



## Sports/Saloon Car Championship Rounds 11 & 12 2014

### Oulton Park

Paul Rose's Saker added another winning double to his seasons victory tally as the CNC Heads BARC NW North West Sports Saloons completed its 30<sup>th</sup> successful season at Oulton Park. But the champagne was out too for Steven Hibbert, whose unbeaten record with his Lotus Elise in Class C crowned him the 2014 Champion.

It was a capacity grid plus reserves for the double header finale on the full Oulton Park International circuit. The early morning rain had just about stopped but the track remained very wet as the 37 cars started the qualifying session. Most of the times were set at the end of the session with Joe Spencer's Stuart Taylor Locosaki taking pole over Garry Watson's Westfield SEW by 0.197 secs. "It was tough in traffic with the backmarkers and I locked up a bit when it started to dry out," said Joe. "I had contact with another car at Knickerbrook and dented the exhaust," Garry added.

Paul Rose headed Anthony Bennett's Caterham R300 on the second row. "I was struggling to see as the windscreen was misting up, Paul admitted. "Loved it, my second time in the championship this year and wish I could do more," Anthony added.

Next up was Iain Gorrie's Ultima, well suited to the conditions. "I was second for most of the session as I just love the wet," he said. Alongside was Garry Wardle's Ginetta G50, another relishing the conditions. "I was fully prepared for the wet and my visibility was good," he said.

Oliver Thomas was also well up with his Subaru Impreza, "the wipers packed up though and I couldn't see, but that was the wettest session I have done," he reckoned. Former multiple Champion Paul Dobson was alongside him in his Mazda RX7, "it was running rich I was unable to use full power, so took it nice and steady," he said.

Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette and Steve Harris' Saker rounded off the top ten. "I thought it was drier when I went into Cascades, went off but kept my foot in and satyed off the barriers," said Luke. "I developed a misfire about three laps into the session, possibly water in the electrics but I was feeling confident," Steve added.

Ilsa Cox headed row six but her Seat Cupra wasn't comortable in the conditions. "There were so many puddles," she said. But Champion elect Steven Hibbert has his usual fairly calm and controlled session, "I had the right tyres on, it was changeable but fine," he added.

Down in 13<sup>th</sup> Philip Duncan found the whole session very uncomfortable, "I was sitting in two inches of water, there was no grip either," said the Westfield driver. But Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara was well suited, "my sort of thing, over the moon with that and the car was brilliant," he reckoned.

Ric Wood should have been next up but having only finished the rebuild of his DTM Astra on the eve of the race after last seasons accident, he was forced to pull out. "The ABS sensor wasn't working and the traction control wasn't right, but it went in a straight line and that would do for now," he said.

So an astonished Les Kirk headed the eighth row in his Renault Clio, "the beauty of front wheel drive and so close to Ric's time too," he declared. Kevin Cryer decided to take things steady with his Ginetta G20, "not pushing hard in those conditions," he said.

Piers Grange was originally a reserve but got a run after his Escort headed the ninth row, with David Fuller's Locosaki alongside. Cam Forbes was struggling for gear selection with his Westfield, "I couldn't see much either so it was survival, " he added. James Aukland also found his Capri misting up, "it was Ok until I caught some slower cars and then it didn't clear," he said after completing the top 20.

Stuart Deeley debuted his brand Banks Europa, while Graeme Laslett was trying his Elise for the first real time in the wet. Howard Affleck's Mini was well suited to the wet however, while Steven Parker was just trying to stop his BMW Compact going sideways.

Mike Hurst's Vectra was a casualty after breaking a driveshaft, so Keith Wilkinson's Mini got a run too. Alan Collinson just wanted to see a race finish in his TR7 V8, whereas Colin Robinson's Escort wanted a start after a troublesome year. Tony Ellis' Mazda RX7 had the wrong tyres, as did Mike Nash's Peugeot 106.

John Marsden's Mini , Ralph Underwood's TR7 V8, Helen Allen's Fiesta and Eric Bamber's Ginetta G20 completed the grid, with John Seery's Westfield V8 getting a late run after Jamie Cryer's Ginetta spun at Deer Leap and broke a wishbone.

## RACE ONE

The sun began to break through as the grid formed up, but there were dramas straightaway with Harris heading pitwards with a fuel problem and Deeley with a blocked fuel filter.

As the lights went out Watson had the edge over Spencer, with Dobson and Rose following through into Old Hall, before Rose snatched third at Cascades. Dobson had lost a couple more places as they crested Hilltop, but with Wardle on the grass at Knickerbrook and Thomas overshooting too, Dobson was back into fourth as they went up Clay Hill.

Out of Lodge at the end of the opening lap Rose got a run on the Watson, Spencer duel and they crossed the line virtually three abreast before Rose nosed ahead into Old Hall and

Spencer soon followed. Behind fourth placed Dobson, Bennett had ousted Thomas too, with Gorrie, Cox, Armiger and Wardle completing the early top ten, but Ellis was heading for the pits after an off at Brittiens.

