
McWilliams is star guest at ISB launch

Posted by Savo - 2008/02/29 00:01

Published Date: 28 February 2008

Source: News Letter

Location: Belfast

McWilliams is star guest at ISB launch

Ex-World Grand Prix star Jeremy McWilliams will attend tonight's official Press launch of the 2008 Irish Superbike Championship in Belfast as the event's special guest.

McWilliams, who finished in sixth position in the 2001 World GP 250cc Championship, will be joined by former multiple Irish champion Michael Swann and a host of ISB riders including current champion, Michael Pearson, as well as Kirk Jamison, James Dickson, Denver Robb and Declan Swanton.

The launch has been instigated by a group of four riders " Pearson, Jamison, Dickson and Scott Kelly " in conjunction with the MCUI in an effort to inject new life into short circuit racing in Northern Ireland.

Last night, Jamison revealed that several potential sponsors have already expressed an interest in coming on board as backers of the Irish championships.

"Negotiations are in place to try and secure title sponsors and things are looking quite positive," said Jamison " who is acting as a spokesperson on behalf of the ISB riders.

"We have had quite a lot of positive feedback ahead of the launch and the appearance of Jeremy McWilliams and Michael Swann at the Press launch will help lend more weight to our bid to attract sponsorship for short circuit racing.

"I got together with Michael Pearson, James Dickson and Scott Kelly and we decided we had to take steps to improve the profile of short circuit racing and make it a more attractive package to sponsors.

"We need to take a professional approach to marketing and promoting the sport and the appointment of a marketing consultant is an area that is being looked at," he added.

"There's only so much we can do as riders and we simply won't have the time for that side of things when the season is underway.

"The most important thing is that we continue to get publicity after the launch this evening and that we can build on it and take it from there.

"At present, not enough spectators are going to the races and it's a vicious circle, because if you don't have the spectators at the races or a high level of media coverage then it's difficult to attract sponsorship."

Jamison pointed to the Easter meetings at Bishopscourt and Kirkistown and the end-of-season Sunflower Trophy races as key examples of short circuit events in Ulster that attract significant publicity and substantial spectator attendances.

"Ideally, we need television coverage of the events and better media coverage.

"The only three meetings of the year that receive decent coverage are the Easter meetings at Bishopscourt and Kirkistown and the Sunflower Trophy races," he added.

"These events receive good publicity beforehand because they have Press launches and they attract decent crowds. We need to build a momentum and keep short circuit racing in the media spotlight.

"That way, more spectators will go to the races and the sponsors will become interested.

Last Updated: 27 February 2008 6:00 PM

=====