

Motorcycling with John Savage

# PEARSON TAKES CONTROVERSIAL FIRST WIN

**Defending Irish Superbike champion Michael Pearson scored his first win of the year, in controversial circumstances at Bishopscourt last Saturday, when the stewards of the meeting upheld a protest by the Ballygowan man that James Dickson had passed him under a yellow caution flag.**

Dickson had taken the chequered flag ahead of Pearson in the second ISB race, but the Coleraine man was subsequently penalised 1.3 seconds, which demoted him to second place, and the win was awarded to Pearson, astride his Carryduff Forklift/Boost Drinks Yamaha R1.

In the first race, Pearson finished runner-up, as Ballymoney's Gerard Kinghan scored his maiden ISB victory, with Dickson third, but when Kinghan crashed the Farlough Garage Suzuki GSX-R1000 in front of Pearson while leading the second race, the contentious yellow flag incident occurred.

Dickson aggressively, but fairly, overtook Pearson exiting Fairways, on the approach to Ringawaddy, but Pearson lodged a post-race protest that Dickson had done so while a yellow flag was displayed, after Kinghan's fall, and Dickson was subsequently stripped of the win.

Pearson, who has jumped from seventh to second in the championship standings, explained: "Kinghan came off and I lost a bit of time, because I nearly followed him off the track. I saw the yellow flag and started to slow. I went up through the back section into the right-hander and Dickson came up the inside of me. I had to lift the bike, or he would have taken both of us off. If the shoe had been on the other foot, I would have been protested against."

Michael added: "It was only on return to the paddock did I realise that the Clerk of Course was aware that I had been passed under a yellow flag and that was when I lodged a protest. It was upheld, but it was a sour win to be honest, but rules are rules and we all have to abide by them."

Dickson disputed that he had overtaken under a yellow flag, but declined to appeal the decision. He explained: "I was about to leave the track, as I was trying to rush off to a mate's birthday. The first I heard of a protest was when Roy Harris of *Irish Racer Magazine* asked me if I'd heard the rumour going around that there was a protest. I went to the Clerk of the Course and he was reading the complaint that Michael Pearson had put in."

James said: "I didn't see any yellow flag at all and the flag marshal didn't remember anything. I was a bit annoyed, as I'm not in contention for the championship anyway, and Pearson still had two laps left in the race to try to pass me. I knew in the first race that I couldn't get up with the leaders, but when Gerard Kinghan came off in the second race, I knew I had to make a move on Michael Pearson straight away, which is what I did."

Pearson led during the formative stages of the first

race, tailed by Kinghan and Dickson, but Kinghan hit the front on lap two and he and Pearson began to ease away from the pursuing pack.

Despite his best efforts, Pearson was unable to find a way past Kinghan, and when it began to rain on the fifth lap of a scheduled eight, the race continued for a further lap, before Kinghan put his hand in the air to indicate he wanted the race stopped, due to the deteriorating conditions, with all the riders on slick tyres.

Pearson felt the race should have run its full distance.

He said: "It shouldn't have been red-flagged — there was no rain on the track. I had no problems with grip and when I came in you couldn't put your hand on the back tyre, because it was so hot. I was bidding my time and I was going to make a move on the last lap, but it wasn't to be."

Dickson believed the premature stoppage was the correct decision.

He recounted: "I saw Gerard Kinghan put his hand up and then Denver Robb did the same and so did I. Down at the bottom of the circuit, the track was very shiny and slippery. Stopping the race was the right thing to do." With the race stopped, the result was declared from positions at the completion of lap five, which gave Kinghan the win by 0.146 of a second over Pearson.

Dickson was the best part of two seconds back in third on Gerry Kingsbury's KP Racing/Zig Zag Suzuki, while Newtownards man Kirk Jamison got the nod for fourth on the Jim Angus Contracts Honda Fireblade CBR1000RR, narrowly ahead of Ballymena man Denver Robb on the Mar-Train Suzuki and Crumlin's Stephen Thompson, now riding the Sloan Developments Honda.

Championship leader, Brian McCormack struggled to seventh in his last ISB outing on his Honda Fireblade, as the Waterford man is poised to switch to Yamaha.

The second race was a thriller, as Pearson grabbed the lead from the outset, tracked by Kinghan, Dickson, Jamison and Robb.

The positions remained unchanged until Kinghan dived past Pearson to take the lead on lap four, but two laps later Kinghan bit the dust and then came the controversial incident, when Dickson dived past Pearson to take the lead.

