

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP – ROUNDS 12 & 13

– OULTON PARK – SEPTEMBER 28

Simon Allaway secured this years CNC Heads North West Sports Saloon title in the best possible way, with a double race win in his Lotus Daytona Esprit V8. But the final race ended in disaster for sponsor Ric Wood, crashing his DTM Astra heavily and ending the season on a red flag.

QUALIFYING

37 cars were out in qualifying and so clear laps were at a premium. Allaway secured pole by 0.847s over Wood before a three seconds gap to third placed Garry Watson's Westfield. "It didn't feel that good but I was trying hard, Allaway admitted. "I spun on the first lap at Clay Hill in fourth gear and it put a groove in the tyre," Wood added. Watson also had a few problems too. "It went pretty well but still had brake trouble and had been off too," he said.

Joe Spencer's Locosaki completed the second row, "it felt greasy but I seemed to be quicker than before. I got some clear laps so I was chuffed with that," he said.

Although Grahame Tilley was next up, he still wasn't happy with his Caterham CSR's handling. "No grip, it felt evil," he said. He had Alastair Chalmers' similar car next up. "I had an issue with the starter motor and went on the grass but didn't spin," he added.

Rob Spencer was seventh best but was forced to withdraw after his Locosaki's engine went again. "I had the crank welded after Cadwell and expected it to last about 10 minutes. It did three laps and seized again," he explained. So Philip Duncan's Westfield moved up, "I went off at Knickerbrook, lost the rear through the tyres and hit the barrier. But managed to get back on and continue, just trying too hard," he explained.

Nick Cresswell's Caterham was only just behind, "very competitive and quicker than ever around here. We changed all the suspension and didn't have chance to test, so very happy," he explained. Iain Gorrie's Ultima completed the original top ten, still making steady progress.

Ilsa Cox's Seat Leon topped class D and was 11th best but had Bill Addison's Caterham between her and Dennis Crompton's class rivalling BMW M3. But Addison was a reserve and had to start at the back. "I have been quicker here but it was Ok," said Cox. "I am bit slow too but it's me not the car," Crompton added.

Despite not having contested many rounds this year Tony Ellis' Mazda RX7 was well up too. "Massive understeer though, it's killing the front tyres and won't go any faster," he reckoned. Brian Dean's Westfield was next before the first class F runner, Mike Nash's Peugeot 106. "I beat my own target and the temperature's OK this time," he said.

Mike Hurst had a "whining diff" but his Vectra still felt Ok, while Paul Woolfitt's Z Cars Mini survived 18th best. Oliver Thomas' Impreza was "quicker than last year," so making progress still. Duncan Aukland's Grand National Coupe survived a light touch with Allaway's Esprit and Steve Hibbert found it a bit "skatey" with his Elise.

Chris Maries had softened the suspension on his BMW 325, "it made the tyres work a lot better," he said. Richard Hall's Ginetta G20 was next up from Paul Sampson's now for sale Volvo Grand National Coupe. "I thought I was going fast but I wasn't," said Sampson.

Graham Saul had problems too, "a cracked front cross member and I could feel it flexing," he explained. Back after his huge shunt at Croft with a totally rebuilt Citroen Xsara was Paul Rotheroe. "Really pleased with the car, my time and new engine," he said even though he was put to the back as a reserve.

Jamie Cryer didn't feel he got the best out of his Ginetta G20, "I spun at Lodge and struggled for grip at the rear," he explained. Richard Roundell's Vectra. was also a bit further back than he had hoped and Richard Morris was back out again in his Mini.

Struggling with brakes was Steven Parker, "I think the discs are warped so I changed the bias to the rear, can't brake late or push on," said the BMW Compact driver. Bob Claxton was back too with his trusty Renault 21 Turbo and was followed by Myles Baker's Fiesta ST. "I didn't get the time I would like, just too busy for me," said Baker.

Jack Marland brought out his rear engined Saxo and found it "a bit unstable," James Caskey's Escort found it "hard to get a good lap with everyone so fast." While bringing up the rear Helen and Brian Allen's Fiesta's were split by Keith Wilkinson's Mini.

RACE ONE

With Rob Spencer, Saul and Wilkinson all failing to take the start, all the reserves got a run and it was still a capacity 34 car grid.

It was an electric start from Joe Spencer that gave him the lead through Cascades, but Allaway was straight on the attack. "I managed to get a run on Joe along Lakeside and was ahead into Island," he said.

As they crested Hilltop for the first time Watson was into third, from Tilley, Duncan, Chalmers, Cresswell, Gorrie, Ellis and Crompton. But Watson attacked too and snatched second into Old Hall on lap two, while Chalmers and Duncan swapped for fifth and Crompton ousted Ellis from ninth.

