



Sports/Saloon Car Championship Rounds 4 & 5 2014

Donington Park

Paul Rose made it three wins from five races this season, but was robbed of another double win at Donington Park when his Saker had a turbo pipe come adrift. Former Champion Robert Spencer picked up the win in race two, his first win of the year in the Stuart Taylor Locosaki.

A huge 33 car grid came out for qualifying and it was Rose that comfortably secured pole. "The car seems very well suited to this circuit," he said. He was joined on the front row by Spencer, "a good session but my tyres are too old," he added.

Newcomer Luke Armiger was third quickest with his Silhouette Vauxhall Tigra, fractionally ahead of Paul Dobson's Mazda RX7. "I stayed out for the whole session too and everything went well," said Dobson.

Heading the third row was another debuting Tigra with Matt Simpson, he had Steve Harris alongside with the second Saker. "I have got the same cornering speeds as Paul's car, but not on the straights," Harris explained.

Brian Dean's Westfield shared the fourth row with Garry Wardle's Ginetta G50. "I had new tyres for the first time and it was brilliant," said Wardle. Behind them were Iain Gorrie's Ultima and Championship sponsor Ric Wood, who was debuting his ex Tarquini Honda Accord super tourer.

Tony Ellis' Mazda RX7 was next up, with Bod Buckby alongside, another debutant in his BMW E36 M3. Cam Forbes' Westfield was just behind them. "I locked up into the chicane and flat spotted a tyre early into the session," said Forbes. He should have had Ilsa Cox's Seat Leon next to him, but she became the only casualty when engine maladies left her heading home early.

Row eight was shared by Steven's Hibbert and Parker in their respective Lotus Elise and BMW Compact. "I had a new diff and it flew," said Parker. Richard Morris' Mini was next up with the first of the Cryer Ginetta G20's sharing the row, but it was Jamie, not father Kevin. "It went really well," said Jamie. "I was getting to know the circuit again," Kevin reckoned.

Oliver Thomas had problems with his Subaru Impreza. "As well as learning the track I had a loose rear strut," he explained. Paul Rotheroe completed row 10 but had his share of drama

too. "The engine just died on the Craner Curves and I was off into the gravel, very scary," said the Citroen Xsara driver.

Kevin Cryer headed row 11 from Richard Roundell's Vauxhall Vectra, with debutant Graeme Laslett Lotus Elise sharing the next with James Aukland's Capri. "A wire came off the ignition though," said Aukland.

Behind them the next row featured newcomers Leslie Kirk in his Renault Clio and Howard Affleck's Mini and with Class F Class leader Mike Nash absent, Matthew Darlington was looking for maximum points with his Peugeot 106 Gti. Reigning Ford Fiesta Junior Champion JJ Ross was alongside Darlington, while Ralph Underwood's TR7 V8, Helen Allen's XR2i, Eric Bamber's Ginetta G20 and Brian Allen's XR2i completed the qualifiers.

But having missed the session Garry Watson did some laps behind the safety car to allow his Westfield to start from the back of the grid. "It was a disaster, electrical gremlins and it wouldn't start," he explained.

RACE ONE

Rose had expected to be beaten away from the start by some of the nimbler cars, so was quite surprised to be heading the field into Redgate. Spencer soon established himself in second, from Harris, Armiger, Dobson and Simpson, while up to 11th by the end of lap one, Watson couldn't be ignored.

"It's not always easy on a standing start with these cars, but that was my best one yet. Rob caught me a bit during lappery and the yellow flags, but I never felt threatened," said Rose after taking his third win of the year by over 18 seconds.

Watson came charging through the pack and was up to fifth within four laps, before demoting Harris and Armiger a lap later on the Dunlop Straight. But Spencer was too far down the road and he had to settle for third. "Mine went into limp mode when we were held at the start, so not a very good start for me. After that I was just on my own," Spencer explained. "Most of it was just a blur and I kept looking for Rob Spencer," said Watson, who was still 15 secs adrift of his rival at the flag.

Having held off Armiger for third for the five laps, Harris' challenge began to fade during the second half of the race. "After a good start a turbo pipe came off and we lost boost, but I was catching Dobson again at the end," he said.

Armiger held onto fourth but had Dobson just behind. "We made a few minor changes and it was a good battle with the Saker until I got him at Redgate," said Dobson. Harris was still a clear sixth, with Simpson the only other unlapped runner.

Gorrie had been running inside the top ten, but after taking Forbes for eighth on lap five, the Ultima began to slip back again to an eventual 12th. "I had an electrical problem,

intermittent but we lost the ecu and everything,” he explained. Forbes had retaken his place on lap 10 but was caught by Dean into the chicane on the last lap. “I just didn’t see Brian coming and the first thing I knew he was alongside,” Forbes admitted. “I had put newer tyres on and it transformed the car,” Dean added.

Wardle was also in the top ten throughout after an early battle with Ellis and Buckby. But his rivals both joined the retirements after six laps, leaving the Ginetta to come home 10th.

Wood started from the pitlane and secured 12th from the ailing Gorrie with a couple of laps to go. “We had a few teething problems, but that was what we were here for,” said Wood.

Parker had been chasing Thomas early on too, until his engine gave up. “It popped an inlet valve and was on two cylinders,” he explained. “I was mainly on my own after passing Steven Hibbert’s Elise, just kept aware in case I had to defend,” Thomas added. “I think I followed Oliver’s Subaru for virtually the whole race, but didn’t catch him,” Hibbert added.