Dickson took the flag with a one second cushion over Pearson, with Robb close behind in third, but the result was subsequently overturned, and Pearson got the verdict, in front of Dickson, with Robb third.

Jamison was four seconds adrift of the leading trio in fourth, ahead of Thompson and Coleraine man Mark Johnston, who improved from eighth in the first race on the VSK Honda, with McCormack again seventh.

Jamison reflected: "My Fireblade still needs an exhaust system and power commander, as it is still basically a showroom road bike — Bishopscourt emphasised that with its long straight. I was having to override the 'Blade to try and get drive out of the corners to stick with the leaders, but unfortunately it was just a bridge too far."

"I tried my best and was pleased with my fourth in race one, after coming through from sixth at mid-distance, but frustrated with fourth in race two, as I was with the leaders in the beginning. I just couldn't get close enough to make a pass on

the leading trio and the harder I tried, the more mistakes I made."

### Supersport

After an eight weeks lay off, following an accident involving his infant son, who is thankfully returning to full health, Kirk Jamison showed he was far from race rusty, with two copybook rides in the Irish Supersport Championship race, astride the Jim Angus Contracts Yamaha R6, quipping that his double success was down to his new 'lucky lids', as Kirk was wearing Nolan's new X-lite helmet for the first time, thanks to a deal brokered by *Irish Racer Magazine* publishing editor, Paul Lindsay.

The surprise package was Michael Sweeney, from Skerries, who grabbed the lead in the first eight lapper, in which Jamison was somewhat slow off the grid, but after Jamison picked his way up from fifth at the completion of the opening lap, he slipped past Sweeney's Street Sweep Yamaha into Fairways at half distance, and immediately began to pull away from the front. Jamison edged away to win by two seconds from Sweeney, who had Drogheda's Wayne Kirwan hot on his tail in third on the JD's Motorcycles Yamaha.

Aboard the TAG Racing Honda CBR600RR, Robert Lanigan got the better of fellow Dubliner Derek Sheils on the Absol Engineering Triumph 675 for fourth, with Carrickfergus man Mark Cassells a lonely sixth on his Yamaha.

Seventh in the first race on the Stevenson Motors Yamaha, Cookstown's Gary Jeffers grabbed the holeshot in the second race, but Jamison soon surged to the front and he cruised to a comfortable three seconds victory, as Sweeney repeated his first race second, ahead of Banbridge man Alistair Kirk, who was again best of the Supersport Cup runners, having placed eighth in race one.

Kirk got the Mar-Train Suzuki GSX-R600 home just ahead of Lanigan, Jeffers and Kirwan, as just over half-a-second covered the quartet.

After his first Irish Championship double since 2003, Jamison joked: "It was definitely nice to repay the team for their hard work — hopefully I won't have to wait another five years for the next one!"

He beamed: "Pole, two wins and two fastest laps — to say I am over the moon wouldn't do it justice. When things continuously go against you, you begin to wonder whether you still have it in you to win, and I suppose that could be said for myself recently. It just seems that every time I get myself in a good position, something crops up to shatter my hopes of winning an Irish Championship, so to bounce back from the last upset with a double was fantastic."

With Dubliner Jack Kennedy, the championship leader, absent from Bishopscourt, as he was contesting the Henderson R1 Cup race at the Bennetts British Superbike Championship Superbike Championship meeting at Snetterton in Norfolk last weekend, Jamison has slashed Kennedy's championship advantage by 50 points to 58.

Kirk said: "Kennedy may not be at the next round at Ballykelly, due to BSB commitments, so further inroads could be made. I am only 17 points behind second placed Robert Lanigan, so a lot depends on which rounds Kennedy decides to take in. All I can do is keep on fighting for wins and enjoying myself." **250cc**

Ballynahinch man David Craig enhanced his lead in the Irish 250cc Championship, when he finished runner-up in the first race and then won the second, astride Cleaver Browne's Honda.

Ballymoney's Paul Robinson led the first race virtually all the way on the D&P Honda, to get the better of Craig by a couple of seconds, with the rest off the pace, and Kildare's Ronan Shanahan third, in front of Derek McLaughlin.

The second race was a thriller, and at the conclusion of six pulsating laps, one-thousandth of a second split winner Craig and runner-up Robinson, as Ballymena man McLaughlin and Shanahan switched their first race results.

### Isaac Agnew Van Centre Mini Twins

The action was fast and furious in both Isaac Agnew Van Centre Irish Mini Twins Championship races.

Ballywalter fireman Alan Brown led the first race until half distance, after which defending champion Lee Hill took control.

