

# **CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 1**

## **– OULTON PARK – APRIL 6 2013**

There had been three different leaders in the first four laps of the opening CNC Heads North West Sports Saloons, but for the last four laps there was only one winner, as championship sponsor Ric Wood stormed home in his in his DTM Opel Astra.

### **QUALIFYING**

25 cars made it out for qualifying and it was Wood claiming pole by 2.3 secs. "We had a restrictor on it, but no problems," he said. Scottish Sports GT Champion Garry Watson was second quickest in his Westfield, "I want to do as many rounds as I can this year, as the different circuits are a real attraction to me," he explained.

Robert Spencer's Locosaki was only 2/100ths behind. "I was surprised, no amazed at my time, but had overfilled it with oil and some got on the tyres," he said. Simon Allaway's Lotus Daytona Esprit V8 joined him on the second row, "I have changed the suspension as my expert was with me and loving it," he said.

Debutant Philip Duncan brought his Westfield from the Scottish Championship and was fifth best, "I tested on Friday and then gained a whole second on that in qualifying. I am hoping to do all season, just loving it," he enthused. He had the experience of multiple champion Paul Dobson alongside in his trusty Mazda RX7. "It felt good and I now have my own preparation business, so I will do as many rounds as I can," he confirmed.

Joe Spencer also felt a lot of improvement in his Locosaki since last season. "It's 4kg lighter, we have a smaller cage and lighter floor, it feels like a race car," he said after securing seventh.

Steve Owen felt a bit "rusty" but was still on the fourth row, with Kevin Cryer's Caterham and defending Champion Dennis Crompton's BMW M3 sharing the next. "My modifications over the winter have made it slower," Dennis admitted.

Just outside the top ten was the Seat Leon Cupra of the vastly experienced Ilsa Cox. "It was as fast as I could go, but the start should be interesting as I haven't done a standing one in this car," she said. Tony Ellis' Mazda RX7 was alongside her, "I flat spotted a tyre and the big judder made me slow, so it's road tyres on the front and slicks on the back now," he explained. Richard Neary's session was cut short when his Sierra RS500 cracked its manifold. "First time out with the car for three years and now we need a welding kit," he said.

Richard Roundell's Vectra was next up and should have been followed by Jamie Cryer, debuting his Toyota MR2 Turbo, but the headgasket went and he was left sidelined. Paul Sampson had problems when his diff seized on the Volvo Grand National Coupe. "It overheated so we are trying to free it," he said.

Richard Hall's Ginetta G20 headed row nine from Steven Parker's BMW Compact. "I can't get the suspension set up right and I am running on road tyres as slicks tended to overheat," Steven explained.

Russell Hunter was delighted to have his MGB in front of the TR7's of Alan Collinson and Ralph Underwood. "Making progress," he said. But debutant Paul Rotheroe also headed the TR7 duo in his Citroen Xsara, "quite an eye opener, my first race weekend after doing trackdays," he said.

Underwood and Collinson were on row 11, with Bob Claxton's Renault 21 Turbo, Brian Allen's XR2i and Jack Marland's Mazda RX7 completing the qualifiers.

## RACE

With Jamie Cryer sidelined and Richard Neary withdrawing after dramas in the earlier Classic Thunder race, 23 cars came under starters orders.

Wood made his predictable pitlane start, which encouraged Watson to make a flying start, from Allaway, with Joe Spencer briefly in third before being usurped by father Rob, who also got Allaway too. "Joe made an amazing start, he was buzzing," said Rob. "When I looked in my mirrors at Shell I spotted lots of tyre smoke, so knew Rob was there, Allaway added.

As they completed the opening lap Owen was into fifth, from Duncan, Dobson, Crompton, Ellis and Cryer, while Wood was already 13<sup>th</sup> and poised to take Parker and Cox.

Watson pushed a little too hard on the second lap however, "I clipped the kerb at Shell Hairpin and slid into the gravel, stalled and couldn't restart," he explained.

