

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUND 9

– DONINGTON – AUGUST 31

Simon Allaway continued his winning ways with another dominant win at Donington Park in his Lotus Daytona Esprit V8, finishing nearly 17 seconds ahead of the equally comfortable Grahame Tilley.

QUALIFYING

20 cars made the trip to Donington as part of the support package for the Italian Superstars Championship, using the full Grand Prix layout of the Leicestershire parkland circuit.

Allaway took pole by 2.431s from Garry Watson's Westfield. "The brakes were getting a bit hot and I was understeering in the slower corners. But it went really well but the race won't be easy. But my pole time would have put me third for the Superstars grid," he enthused. "I was quite surprised as it was my first time on this track and it doesn't take any prisoners," Watson added.

Rob Spencer's Stuart Taylor Locosaki headed the second row, with Tilley's Caterham CSR alongside. "I am just not fast enough. The car is set up for Magnificent Seven tyres, so we are learning with the car still on slicks. I think we have too much camber, so we will take some off for the race and see how it goes and the diff is over geared too," said Tilley.

Joe Spencer was next up with his Locosaki. "I have never been on the full circuit here, so I was learning the new hairpins, but struggling with gearing on the back straight," he explained. Nick Cresswell's Caterham was alongside, "I am pleased with my time as it's my first outing on the Grand Prix circuit since 2005," he said.

Alistair Chalmers' Caterham CSR was seventh quickest, with Phillip Duncan's Westfield completing the row. "I had an oil leak on the diff, so had to change to longer ratios and I am still in third at the end of the straight, so it's messed things up a bit," Duncan explained.

Down in ninth was reigning champion Dennis Crompton's BMW M3, which should have had Chris Maries BMW 325 alongside. "It was going well until the gearbox gave up," said Maries

after being forced to withdraw from the race. So Steven Parker's BMW Compact moved up, but he had his own problems too. "About three laps in and I noticed a rattle. The top mount had shaken itself apart," he said.

Mike Hurst brought his Vauxhall Vectra out for a seasonal debut and qualified 12th, while Richard Hall was next quickest in his Ginetta G20. Paul Sampson had a few problems too with his Volvo powered Grand National Coupe. "The rear joint on my exhaust split and set fire to the wooden undertray. Then the cockpit filled with smoke so I pitted," he said.

In 15th and top class F car Graham Saul recovered from an off in his XR2. "It was a nice session but I couldn't get the last corner right and on one lap I outbraked myself and went off," he explained. Richard Roundell felt his Vectra was "getting better" after sorting out the handling from his Anglesey contact.

Bob Claxton was back with his Renault 21Turbo and the grid was completed by Myles Baker's Fiesta ST, with Helen and Brian Allen's Fiesta's.

RACE

There were dramas as the grid formed up when Watson's Westfield refused to start and was forced to start from the pitlane. "It was a shame Garry wasn't alongside me, he usually starts quickly and gives me some work to do," said Allaway as he blasted away from the start and had a 2.5secs lead by the end of the opening lap.

Rob Spencer had a brilliant getaway to rocket into second, with Tilley close behind. Joe Spencer settled in fourth before an early gap opened back to fifth, where Chalmers was clear of Cresswell and Duncan, who were ready to re-inact their duel from the last round at Oulton. Crompton was in eighth and Watson already up to ninth, as Hurst rounded of the early top ten.

Tilley was into second on lap two and although Spencer Snr started to lose touch, he was still a solid third, despite son Joe chasing hard behind. But two laps later the yellow flags were out after Watson had spun at McLeans. "I was trying too hard and thought my race was over, I got a push back on but had lost a lap though," he explained.

But Allaway's lead was slashed. "They caught me a bit and then some more, Garry did make it interesting for me in a way," he said after his 4.8 second lead was reduced to 1.5. Cresswell had also managed to not only shake off Duncan but had moved to fifth at Chalmers expense.

As the race settled down Allaway rebuilt his lead his lead to a decisive 16.9 secs, but Tilley continued to battle with Spencer Snr until lap eight, when the Locosaki engine tightened

and he pulled off. "The car seemed a little better, I tweaked the suspension and took some camber off, but Rob was still catching me in places he shouldn't have. It would be better if I altered the springs, but it was a shame Rob went out, we would have had a really good battle, even though I had the measure of him," said Tilley.

Rob's retirement was son Joe's gain, as he moved into third and looked fairly safe until Chalmers started to close in the final laps. "I started running out of fuel, at every slow corner it coughed and spluttered, but luckily it picked up just in time out of the last corner. When I saw Dad parked up I just wanted to bring it home," said Joe.

Chalmers, Duncan and Cresswell had a great battle for fourth and class B honours. Cresswell managed to attack and defend from Chalmers at Redgate on lap six, but Chalmers made it through a lap later, before Cresswell found himself further demoted by Duncan. Over the next four laps they continually swapped and changed, which gave Chalmers a chance to go clear. Duncan finally held onto fifth after exiting the Esses on lap 11 with his nose ahead.

Crompton had been a safe seventh until a water pipe came off and he lost it on the Craner Curves. There was oil down too and so red flags brought the race to a halt a few minutes early.

Watson recovered from his spin to secure seventh, with Parker's eighth placed BMW inheriting the class D win too, taking class E winner Hall's Ginetta on lap seven. Roundell was a lap down on Hall and completed the top ten, "I was going to have a battle with Graham Saul, but he wasn't quick enough, so I overtook and battled with Paul Sampson instead," Roundell added.

Hurst had also been in the mix with his Vectra, but retired from a promising ninth after seven laps. "It went well at the start of the race and then a driveshaft came out and I was one wheel drive. I tried to keep going and then spun on Dennis' oil," he said.

Saul spent most of the race on his own though, "I lapped the other cars in my class so it wasn't a bad race," he said. Sampson was disappointed to have lost out on a possible top ten. A spin on lap seven dropped him to 15th but he battled back to 11th at the flag. "Well I wasn't on fire so that was an improvement, but had severe vibration. I wasn't sure where it was from so backed off," he explained.

Claxton also fell back at the end after a rear puncture, but still managed to bring it home before the Fiesta trio of Baker, Helen and Brian Allen.

Results: 1 Simon Allaway (Lotus Daytona Esprit V8) 13 laps in 21m10.483s (91.652mph); 2 Graham Tilley (Caterham CSR) +16.970s; (89.49mph); 3 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Alistair Chalmers (Caterham CSR); 5 Philip Duncan (Westfield SeiW); 6 Nick Cresswell (Caterham Seven); 7 Garry Watson (Westfield SEIW); 8 Steven Parker 9BMW Compact); 8 Richard Hall (Ginetta G20); 10 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra). **Class A:** 1 Allaway; 2 Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); no other starters. **Class B:** 1 Tilley; 2 Chalmers; 3 Duncan; 4 Cresswell; 5 Watson; no other starters. **Class C:** 1 J.Spencer; no other finishers. **Class D:** 1 Parker; 2 Bob Claxton (Renault 21 Turbo); no other finishers. **Class E:** 1 Hall; 2 Roundell; 3 Myles Baker (Ford Fiesta ST); no other starters. **Class F:** 1 Graham Saul (Ford Fiesta XR2); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 3 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i) no other starters. Fastest lap: Allaway 1m33.965s (95.318s).

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