Brown set the pace for four of the seven laps, before Hill forced his NH Trade Frames SV650 Suzuki to the head of affairs, following which the Ballyclare man retained control to win by just over one second from Wayne Kirwan, who snatched the runners-up berth from Brown on the final lap, with Alan Glasgow close behind in fourth.

At the conclusion of the second six lapper, less than half-a-second separated the leading trio, as Hill repeated his first race win over Kirwan, with Glasgow third, while Brown had to settle for a disappointing tenth.

Kirwan had the consolation of a new lap record at 85.84mph, bettering the previous mark, set by Hill in the corresponding fixture last season.

### 125cc

There was a mixture of experienced and youthful enthusiasm in the Irish 125cc Championship races, in which the honours were shared by Ballywalter veteran Davy Lemon and Ballinamallard youngster Josh Elliott.

Starting from pole position, soon-to-be-married Mark Lunney set the pace in the first race, astride the KRB Honda, but after Lemon shadowed the Belfastman until half distance, he moved to the front on his Aprilia, and was never again headed.

It was a hotly contested affair, with just over half-a-second covering the leading quartet at the completion of the six laps, as Lemon held on to take the win from Elliott, who relegated Lunney to third on the final lap, and Newtownabbey youngster Glenn Irwin finished close behind in fourth.

Glenn, son of former multi-Irish champion Alan, also smashed the lap record for a 125cc Clubmans' rider, which had been held by Elliott since last October.

Elliott, who is contesting this year's Red Bull Rookies KTM 125cc Championship, a support class at European rounds of the MotoGP World Championship, underlined his growing maturity when he held off former Irish 125cc champion Lunney to win the second race by two-hundredths of a second.

Dubliner Andrew Pollock improved from eighth in the first race to take third, hotly pursued by another pair of former Irish 125cc champions, Belfast-based Welshman Tim Stott, astride the Dunlop Racing Honda, and Paul Robinson, who repeated his first race fifth on the Impact Conveyor Parts Honda.

Lemon's Aprilia bogged down on the line at the start, as a consequence of which Davy could only salvage ninth position.

Defending Irish 125cc champion and championship leader, Nigel Percy from Randalstown, was a non-starter after a heavy qualifying crash, in which he tangled with Gary Jordan and sustained a badly bruised back and neck.

### Sidcar

Dubliner John Farragher and his passenger C. J. Fahey won both Irish Championship Sidcar races, the first from Newtownards man Alex Johnston and Kyle Young in the Willie Moore Racing LCR Suzuki and the second from another



ISB racing at its closest: Gerard Kinghan leads Michael Pearson, James Dickson and Kirk Jamison. Photo by Gordon Williams

1st race: 1, J. Farragher/C. J. Fahey (Baker Yamaha) 82.22mph; 2, A. Johnston/K. Young (LCR Suzuki); 3, S. Killough/P. Marley (Baker Yamaha); 4, G. Kennedy/C. Smyth (ART Suzuki); 5, S. Galligan/F. Woodlock (Baker Yamaha); 6, P. Farrelly/J. Abel (MR Equipe Suzuki F2); 7, M. Donovan/A. Browne (Ireson Yamaha F2); 8, S. Charlton/C. Kinsella (DMR Yamaha F2); 9, A. Galligan/D. Lynch (LCR Suzuki F2). Fastest lap: Farragher/Fahey 84.95mph. 2nd race: 1, Farragher/Fahey 82.13mph; 2, Kennedy/Smyth; 3, Killough/Marley; 4, Johnston/Young; 5, Galligan/Woodlock; 6, Farrelly/Abel; 7, Donovan/Browne; 8, K. & S. Mullen (Jacobs Suzuki); 9, Charlton/Kinsella. Fastest lap: Farragher/Fahey 84.68mph. Classic, 1st race: 1, R. J. Wooley (900 Seelye Weslake) 68.93mph; 2, S. Wilson (500 Honda); 3, L. White (350 Honda); 4, G. O'Kane (250 Suzuki); 5, M. McCloskey (350 Honda); 6, N. May (500 Honda). Fastest lap: Wooley 70.04mph. 2nd race: 1, Wooley 67.53mph; 2, White; 3, Wilson; 4, J. Monteith (850 Weslake); 5, O'Kane; 6, May; 7, McCloskey; 8, W. Mulholland (500 Matchless). Fastest lap: Wooley 69.11mph.