While Allaway started to build his lead Spencer stuck with Watson. Tilley was left on his own however, as although Chalmers stayed ahead of Duncan, it was mighty close, as Cresswell shadowed them both. As Crompton escaped from Ellis and started to chase down Gorrie, the Mazda driver had Cox reeling him as he fought to retain 10th.

While the head of the field began to settle the rest continued to scrap for places. Cresswell started to drop off the back of the duel for fifth and after Wood, who had started from the pitlane, had taken Gorrie for eighth on lap six, he was next in line and lost out two laps later.

Wood continued to carve his way through the field and was into third by lap 11 after Watson had slowed and Spencer gone clear in second. "It was rear axle failure, I couldn't shake Joe off though then I slowed due to the oil leak. At first I thought it was someone else's and then I pulled off," said Watson retiring on the last lap.

Allaway still had over 19 secs in hand at the flag over the charging Wood. "It was jumping out of fifth gear and had low oil pressure," he said. "I thought I would give Simon a chance but left myself with too much to do though," Wood admitted.

There was only a couple of laps to go when Spencer lost second to Wood, but he was well clear of third placed Tilley. "Dead good start and couldn't see Simon until the exit of Old Hall, then he was in my mirrors and he got me with a determined move. It was good with Garry too he had me on the straights and I was quicker on the twisty bits," Spencer explained.

Tilley was still fairly lonely in fourth but Chalmers closed a little after finally shaking off Duncan. "It was no better than qualifying. I stayed near them for two or three laps but once there was a gap that was it," Tilley explained. "Philip and I swapped as I gapped him and then made a mistake and he got me back. We carried on like that and I had to work hard. He kept me honest but I still couldn't catch Grahame," said Chalmers. "That was a great race with Alastair, when I kept getting alongside he wouldn't let me by. The handing wasn't 100 per cent but I just kept going," Duncan replied.

Cresswell came back strongly and almost snatched sixth off Duncan. "Philip got an advantage with traffic the I did the same at the end. I could see them all the time and sat and waited to see if anything happened," he said. Gorrie was on his own in eighth, "coming on slowly, not bad but a bit lonely," he added.

Once Cox had taken Ellis she reeled in Crompton but they clashed at Lodge on the penultimate lap. "My tyres were going off and then Ilsa caught me among the backmarkers and then hit me," said Crompton. Dennis braked hard into Lodge left a gap and then turned in me," Cox replied.

Ellis was the first lapped runner in 11th. "I couldn't stand the pace when Ilsa was pressing me , she went through at Lodge as I didn't want to make any mistakes," he said.

Dean was next home but had Addison with him until the Northern Saloons & Sports Champion pulled off after five laps. "I suddenly got covered in water and don't know where from, so I pulled off," he said. Hurst had a troublefree run to 13th and Hibbert settled in 14th after a wake up call. "I had my mirrors full of class E rivals so had to get a move on, but going from fifth to second at Shell didn't help," he said.

Woolfitt was 15th followed by Maries, Aukland, Sampson, Hall and Rotheroe to complete the top 20. "I held the gap to Chris OK but wasn't caught and couldn't catch," said Aukland. "I just settled back," Sampson added. "For a while I followed Paul, couldn't get him and then we were split up," Hall commented. "It was all a bonus for me as I didn't know I was racing until the end of the out lap, great fun from the back though," Rotheroe reckoned.

Of the rest Nash was lucky not to be hit at the start when he was stuck in second gear and retired. Thomas joined him after three laps with his Impreza misfiring. Roundell, Morris, Cryer, Parker, Claxton and Baker finished two laps down, with Caskey, the Allen's and Marland three down to complete the finishers.

RACE TWO

For once Wood elected to start from the front row of the grid rather than the pitlane, but with his car built for rolling starts he was soon swamped.

Allaway led through the opening lap from Spencer, Tilley, Duncan, Cresswell and Chalmers, with Wood in seventh, as Gorrie, Cox and Crompton completed the early top ten.

The lead pair continued to settle on the first couple of laps leaving Tilley under attack from Duncan. Wood had already past Cresswell and Chalmers and was up to fifth, before taking

Tilley and Duncan a lap later. Cox also started to close on Gorrie and took Crompton with her.

Wood continued to charge into contention and after taking Spencer on lap four he was 9.6 secs adrift of Allaway. But Spencer had an off and pitted to check the car over. "Out of Druids I spun and touched the barrier but had been going well," he explained. It also started to close up in third when Tilley not only had Duncan to look after again but Chalmers and Cresswell too after they exchanged places on lap six.

Into Lodge for the ninth time it was nose to tail between Allaway and Wood but the Lotus held on as they cautiously negotiated slower cars. But cresting Hilltop on the next lap Wood touched the grass sand crashed heavily. The car was extensively damaged from the rear impact and but Ric walked away unhurt as the race was red flagged."I was just passing backmarkers touched the grass and that was it," he explained.

