

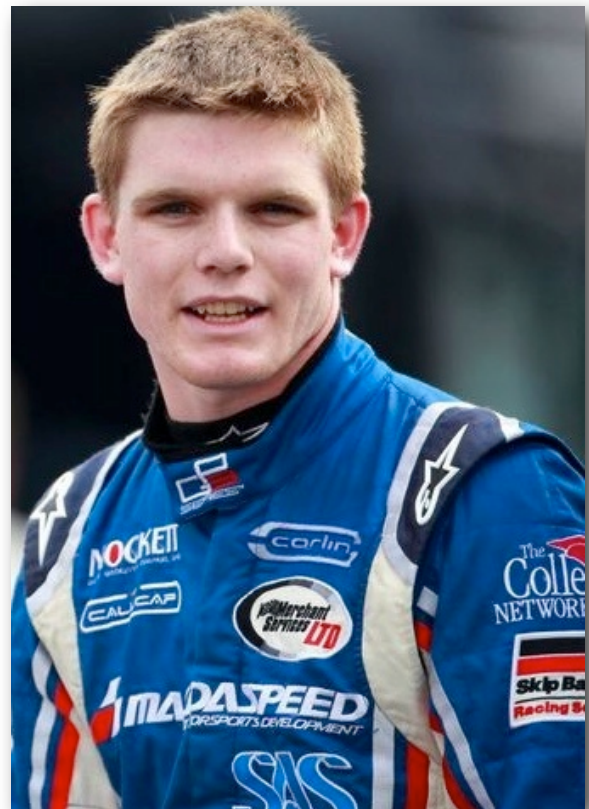


Daly's best GP3 weekend at Spa

It was never going to be easy because Conor had never raced there before but it would be on arguably the best Grand Prix circuit on the calendar. Spa, Franchorchamps in the Ardennes forest of Belgium, is considered to be the true test of a driver because of its fast spectacular corners that can become treacherous in the rain. Spa is also notorious for its weather changes where it can be raining on one half of the circuit, yet have sunshine on the other half. This past weekend was no different.

In the first and only practice session on Friday it rained three different times during the 45 minute session from a mixture of cloud and sunshine. Conor did four laps on dry tires on the damp track before changing to wet rain tires for the remainder of the session.

Qualifying was the opposite with a wet tire start for the first half of the 30 minute session on Saturday morning but the big decision came with 12 minutes to go when many gambled that the last lap on dry slick tires might be faster than staying on wets on a drying line. Conor elected to go with the gamble even though he had never done a fast dry lap. With seven minutes to go he had enough time for three laps - if he could hang on to the car. Lap one as he explored the situation put him 23rd fastest. Lap two saw him improve to P12 and his third and last lap he went flat out through the famous Eau Rouge corner with wet spray coming off the dry tires. The effort gave everybody reason to smile as he had qualified in sixth place - his best qualifying session of the year.





Race one on Saturday afternoon was again held in typical Spa weather; wet, overcast and cold. After starting 6th, he passed British driver, Nick Yelolly around the outside at Les Coombs at the end of the long straight on the first lap. Yelolly did not want to yield the position and the two cars touched breaking Yelolly's suspension. The contact rubbed the Pirelli logo off Conor's right rear tire.

After five laps, the focus of the race became Conor and British driver (and championship leader), Alexander Sims. Sims attempted for three laps to make his move to pass Conor. On lap seven Conor caused his team owner Trevor Carlin, to jump from his seat as the television cameras caught Conor almost losing control through the flat out 145 MPH Blanchemont corner when his car slid sideways over the outside curbs with Conor fighting to keep control. Sims did not believe Conor could control the car and backed off to "watch the accident". It never happened as Conor maintained control but Sims thought that that would be his overtaking point on the next lap. Next time by he lined up Conor for the attempt and made a lunge for the inside line. Just before the apex and in the wet conditions he lost control however, spinning off and hitting Conor's left rear wheel at close to 145 MPH. Sims apologized after the race for the contact.

The battle for third and fourth place between British drivers, Andrew Quaiffe-Hobbs and German, Nigel Melker was just too far ahead for Conor to catch despite setting his fastest lap of the race on the last lap.

"I've had so few laps here that I know I was getting better as I learned the track. The pressure from Sims was intense and I saw him try the move and actually gave him room so that he would not take us both off the road. I'm more pleased for the team than for myself because they have supported me so much this season", said Conor





Because of the reverse grid start for the top eight finishers, Conor started on the second row of the grid for the Sunday morning race - his highest starting position of the season.

Race two was dry tires on a damp track. At the end of the long straight into Les Combs corner, Conor spun on the first lap attempting to maintain his position in a three abreast fight in the

brake zone - with Conor on the inside and wettest part of the circuit. He gathered it up quickly and had an uneventful race from there on to finish in seventh place rounding out his best results of the year and leaving just two races to go in Monza, September, 10th-11th.

“I was disappointed in Sunday’s performance. I had too much understeer in the middle sector to be a real challenge but we never got any dry laps to really work on the car. This can be a difficult place to learn especially when the weather is never constant. I think we did a really good job however under the circumstances. Going flat out through Eau Rouge in damp and iffy conditions was a thrill. This is by far the best track I’ve ever raced on”, commented Conor.

Conor’s next race will be on the streets of Baltimore in the Firestone Indy Lights Championship, September 3rd-4th before he finishes off his GP3 campaign in Monza, Italy. After his trip to Monza, Conor will have been in nine different countries in the space of eight consecutive weekends.





For more information about this release or Conor Daly's programs please contact Jeff Grist at Derek Daly Academy – 905.328.7458 or press@derekdalyacademy.com.