Rose gradually eased himself clear to claim the win, "once I got ahead it was plain sailing but a lot of yellow flags," he said. Spencer had tried hard to stay with Rose but a lock up at Lodge lost him valuable time. "It wasn't the best of starts, too much wheelspin", Spencer added.

Watson had started to fall back in third and was caught by Dobson. Having dropped to fourth he finally pulled off," great start and Joe pushed me hard straightaway. I was on full wets and was Ok for a while until I started losing oil at the rear axle, then the diff seized," he explained.

Bennett had closed on Dobson for a while, before losing fifth to Gorrie on lap four, as Thomas begun to close too. Cox was holding onto eighth but Wardle had joined the casualties, "I had gone off on the first lap, just couldn't stop, was then catching Ilsa and went straight on at Lodge," he admitted.

Duncan and Harris, from a pitlane start, therefore came into the top ten and looked for further progress on a drying track. Over the next few laps Harris' progress was rapid and with a couple of laps to go was poised to challenge Dobson for third. "It had been very interesting and great fun coming through the pack until I caught Dobbo. We went along Lakeside side by side and as we both eased over I put two wheels on the grass and spun. I would like to say it was skill that kept me off the barriers," he said.

But after a swift recovery he crested Hilltop to see Dobson spinning at Knickerbrook too and did eventually get his third place with a lap to spare. "Maybe a bit excessively sideways and I spun, but I had just been trying to keep my tyres cool," Dobson explained after recovering fourth from Gorrie at Lodge on the last lap. "We went side by side into Lodge until I had to brake and I didn't realise it was the last lap," said the Ultima driver.

Thomas also snatched fifth at Knickerbrook on the last lap at Bennett's expense. "My exhaust was in two pieces, sliding around on wets, but had been third briefly until I outbraked myself," said Thomas. "I didn't fight him off as I was happy with my class win and seventh overall," Bennett replied.

Cox was a solitary eighth, "I couldn't stay with Oliver today so just looked after my tyres," she said. Duncan had climbed to ninth but was forced to pull off after three laps. "The fuel pump failed, it just slowed at Shell and stopped," he said.

Armiger made it home in ninth after a recovery drive, "I had gone sideways through the gravel at Lodge trying to chase Garry's Ginetta but locked up," he explained. Fuller completed the top ten having risen from 16<sup>th</sup> on the opening lap.

Hibbert had his customary troublefree race into 11<sup>th</sup>," just kept out of trouble," he confirmed. Grange had an entertaining duel with Aukland, until the Capri spun and left him free to to hunt down Cryer. He sealed 12<sup>th</sup> on lap nine, leaving Cryer to duel with Rotheroe for the remaining distance. "The tyres went at the end but I had dices with a few different cars after the brake pedal went a bit long for a while," said Cryer.

Rotheroe followed him home in 14<sup>th</sup>, I seemed to gain and lose to the same people, had a lock up at Lodge, but happy with that," he confirmed. Parker got quicker as the track dried but spent much of the race on his own, while Seery came from the back of the grid to oust Forbes for 15<sup>th</sup> a lap from home. "It ignored fifth gear when it wanted too, so very difficult," said Forbes.

Robinson, Kirk and Laslett rounded off the top ten. "I was with Steve Parker for a while until it started to dry out," said Kirk. Collinson was delighted to see the chequered flag for the first time this year, while Affleck was able to celebrate his first class win.

Aukland pitted when a plug lead came off, but rejoined, as Nash, Underwood, Bamber, Marsden and Allen completed the finishers.

## RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker) 12 laps in 23m20.505s (83.03mph); 2 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) +11.351s; 3 Steve Harris (Saker); 4 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7) +0.903s; 5 Iain Gorrie (Ultima GTR); 6 Oliver Thomas (Subaru Impreza). 7 Anthony Bennett (Caterham R300); 8 Ilsa Cox (Seat Cupra); 9 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette); 10 David Fuller (Stuart Taylor Locosaki). Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Gorrie; 4 John Seery (Westfield Seight); 5 James Aukland (Ford Capri); no other starters. Class B: 1 Bennett; 2 Armiger; 3 Cam Forbes (Westfield SEiW); 4 Colin Robinson (Ford Escort); 5 Eric Bamber (Ginetta G20); no other finishers. Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Fuller; no other starters. Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Thomas; 3 Cox; 4 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 5 Alan Collinson (Triumph TR7 V8); 6 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8). Class E: 1 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Sport Elise); 2 Piers Grange (Ford Escort); 3 Kevin Cryer (Ginetta G20); 4 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 5 Leslie Kirk (Renault Clio); 6 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise). Class F: 1 Howard Affleck (Austin Mini); 2 Mike Nash (Peugeot 106 Rallye); 3 John Marsden (Austin Mini Cooper S); 4 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec); no other finishers. Fastest lap Rose 1m52.853s (85.87mph).

## RACE TWO

The grid was formed by the second best qualifying lap, which gave Spencer pole again, with Gorrie alongside after Watson's withdrawal. Bennett and Rose were on the second row, with Wardle, Thomas, Dobson, Duncan, Hibbert and Cox completing the top ten, while on the back Wood had elected start in his Astra to complete another capacity grid.

