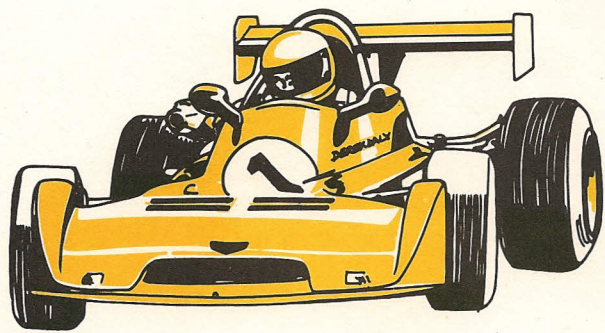


DEREK McMAHON RACING



INTERNATIONAL
FORMULA 3
TEAM

DRIVER: DEREK DALY

AUTOSPORT
YEAR BOOK

1977

A FUTURE WORLD CHAMPION?



DEREK DALY

Derek Daly and David Kennedy might almost be brothers. Daly was born in Dundrum, Dublin, and he started in stock car racing with a Mini, becoming Irish Champion in 1972. David Kennedy used to act as his mechanic while, in turn, Daly was mechanic for Kennedy when he had his old "jubilee clip" Lotus 51. The story goes that when David entered his first race with the Lotus, Daly practised it for him!

In 1974 Daly bought the ex-Eddie Jordan Lotus 61 and contrived to spin in his first four races. He won his fifth and also gained several sprint and hillclimb successes — including an outright win at the soaking wet Cruagh hillclimb — which gave him the Formula Ford class in the Irish Speed Championship, known as the Sexton Trophy.

Then came the trip to Australia with Kennedy, and during his spell "down-under" Derek participated in local stock car races before being banned for pushing someone off. (That someone was the championship leader who also happened to own the track!)

Upon returning to Ireland for the 1975 season, Daly purchased a Crossle 25F, but it had an awful engine and Derek got nowhere, ultimately rolling it after colliding with Bernard Devaney. It looked as though his racing career had ended, but constructor John Crossle offered a brand new Crossle 30F chassis in exchange for the wrecked 25F plus £450. Daly's fortune changed and, despite missing the first two rounds, he won the Irish Formula Ford Championship plus the Driver of the Year Award for his performance at Phoenix Park where he worked his way up from 14th place on the first lap to ultimate victory. The season ended with a quick trip to England when he astounded everyone at Snetterton's Formula Ford Festival, setting a new lap record and running among the English elite before his engine cut out.

The Snetterton trip made up Daly's mind. He decided to spend a full year in Britain in 1976 and, turning down offers of works help from Crossle and Hawke, equipped himself with a Van Diemen RF76. His decision was largely based on the fact that FF2000 and even Formula 3 drives were promised for the future, but the fact remained that the Van Diemen was not competitive and soon he switched to a Hawke, campaigning a DL15 with great success. Although he won well over a dozen races, Daly did not win a championship. He was plagued by a series of misfortunes which caused him to retire from some races when leading: an experimental gear-linkage failed at Mallory Park; the coil lead fell off at Snetterton; the clutch exploded at Oulton Park; and twice he was involved in other people's accidents.

For 1977 Daly is moving up to Formula 3 along with other ex-FF stars. Originally he was to have run a 1976 car, but his new sponsor Derek McMahon became so excited about the season's plans he ordered a brand new Toyota-powered Chevron B38 instead.