Allaway was therefore declared the winner and the 2013 Champion. "That was hard work I pushed really hard to try and stop Ric catching me. I couldn't have tried harder and then I looked in my mirrors and couldn't see him and saw the red flags," he said.

Tilley therefore moved up to second but still had only 0.339secs to spare over Duncan at the end. "I was quick in the right places and Philip was very fair but made it hard for me," he admitted. "I loved it too even though the car was handling like a bag of bolts," Duncan replied.

Chalmers was only just behind in fourth having managed to edge away from Cresswell finally. "Alastair got me with horsepower on the straight into Island, super race though," said Cresswell.

Gorrie responded to Cox's advances and came in sixth, but like Crompton who took eighth and second in class, he had received damage at the start when Ellis tried unsuccessfully to go between them. "It left me with terrible vibration," said the Ultima driver. "After the contact the handling was terrible and although I tried to challenge Ilsa I couldn't Crompton replied. "Dennis still kept me on it and I was going as fast as I could," Cox added.

Hurst moved into the top ten after Ellis had gone off at Deer Leap, the Vectra driver finally taking ninth from the closing Thomas. "I'd run out brakes on the last few laps," Hurst confirmed. "I lost my brakes at about half way and then they came back," said Thomas.

Dean was heading for the top ten too until he broke a halfshaft after five laps. Hibbert had a tussle with Maries, Thomas and Hurst and eventually settled in 11th. "It was a gaggle," he reckoned. But Maries was happy to see the finish, "two races, two finishes and a good result, but we got close in traffic," he said.

Despite his stop Spencer was still 13th, with Ellis recovering from his off in 14th. Auckland was next home from Sampson, while in 17th Nash took his first class F win. "It was spot on but I had started from the pitlane just to be safe," he said. Saul was five seconds adrift on this occasion after his cross member had been welded to allow him to race. "I did what I need to and let Mike go at Island when he caught me," Saul replied.

Hall followed Saul home, while Parker completed the top 20. Cryer, Rotheroe, Claxton, Morris and Roundell were all a lap down and Baker, Marland, Caskey, Wilkinson and Helen Allen were two down, with Brian joining the retirements after his engine blew on the second lap.

Results: 1 Simon Allaway (Lotus Daytona Esprit V8) 13 laps in 22m50.782s (91.90mph); 2 Ric Wood (Opel Astra DTM) +19.185s; 3 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Grahame Tilley (Caterham CSR); 5 Alastair Chalmers (Caterham CSR); 0.649s; 6 Philip Duncan (Westfield SeiW); 7 Nick Cresswell (Caterham); 8 Iain Gorrie (Ultima GTR); 9 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra) 10 Dennis Crompton (BMW M3 E36). **Class A:** 1 Allaway; 2 Wood; 3 Gorrie; 4 Duncan Auckland (Grand National Coupe); 5 Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); 6 Jack Marland (Citroen Saxo). **Class B:** 1 Tilley; 2 Chalmers; 3 Duncan; 4 Cresswell; 5 Brian Dean (Westfield SE); 6 Paul Woolfitt (Z Cars Mini); 7 Richard Morris (Mini); 8 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20).. **Class C:** 1 J.Spencer; 2 James Caskey (Ford Escort); no other starters. **Class D:** 1 Cox; 2 Crompton; 3 Tony Elis (Mazda RX7); 4 Mike Hurst (Vauxhall Vectra); 5 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 6 Bob Claxton (Renault 21 Turbo). **Class E:** 1 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Elise); 2 Chris Maries (BMW 325 E30); 3 Richard Hall (Ginetta G20); 4 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara VTS); 5 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 6 Myles Baker (Ford Fiesta ST). **Class F:** 1 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 2 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i) no other finishers. Fastest lap: Wood 1m41.523s (95.45mph).

Race two: 1 Allaway 9 laps in 15m56.300s (91.20mph); 2 Tilley +33.368s; 3 Duncan; 4 Chalmers; 5 Cresswell; 6 Gorrie; 7 Cox; 8 Crompton; 9 Hurst; 10 Oliver Thomas (Subaru Impreza). **Class A:** 1 Allaway; 2 Gorrie; 3 Auckland; 4 Sampson; 5 Marland; no other finishers. **Class B:** 1 Tilley; 2 Duncan; 3 Chalmers; 4 Cresswell; 5 J.Cryer; 6 Morris. **Class C:** 1 J.Spencer; 2 Caskey; no starters. **Class D:** 1 Cox; 2 Crompton; 3 Hurst; 4 Thomas; 5 Ellis; 6 Parker; 7 Claxton. **Class E:** 1 Hibbert; 2 Maries; 3 Hall; 4 Rotheroe; 5 Roundell; 6 Baker. **Class F:** 1 Mike Nash (Peugeot 106); 2 Saul; 3 Keith Wilkinson (Mini); 4 H. Allen; no other finishers. Fastest lap: Allaway 1m43.948s (93.23mph). 31.831s