

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 8

– OULTON PARK – AUGUST 17

Although the skies threatened the weather held fine and allowed Simon Allaway to unleash his V8 powered Esprit to its full potential and take another win over former Champion Robert Spencer by just over six seconds.

QUALIFYING

It was overcast and maybe threatening but the very early morning qualifying session stayed dry and allowed Allaway to secure pole by 0.443secs. "Not bad really, no front brakes and the handling wasn't so good, so a surprised pole," he admitted.

"I was shocked with my time too but it was hard to get a clear lap. I came in early as Joe had overfilled my oil, at first I thought it was raining," said Spencer Snr after securing second with his Stuart Taylor Locosaki.

Garry Watson found it rather busy too, but he still headed the second row with his Westfield SeiW. "A bit busy and too many close shaves, now it won't start," he said after leaving parc ferme.

He had Joe Spencer alongside with his Locosaki, "it's better being back on the track as I got bored watching. It's Ok but I think there's more to come," he said. Next up was Nick Cresswell out for the first time his season since damaging his Caterham's engine. "It's a new engine and gearbox and nothing leaks and it's all positive and quicker than before," he reckoned.

Steve Owen also felt that "everything was OK and nothing to change" with his Westfield in sixth place, just edging out Philip Duncan's similar car. "I don't like the shorter Island circuit though," Duncan added.

After excellent reliability so far this season Dennis Crompton had problems with his BMW M3. "The diff cooler was leaking so I will have to go slower," he explained. Also back for his

seasonal debut was Alistair Chalmers with his Caterham CSR. "It was a last minute effort and only just put the engine back in, so it feels more like trackday mode," he said.

Rounding off the top ten and now becoming a regular in the championship was Ilsa Cox with her Seat Leon Cupra. "I had a bit of wheelspin but it went very well," she said.

After an 18 month absence Patrick Smyth was back with his Elan and admitted to feeling "very rusty." Having had teething problems with his Ultima Iain Gorrie was looking forward to a race debut, "I am just getting used to it and building in confidence," he said.

Kevin Cryer's Caterham was next up but he had problems too, "I lost second gear and pitted early," he explained. He had the "rusty" Paul Woolfitt alongside with his Z Cars Mini, while Oulton Park legend Chris Maries headed row eight in his BMW 325 E30. "I had problems with the propshaft joint though," he explained and was later forced to withdraw from the race.

Pete Edwards had a problem too when his Escort RS1800's distributor exploded, "lovely until then," he said. But was a case of "no dramas, no issues and no speed," for Steven Hibbert, who was disappointed to be down in 17th with his Elise.

Paul Sampson had a new turbo on his Volvo Grand National Coupe. "It was the first time it felt right all year," he said. Apart from the shock of being 19th in his TR7 V8 Ralph Underwood was happy too.

The top 20 was completed by the duel for class F honours between Graham Saul's XR2 and Mike Nash's Peugeot 106. "I had a slipping clutch but happy overall," said Nash. "It went to plan I beat Mike, scrubbed my tyres in and no nasty surprises," Saul replied.

Apart from being "too slow" Richard Hall was happy with his Ginetta G20 , while heading row 12 was newcomer Gary Wardle in his BMW Mini Cooper. Richard Roundell was less than happy with his Vectra's handling, "it maybe set up or I might have bent something at Anglesey," he reckoned. Steven Parker was also unhappy with his BW Compact, "I didn't have time to put my slicks on so ran on road tyres and it was terrible," he explained.

Bob Claxton's Renault 21 Turbo was back and headed a quartet of newcomers, Myles Baker and Russell Paul's Fiesta ST's, Richard Morris's Mini Clubman and David Bird's Honda Civic, while Helen Allen's Fiesta had the legs of husband Brian, but had Keith Wilkinson's Mini splitting them at the back of the grid.

One notable absentee from the line up was Ric Wood, who's DTM Astra broke a stub axle exiting the garage and didn't even make the assembly area.

RACE

With Maries and Wood both absent it was 32 cars that came under starters orders, but both Cryer and Woolfitt had also ducked into the pitlane, Woolfitt failed to return.

As the lights went out Rob Spencer led into Old Hall from Watson, Joe Spencer and Allaway, but Allaway was into third on the exit , while Watson and Spencer Senior shared a couple of exchanges through Cascades and Island Hairpin for the lead. "That was a really good move on me but I got him back into the Hairpin," said Rob.

As they sped along Lakeside for the second time Allaway was into second, while Spencer Jnr did his best to hold on in fourth, as Owen, Cresswell and Duncan battle d behind.

The first retirement came o the third lap when Owen hit the tyre wall at Knickerbrook, "I went wide over the kerbs and onto the wet grass. I held it and was heading back for the track and it snapped again and spat me across the track into the opposite tyre wall," he explained.

