

29/09/2019 – No 32

Infected by motorsport bug: Veteran at 16, Pourchaire secures ADAC Formula 4 title



- Pourchaire first began karting aged six
- “Excellent sport”: French teenager has motor racing bug
- Pourchaire intends to race in Formula 1: Vettel is his big idol

Hohenstein-Ernstthal: 16-year-old French teenager, Théo Pourchaire, leaps for joy and then heads off to take part in the podium celebrations while endeavouring to enjoy the usual champagne shower from a safe distance. Driving for US Racing CHRS, Pourchaire won the ADAC Formula 4 title in a thrilling finish to the season by coming second, achieving his biggest success to date in motorsport. In the overall standings, he consigned arch rival Dennis Hauger (16, Norway, Van Amersfoort Racing) to second place, beating him by seven points. “It’s a tremendous feeling to win the championship and for the team as well. Many thanks to them for their terrific support throughout the year,” said Pourchaire: “I would also like to congratulate Dennis on his great year.”

Pourchaire put the icing on the cake to an outstanding year, during which he displayed impressive consistency. He finished in the Top Ten in 16 of this season’s 20 races with eight podiums in addition to his four race wins. His opponents could find no answer to his consistency. Only Hauger remained a serious rival until the end, especially after the Hockenheim weekend which must have felt like something from a horror movie to Pourchaire. With only six points to show from three races, the Gods of racing seemed to be raining bad luck down on Pourchaire. Meanwhile, arch rival, Hauger, was busy securing an historic triple victory, moving to within one point of Pourchaire.

But Pourchaire, who is normally completely relaxed as he drives, did not let himself be put off his stride. Not even variable weather conditions during the season finale at the Sachsenring could stop him from completing his mission to win the title. “Coming to the Sachsenring was very tough after the Hockenheimring weekend, knowing I had to focus everything on this one big task. I was well aware that I was only one point ahead and that I had to finish in front of Hauger, but I did it in the end and am mega happy. Everyone in the whole team is happy, my family too – awesome!” he said.

Pourchaire developed his enthusiasm for racing at an early age. “I started go-karting when I was two,” he told us. “My dad got me interested, and I got the bug once I began karting. And then there’s the scraps, lots of them, and the adrenaline. As far as I’m concerned, it’s the best sport around. Obviously, it’s an extreme sport, but it’s simply excellent,” he said, fizzing with excitement.

His results matched his enthusiasm. As an eight-year-old, Pourchaire won the title in the Kart Championship of his home region, PACA, in southern France, adding many more in the years that followed. And the passionate cyclist and tennis player soon shook things up too in international competitions. He came third in the World Cup Junior class in 2016, leaving many others trailing behind, including the Brazilian Gianluca Petecof, who also contested the 2019 ADAC Formula 4.



After another strong year in karting, the switch to single-seater racing was the next logical step. Aged just 14, Pourchaire made the bold move into the French Formula 4 for the 2018 season and easily dominated the Junior classification, taking 16 wins from 21 races. Along with his strong speed, Pourchaire also demonstrated a special gift for developing cars' performance at a very early age, making him an altogether excellent package that the big motorsport teams just could not ignore.

Well-established Sauber Formula 1 team took Pourchaire on as a member of their junior squad, and he found a worthy home in the ADAC Formula 4 with reigning team champions, US Racing CHRS. He quickly found his feet in the new series as well, achieving his first podium in only his second race at Oschersleben. It was the start of a new success story which was due also to help received from ex-Formula 1 driver Ralf Schumacher, who brought Pourchaire to US Racing CHRS together with Gerhard Ungar and closely followed the performance of his protégé from far-off Sochi this weekend. "They've taught me a lot and have a plenty of experience of motor sport, which is excellent. Ralf was a Formula 1 driver, knows a lot about this sport and we've even had some contact this weekend. He can always help and gives me lots of tips – just like Gerhard," said Pourchaire, who still attends school when not racing.

Pourchaire is aiming high as regards his long-term future. "I hope I can make it into Formula 1. Of course, everyone dreams of that. It's a long way off, but one day, I want to be Formula 1 World Champion," he said. His role model has taken more than just one world title. "I really like Sebastian Vettel. Our driving styles might even be a little similar. He's a four-time Formula 1 World Champion, of course, and I'm only in Formula 4. But I'm relaxed in the cockpit, just like him, I really love that and like to watch how he does things," said Pourchaire. Having achieved his first triumph in the ADAC formula racing series for juniors which has been around since 1991, he is already following in the footsteps of his big idol. Vettel triumphed in the ADAC High-Speed Academy in 2004.

For the moment, though, Pourchaire is hoping to take the next step: "Maybe I'll be in Formula 3 next year. Let's wait and see. Sauber's Junior team are helping me a lot. They're a great outfit but we'll just have to see what the future holds."

TV schedule for ADAC Formula 4 grand finale

SPORT1+	30/09/2019	03:00 CEST	Race 1	Recording
SPORT1+	30/09/2019	08:15 CEST	Race 3	Recording

ADAC Formula 4 Calendar 2019

26/04/19 – 28/04/19	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
07/06/19 – 09/06/19	Red Bull Ring Spielberg (AUT)
26/07/19 – 28/07/19	Hockenheim (with Formula 1)
09/08/19 – 11/08/19	Zandvoort (NL)
16/08/19 – 18/08/19	Nürburgring
13/09/19 – 15/09/19	Hockenheimring
27/09/19 – 29/09/19	Sachsenring

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