

NEWS IN BRIEF

EAGLE PLAN IS ALL AT SEA

THE MANAGER of the Sea Eagle Project claimed that the law is not protecting the birds. The comments come as two more white-tailed eagles have been found dead in South Kerry. It's believed both were poisoned. Dr Allan Mee, manager of the re-introduction project said that: "The law in relation to poisoning is being broken."

OPEN DAY IS HOLY SHOW

ABOUT 80 men aged between 20 and 35 attended the the country's only seminary in Maynooth this week for an open day for prospective priests. The initiative was the first of its kind for St Patrick's College and organisers were impressed at the numbers of young men who showed up to get an insight into what life is like in the seminary.

EXCLUSIVE IRISH ACE CAN BE THE



JOB DONE: Geraldine with the Irish team's bosses



HANDS ON: Team mechanic Charlie with Geraldine



PRIDE: Girlfriend Claire celebrates Adam's victory

FORMULA

BY GERALDINE COMSIKEY

HE IS the lad with nerves of steel and a need for speed.

But Adam Carroll, who shot to victory at 200mph in the A1 motor racing world championships at Brands Hatch in England last weekend, will need to step on the brakes as he steers himself through the next lap of his amazing career.

The 26-year-old driver from Portadown has to decide whether he wants to continue racing for his country in A1 – or for money.

After last weekend's spectacular win, when he finished laps ahead of drivers from 20 other countries, Adam is in pole position in international motorsport, where F1 drivers can earn salaries of up to €50million.

And Ferrari, who supplied all the cars for the race, will be taking a keen interest in our man.

"They will want to take him away from us. He is the next Michael Schumacher or Lewis Hamilton," one of team Ireland's sponsors, John Hynes, told the *Sunday World* as we celebrated with the Irish team at the famous race track.

John urged Adam: "Please don't leave us. A1 is real motor-racing. Formula one is more about how much money you throw at it."

Happy

But the man who provided most of the €5million fund for Team Ireland said he would be really happy to see Adam go to Formula One.

"I would be proud because he started with us," Macao businessman Teddy Yip said.

As world champion, Adam has nothing more to prove in A1 and his reserve driver Niall Quinn is raring to get his chance to drive for Ireland.

But the close-knit team of sponsors and 15 mechanics will miss their boy wonder – and Adam will surely miss his dedicated A1 Team. As I stood in the garage, watching them get the car ready, I could see why.

He didn't know it at the time, but one of his mechanics, Englishman Simon Price, had a broken leg. The brave lad had refused to wear a tell-tale plastercast because he would not have been allowed to work.

The back-up team came from all over the world but today they were all Irish. Like a rock star, Adam waited as his roadies fired up the Ferrari.

The car's massive engine was roaring long before he climbed in – it had to be kept hot. The water had to be



CHAMPION: Adam with Claire

Adam lines up for shot at big time

kept at exactly 60 degrees and the oil at 190. There's no such thing as a cold-start when you're driving a 600-brake horsepower rocket.

Even the spare wheels had to be kept warm – in heated bags.

I went up on the roof of the VIP room to watch the actual race, which was Adam's second of the day. He had won an earlier sprint race by several laps, but no-one wanted to tempt fate, so we watched anxiously as the cars revved up on the grid.

Skidding and shuddering, these monsters strained at the leash, the hum of their engines getting ever louder. All had been supplied by Ferrari – this race was not between cars but between teams.

They did a few 'slow' laps – more than 100 mph – to warm up. It was the ultimate petrol-head's fantasy to see 21 Ferraris at full tilt, followed by the flashing blue lights of the safety car.

Then they were off – and all eyes were on our car, which shot out in front. It was like watching a bright green bullet whizzing around the track.

Watching our car take hairpin bends at speeds of 170 mph was surre-

al but we were reminded of just how dangerous this sport can be when the Indian car got too close to the Chinese and went flying up into the air. Amazingly, both drivers were unharmed.

Still going at high speed, the safety car – a red Ferrari – led the competitors around a few laps until the track was cleared. Then we were off again, with Ireland still flying ahead.

Even the pitstops were thrilling. Four muscle-bound mechanics rushed out, each with a massive wheel on the end of a gun. Our lads were easily the fastest at changing a wheel.

The thrills weren't all on the track. Four laps from home, Ferrari called to say the engine had a problem – and the spare one wasn't a high enough spec. But the team couldn't warn Adam – because the radio was broken!

"Before we could do anything about it, he was across the finish line," team manager Dave O'Neill said later.

As Adam finally put the brakes on, the roar of the crowd threatened to drown out the sound of 20 Ferraris coming behind him.

As Adam was excavated from his car, I expected him to have a G-force grin, but he looked as if he had just been for a nice drive in the countryside – which of course he had.

Tradition

In true motor-racing tradition, Adam was surrounded by an entourage of sexy pitlane girls as he took to the podium to accept his trophy.

As he sprayed everyone with champagne, his mechanics chanted: "Who's the daddy?"

They were relieved to find that he hadn't even felt the call of nature during the race – motor racing drivers are notorious for doing it in the car.

Adam's mother, who was standing in the crowd with his girlfriend Claire Simmons, had a moment of fame as sponsor John Hynes yelled down from the podium: "Thanks for having him! I bet you had to chase him around the kitchen!"

He also thanked the main sponsor's mother Beverly Clarke, "for having Teddy". At 26, Teddy is the youngest sponsor in the race but comes from a family of motor-racing fans and his dad previously sponsored the Jordan team. "This cost me €2 million but it's worth it," he told me even before Adam had gone on to the track.

Meanwhile, Mrs Carroll described the race as: "The longest 70 minutes of my life!" She told me Adam had never given up on his dream. "He's had ups and downs but he stuck at it."

British motor-racing legend Sid Taylors hobbled over on a walking stick to congratulate Adam, adding: "He's one to watch."

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