of ‘luck’ in the second race when he failed to score any points due to a mechanical breakdown. And, quite honestly, I wasn’t too worried about the third race. I was starting behind Marcus, who was on the pole, and I knew that, in the event of him winning, I just had to finish the race in second place. In the end, it was enough, and that’s why I am just so happy with the outcome.”

Your team-mate Marcus Armstrong was understandably very disappointed after the last race. Have you seen him in the meantime, and has it affected your relationship?

Vips: “I was surprised that he was so gracious to me after the race. But it took a few hours before he came to terms with it. Now our relationship is just the same as it always was. We get on really well with each other. It’s been a real pleasure to be on the same team as him.”



Looking back at the season as a whole, what were the high points and what were the low points?

Vips: “The high point has to be the day on which I clinched the championship – no doubt about it. The low point was perhaps the third race at the Lausitzring, when Marcus and I were pushed off the track by another car as we were going round a corner. That caused my only DNF of the season, because I finished among the points in every other race. And because it was something completely beyond my control, I was pretty annoyed afterwards.”

How much of your success can be attributed to your team?

Vips: “I cannot thank Prema Powerteam enough! They have won almost all the team championships they have entered this season. When you look at the way Prema operate and the way they prepare their drivers, it’s no wonder that they are simply the best single-seater team.”

Let’s return to the opposition. What other drivers have impressed you this season?

Vips: “Well, I have to say that Felipe Drugovich was surprisingly fast. When he tested with Prema, he wasn’t all that quick. So in this respect, I was very surprised by his pace throughout the season. To be honest, I had expected Nicklas Nielsen to be in the running for the championship this year. He is a superbly experienced driver, and I would have expected him to finish much higher than he did.”

2017 was your second year in ADAC Formula 4. How important has this series been for you and for your career?

Vips: “I’ve had two great years in ADAC Formula 4, especially this season. There were only a few rookies, and the field of contestants was much more closely matched than ever before in terms of pace and experience.”

It’s mid-October and four weeks since your title win, and you’ve already competed in Formula 3 for the first time. How did that come about, and how did it go?

Vips: “It was all quite straightforward really. I received the call on Monday ahead of the race weekend at the Hockenheimring, and I went to Germany on Wednesday to take over the free cockpit at Team Motopark. And then it actually went much better than expected. Especially when you consider that I came into the event with literally no preparation. To find myself on the rookie podium twice was a really unexpected outcome. And of course, it was also great fun to be competing against my old mates Joey Mawson and Mick Schumacher.”

What are your plans for the rest of this year and for the future?

Vips: “I’ve noticed how much I’ve improved as a driver, and I’m going to do everything I can to continue improving as a driver. Graduating to Formula 3 would be super. Let’s see what the winter brings. I love motor racing and would be delighted to make my living doing something that I enjoy.”

Media contact

ADAC Formula 4

Uschi Vogel/Andreas Asen, Tel: +49 (0) 221 99880 305. E-mail: adac-motorsport@sid-marketing.de

ADAC e.V.

Oliver Runschke, Tel: +49 (0) 89 7676 6965, E-mail: oliver.runschke@adac.de

Kay-Oliver Langendorff, Tel: +49 (0) 89 7676 6936, E-mail: kay.langendorff@adac.de

www.adac.de/formula-4