The Cresswell and Duncan duel therefore moved up to fifth, with Chalmers, Crompton and Smyth all starting to spread out after Cox spun. "I was chasing Dennis around the outside of Cascades and he braked a bit early," she explained. Gorrie was also into the top ten after four laps, while the scramble behind continued.

But as they started lap four Allaway powered into the lead and left Spencer Snr and Duncan to duel for second. "After a rubbish start I had a few close moments getting through, then got in the groove built a lead but then lost third gear near the end," said Allaway.

Rob Spencer finally broke the tow to Duncan and was 1.8 secs clear at the flag. "It's easier chasing than being chased, but didn't expect to shake off Garry," he said. "I didn't make it easy for Simon or Rob but then started to lose my brakes and lost ground too, "Watson added.

Joe Spencer retained a lonely fourth, "I had a good start side by side with Garry on the grass and lucky to get back on. I kept up with them until the temperature started rise again," he explained. Duncan finally got the better of Cresswell from lap five for fifth place, "the backmarkers helped me, but we had been wheel to wheel and a lot of side by side at Old

Hall. I was tempted to wait for him to catch up again for a while," Duncan reckoned. "Yes I was just unlucky in traffic and lost touch, but a great race," Cresswell added.

Chalmers completed his solitary race in seventh, "I could see them in front for a while, but the car was fine," he said. Gorrie ousted Crompton for eighth on lap seven, "I finished one and that felt good," said the Ultima driver.

Although Crompton held onto ninth he did it with inches to spare and a wide BMW as class D rival Cox came back with vengeance after her early spin. "The diff gave up and I was spinning wheels up the hills so made it wide for Ilsa," he admitted. "Yes Dennis is a wily old Fox," she replied.

Smyth was delighted to see the flag in 11th place and after an early threat from Hibbert, Edwards was on his own in 12th too. "He dropped away early on so I was sideways everywhere, great fun," said Edwards. Hibbert retained 13th and despite starting from the pitlane and making an extra stop, Cryer was still 14th. "I still had no second gear at the start and had changed the header tank cap, so just pitted to check it was Ok," he said.

Sampson had a lonely race, "good start, got established and that was it," he explained after losing out to Cryer on the last lap. Behind him had been a terrific duel between Nash and Saul with the Peugeot driver just having the edge until he hit trouble. "The battery wasn't charging and caused a misfire, but it was brilliant battling with Graham and harder for me looking in my mirror," said Nash. "Places were swapped not paint, but I agree, brilliant," Saul replied.

Wardle's Mini would have been next home but overheating sent it into limp mode and he dropped to 20th behind Parker and Hall. Underwood had also been in that mix until he retired at the end and caused a red flag with barely a minute on the clock. "The back end bounced at Druids and I spun and stalled," admitted Underwood. "I had a fight with Ralph but then he got away on the straights until I finally got him at Lodge near the end," Parker added.

Roundell ended his troublesome race in 21st, with Claxton, Morris, Baker, Bird, Paul and Helen and Brian Allen completing the finishers, after Wilkinson had joined the retirements.

Results: 1 Simon Allaway (Lotus Daytona Esprit V8) 11 laps in 16m24.996s (89.49mph); 2 Robert Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) +6.007s; 3 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Garry Watson (Westfield SEiW); 5 Philip Duncan (Westfield SeiW); 6 Nick Cresswell (Caterham Seven); 7 Alistair Chalmers (Caterham CSR); 8 Iain Gorrie (Ultima GTR); 9 Dennis Crompton (BMW E36 M3); 10 Ilsa Cox 9Seat Leon Cupra). **Class A:** 1 Allaway; 2 Gorrie; 3

Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); no other starters. **Class B:** 1 Watson; 2 Duncan; 3 Cresswell; 4 Chalmers; 5 Patrick Smyth (Lotus Elan); 6 Kevin Cryer; (Caterham Seven); 7 Richard Morris (Mini Clubman); no other finishers. **Class C:** 1 R.Spencer; 2 J.Spencer; no other starters. **Class D:** 1 Crompton; 2 Cox; 3 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 4 Bob Claxton (Renault 21 Turbo); no other finishers. **Class E:** 1 Pete Edwards (Ford Escort RS1800); 1 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Elise); 3 Richard Hall (Ginetta G20); 4 Richard Wardle (BMW Mini Cooper); 5 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 6 Myles Baker (Ford Fiesta ST); 7 Russell Paul (Ford Fiesta ST). **Class F:** 1 Graham Saul (Ford Fiesta XR2); 2 Mike Nash (Peugeot 106); 3 David Bird (Honda Civic); 4 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 5 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i) no other finishers. Fastest lap: Allaway 1m28.005s (91.05mph).

Published by Peter Scherer for BARC NW, August 20th, 2013