James Dickson flashes past Gerard Kinghan's cartwheeling Suzuki, after Kinghan crashed during the second ISB race — the incident which led to post-race controversy. Photo by Gordon Williams

85.04mph; 2, J. Elliott (Honda); 3, M. Lunney (Honda); 4, G. Irwin (Honda); 5, P. Robinson (Honda); 6, D. Jamison (Honda); 7, T. Stott (Honda); 8, A. Pollock (Honda); 9, A. McClean (Honda); 10, S. Kelly (Honda). Fastest lap: Irwin 87.01mph. 2nd race: 1,

Elliott 83.32mph; 2, Lunney; 3, Pollock; 4, Stott; 5, Robinson; 6, C. Donnelly (Honda); 7, A. Flanagan (Honda); 8, J. Patterson (Honda); 9, Lemon; 10, McClean. Fastest lap: Lunney 86.75mph. Irish Sidcar Championship,

### Results

Irish Superbike Championship, 1st race: 1, G. Kinghan (1000 Suzuki) 90.70mph; 2, M. Pearson (1000 Yamaha); 3, J. Dickson (1000 Suzuki); 4, K. Jamison (1000 Honda); 5, D. Robb (1000 Suzuki); 6, S. Thompson (1000 Honda); 7, B. McCormack (1000 Honda); 8, M. Johnston (1000 Yamaha); 9, J. Anderton (1000 Suzuki); 10, P. Byrne (1000 Suzuki). Fastest lap: Kinghan 93.13mph. 2nd race: 1, Pearson 91.44mph; 2, Dickson; 3, Robb; 4, Jamison; 5, Thompson; 6, Johnson; 7, McCormack; 8, Anderton; 9, D. Swanton (1000 Honda); 10, R. Clarke (1000 Suzuki). Fastest lap: Pearson 93.41mph.

Irish Supersport Championship, 1st race: 1, K. Jamison (600 Yamaha) 89.46mph; 2, M. Sweeney (600 Yamaha); 3, W. Kirwan (600 Yamaha); 4, R. Lanigan (600 Honda); 5, D. Shiels (675 Triumph); 6, M. Cassells (600 Yamaha); 7, G. Jeffers (600 Yamaha); 8, A. Kirk (600 Suzuki); 9, K. Cassells (600 Yamaha); 10, M. Weldon (600 Honda). Fastest lap: Jamison 91.43mph. 2nd race: 1, Jamison 89.31mph; 2, Sweeney; 3, Kirk; 4, Lanigan; 5, Jeffers; 6, Kirwan; 7, Shiels; 8, M. Cassells; 9, K. Cassells; 10, P. Conway (600 Yamaha). Fastest lap: Jamison 91.08mph.

Irish 250cc Championship, 1st race: 1, P. Robinson (Honda) 88.33mph; 2, D. Craig (Honda); 3, R. Shanahan (Honda); 4, D. McLaughlin (Honda); 5, W. Hamilton (Honda); 6, G. Ferguson (Yamaha); 7, J. Ella (Honda); 8, C. Donnelly (Honda); 9, G. Keep (Honda); 10, L. Irwin (Honda). Fastest lap: Craig 90.15mph. 2nd race: 1, Craig 86.88mph; 2, Robinson; 3, McLaughlin; 4, Shanahan; 5, Ella; 6, R. Crawford (Honda); 7, D. Guiney (Honda); 8, Donnelly; 9, Ferguson; 10, Keep. Fastest lap: Craig 89.48mph.

Isaac Agnew Van Centre Irish Mini Twins Championship, 1st race: 1, L. Hill 83.74mph; 2, W. Kirwan; 3, A. Brown; 4, A. Glasgow; 5, K. Meere; 6, M. McKinney; 7, D. Gilpin; 8, S. McKeown; 9, D. Walsh; 10, S. Clarke (all 650 Suzuki). Fastest lap: Kirwan 85.23mph. 2nd race: 1, Hill 83.21mph; 2, Kirwan; 3, Glasgow; 4, Meere; 5, McKinney; 6, McKeown; 7, C. Wright; 8, Gilpin; 9, Walsh; 10, Brown (all 650 Suzuki). Record lap: Kirwan 85.84mph.

Irish 125cc Championship, 1st race: 1, D. Lemon (Aprilia)



Kirk Jamison had an excellent day, with two fourth places in the ISB races and back to back wins in the Irish Supersport Championship. Photo by Deek McCoubrie



Lee Hill scored back to back wins in the Isaac Agnew Van Centre Mini Twins races, in which Wayne Kirwan set a new lap record for the class. Photo by Deek McCoubrie



Ballywalter's Davy Lemon won the first 125cc race. Photo by Deek McCoubrie