On a completely dry track Spencer led the charge to Old Hall, as Rose, Bennett and Duncan slotted in behind, with Gorrie losing out. Rose was soon on the attack and once again had the lead before the end of the opening lap. "I got a run on Joe into Island, but then damaged the front spoiler on the second lap, which began to vibrate through the car," he explained.

The lead pair were soon in the clear, while Bennett started to fall back from an initial third, before retiring six laps in with a blown engine. Dobson took over third, and was being pressed by Duncan until both Harris and Wood closed in and demoted them both. But with Harris then pitting with a rear puncture and Wood with a tightening gearbox, Duncan was into third after ousting Dobson on lap eight. "I had just got third and then Ric got me, then my rear tyre went down at Shell and I made it back to the pits," said Harris.

With Rose's vibration worsening he was just pleased to see the flag at the end of the 13 laps. While Spencer retained a clear second, Duncan consolidated third over the closing laps. "I stayed with him until we got among the backmarkers, then he had gone," Spencer replied.

Duncan and Dobson both remained on the lead lap, "once we spread out it got a bit lonely, so I just cruised home," said Dobson. Forbes held onto fifth after Wood and Harris retired, but was unable to fend off Fuller's late charge, after the Locosaki driver finally got away from a lengthy duel with Gorrie. "I swapped four or five times with Iain and he has a very wide Ultima. My best race by a long way," Fuller reckoned. "I still had gear selection problems, but it was intermittent and I was in neutral when David got me," Forbes replied.

Cox had a midrace duel with Wardle but eventually claimed eighth after a spin. "I was trying too hard but got Garry among the backmarkers," she said. Wardle was still ninth, "Ilsa got away from me when I had a big slide on oil at Lodge," Wardle added.

Seery came through to complete the top ten demoting Hibbert on the penultimate lap, but it had little consequence to the Elise driver as his 12<sup>th</sup> class win out of 12 had already secured him the overall Championship title. "The car has been brilliant and faultless all year and all I have replaced is one fuse and an exhaust rubber," said the new Champion.

Ellis kept the closing Grange at bay over the final laps for 12<sup>th</sup> place, "I just wanted a finish," he said. Thomas' exhaust broke again at the start, but had also held off Grange until lap 10. "I got him a couple of laps earlier at Lakeside though," Thomas added.

Cryer, Rotheroe and Nash battled together for a while, before Nash got away when Cryer spun at Knickerbrook and was nearly collected by Rotheroe. "I had a stricking throttle in the second half and it got more difficult," Cryer explained. Parker managed to oust both Rotheroe and Cryer to clinch 16<sup>th</sup>, as Rotheroe, Laslett, the recovering Cryer and Collinson completed the top 20.. "I was nose to nose with Kevin when he spun, but then got Paul at Cascades a lap later," said Parker.

Armiger was 21<sup>st</sup> when after pitting with a puncture he completed the race in one wheel drive after breaking a driveshaft. Affleck, Underwood, Bamber, Marsden and Allen were the remaining finishers, as Deeley, Kirk, Robinson and Hurst had all been early retirements and Auckland broke a driveshaft on the green flag lap.

## RESULTS

1 Rose 13 laps in 22m42.951s (92.43mph); 2 Spencer +8.356s; 3 Philip Duncan (Westfield SEiW); 4 Dobson; 5 Fuller; 6 Forbes; 7 Iain Gorrie; 8 Cox; 9 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); 10 Seery. Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Gorrie; 3 Seery; no other finishers. Class B: 1 Duncan; 2 Forbes; 3 Armiger; 4 Bamber; no other finishers, Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Fuller; no other starters. Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Cox; 3 Wardle; 4 Tony Ellis (Mazda RX7); 5 Thomas; 6 Parker; 7 Collinson; 8 Underwood. Class E: 1 Hibbert; 2 Grange; 3 Rotheroe; 4 Laslett; 5 Cryer; no other finishers. Class F: 1 Nash; 2 Affleck; 3 Marsden; 4 Allen; no other starters. Fastest lap Wood 1m40.651s (96.28mph).

FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 1 Steven Hibbert 108pts; 2 Paul Rose 103; 3 Paul Dobson 103; 4 Mike Nash 91; 5 Garry Watson 79; 6 Steve Harris 72; 7 Cam Forbes 67; 8 Ilsa Cox 66; 9 Garry Wardle 66; 10 Kevin Cryer 58 etc. Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Iain Gorrie 50; Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Forbes; 3 Philip Duncan 47; Class C: 1 Joe Spencer 54; 2 David Fuller 36; 3 Rob Spencer 20; Class d: 1 Dobson; 2 Cox; 3 Wardle; Class E: Hibbert; 2 K.Cryer; 3 Paul Rotheroe 58; Class F: 1 Nash; 2 Matthew Darlington 49; 3 Helen Allen 48.

(full points table wil be included with seasonal review).

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