Spencer Snr had the lead but Allaway was starting to close, while in third Owen had fought his way past Spencer Jnr. Cryer was also on the move picking off Ellis, who had also been penalised for a start infringement. but both had Wood as his next targets.

The lead was down to 0.825s after four laps, but halved on the next as Allaway was poised to challenge. While Spencer Jnr had his eye on retaking Owen, both Duncan and Dobson closed in too. On lap five Owen lost out and was down to fifth, with Duncan on his tail too, before losing out to both the flying Scot and Wood a lap later.

Allaway finally made his move for the lead exiting Lodge on the ninth lap, it was successful but shortlived as Wood had already joined and had the lead as they charged down the Avenue.

Wood had pulled out a lead of over six seconds at the flag, with Allaway an equally comfortable second. "I gave it my best to stay in front though," Allaway admitted.

While Spencer Snr consolidated third, the fight for fourth went right to the flag. Dobson had led the four way battle from lap six, but dropped to the back of the quartet on the last lap. "A fantastic race watching the sports cars, they held each other up and I got by at Old Hall

and Island, but then I ran out of fuel at Druids on the last lap and coasted home,” he explained.

So Joe Spencer seized his chance and as well as repassing Dobson, he ousted Duncan too on the last lap into Druids, having dropped to sixth on the after lap seven. “Hard work, but great watching Dobbo and the crowd cheering him, tired though,” Joe admitted.

Owen ousted Duncan to take fifth, “a good race, a lot of fun but too much indecision at the start,” he said. “Some great dices, very pleased with that,” Duncan added. Crompton and Cryer spent most of the race in formation, with Crompton heading initially, before Cryer got by on lap six. But the Champion responded stayed close and reclaimed eighth place four laps from home. “It was great, he got me into Cascades and I got him back into Knickerbrook,” said Crompton.

Ilsa Cox was the last unlapped runner, with Ellis retaining 11<sup>th</sup> for most of the race, “a bit on my own,” he said. Sampson worked his way up the order in the early laps to take 12<sup>th</sup> from Parker on lap eight, “a good start, good race but Latin writing on the front of my car made all the difference,” he reckoned. “It was Ok but I went straight on at Knickerbrook chicane on the last lap, didn’t brake early enough,” Parker replied.

Roundell battled his way through from penultimate place on the opening lap to a worthy 14<sup>th</sup> by the end of lap seven. Although Hunter had finished behind Rotheroe on the road, he moved up when the Xsara driver was penalised, “can’t wait for the next race though,” Rotheroe concluded.

Collinson pipped Hall for 17<sup>th</sup> with a lap to go, while Underwood and Allen completed the finishers. Claxton retired when a wheel came loose and Marland went out with a loose turbo.

Results: 1 Ric Wood (Opel Astra DTM) 13 laps in 23m01.069s (91.21mph); 2 Simon Allaway (Lotus Daytona Esprit V8) +6.817s; 3 Robert Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 5 Steve Owen (Westfield SEiW); 6 Philip Duncan (Westfield SEiW); 7 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7); 8 Dennis Crompton (BMW E36 M3); 9 Kevin Cryer (Caterham Seven); 10 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra) . Class A: 1 Wood; 2 Allaway; 3 Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); no other finishers. Class B: 1 Owen; 2 Duncan; 3 K.Cryer; no other finishers. Class C: 1 R.Spencer; 2 J.Spencer; no other starters. Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Crompton; 3 Cox; 4 Tony Ellis (Mazda RX7); 5 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 6 Russell Hunter (MGB); 7 Alan Collinson (Triumph TR7 V8); 8 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8). Class E: 1 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 2 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara VTS); 3 Richard Hall (Ginetta G20). Class F: 1 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i) no other starters. Fastest lap: Wood 1m40.489s (96.43mph) RECORD

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