Behind them the Cryer’s had a racelong battle with Rotheroe. Kevin took the Cryer family honours, after consolidating 15th place during the later laps. “I was losing oil, but got Jamie at the start and had a good race,” said Kevin. “I lost out to Paul when I got squeezed and went off at McLeans,” Jamie added. “It was very close,” Rotheroe admitted.

Roundell and Aukland both made it home ahead of Jamie after his excursion. “I was chasing Jamie at the start too, but missed a gear and they got away,” said Roundell. “A few gear selection problems and then just learned my way around again,” added Aukland.

Cryer Jnr finally made it home in 19th, well clear of Ross, while Darlington took his class F victory over Affleck, as Kirk. Underwood and the Allen’s completed the finishers.

RESULT

1 Paul Rose (Saker) 18 laps in 21m37.500s (98.83mph); 2 Robert Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) +18.180s; 3 Garry Watson (Westfield SEW); 4 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7); 6 Steve Harris (Saker); 7 Matt Simpson (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Brian Dean (Westfield SE); 9 Cam Forbes (Westfield SeiW); 10 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50). . Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Iain Gorrie (Ultima GTR); 4 James Aukland (Ford Capri); no other starters. Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Armiger; 3 Simpson; 4 Dean 5 Forbes; 6 Ric Wood (Honda Accord. Class C: Spencer; no other starters, Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Wardle; 3 Oliver Thomas (Subaru Impreza); 4 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8); no other finishers. Class E: 1 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Sport Elise); 2 Kevin Cryer (Ginetta G20); 3 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 4 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 5 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 6 JJ Ross (Ford Fiesta); 7 Leslie Kirk (Renault Clio). Class F: 1 Matthew Darlington (Peugeot 106 Gti); 2 Howard Affleck (Austin Mini); 3 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 4 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); no other starters. Fastest lap: Rose 1m10.290s (101.36mph).

Rose once again took pole for Sunday's race by well over a second from Watson. "I was bedding in new brakes and it all felt good," said the poleman. It wouldn't start again though, but we made it through," Watson added.

Spencer headed the second row from Simpson. "We changed the rear camber to use the tyres better and it felt good," he said. Harris had Armiger alongside him on row three, "it was alright and I improved one place," said Harris.

Dobson and Dean were next up. "Fantastic, I only did four laps and came in," said the flamboyant Mazda driver. Wood was behind them with Forbes alongside. "That felt a lot better, I got my head around it and it began to flow," Forbes admitted.

Buckby led row six from Wardle, with Ellis and Morris on the seventh, as Thomas, Hibbert, Rotheroe and Cryer Snr completed the top 20 qualifiers. "We had the engine out overnight but it still didn't feel right," said Rotheroe.

Cryer Jnr and Aukland were on row 10, followed by Ross and Laslett. Roundell find himself stuck in traffic, while Darlington once again headed the class F qualifiers from Affleck.

Underwood, Kirk, Bamber and the Allen's all made it through the session, but Gorrie only made three laps after more electrical problems, which were traced to the alternator.

RACE TWO

Watson edged out Rose from the start, with Spencer a close third as they entered Redgate. Into the Old Hairpin for the second time though Watson spun, recovering in sixth, but Rose and Spencer were long gone. Simpson and Armiger started have their own duel for third, while Watson's swift recovery took him past Harris for fifth by the end of lap three.

Watson's charge continued and took him past the third placed duel on lap five, only for Rose to head pitwards after losing power. Spencer had a sizeable lead but Watson continued to chase hard, Armiger was on his own in third too after Simpson pitted, which put Harris back into fourth place, but with Forbes closing.

"I had begun to ease off and then saw Garry again," said Spencer. Watson was back in front at the chicane on lap 14 but not for long. "There was oil down and I just went straight on at Redgate," he explained.

Spencer had contact with Rose at McLeans during late lappery, after the Saker had rejoined after a turbo pipe repair, Rose retired but Spencer continued to claim first win of the year by over nine seconds, from the twice recovering Watson.

A smokey Armiger pulled off at the chicane to vacate a safe third with only two laps to go, which handed Harris a podium finish, after he continued to keep Forbes at a safe distance. "I could see when Cam was catching, but controlled the gap for a change," said Harris. "I kept catching a bit and then he would get away, then I had a big slide on oil at Redgate and he got away," Forbes replied.

Dean was fifth but had started to lose power with a suspected headgasket problem. Behind him for much of the race was a fantastic duel between Dobson and Wardle. "I had started to overheat, so changed gear early to help cool down, got away and then overheated again as the tyres went off," said Dobson, after his own excursions gained him a track limits penalty, before he was caught up in the Rose and Spencer incident at McLeans and retired to the pits, two laps from the flag.

Wardle settled in sixth, "I really tried to push Dobbo. I had a great start but he was better with the backmarkers, then my tyres came on and I eventually got him on the Craner Curves," he explained.

Ellis and Buckby were never far apart for the entire race, but it was the Mazda that had the edge. "He tried his hardest but didn't get close enough," said Ellis. "It was my first time in the championship this weekend and it was great from start to finish, absolutely loved it," Buckby replied.

Wood came through to claim ninth in the final laps with Simpson recovering from his earlier pitstop to complete the top 10.

Thomas and Hibbert had a much closer duel than in race one and it was Thomas again that got the verdict. "He was hassling me so I let him go, then boiled the brakes and the fronts really faded," said Hibbert. "I had got a boost leak from half distance, but I had got Steven at Redgate and managed to hold a gap," Thomas replied.

Rotheroe was once again embroiled in the Cryer family battle, but this time beat them both. "I couldn't get Paul so just made sure I kept Jamie behind, even though he got by a couple of times and I outbraked myself at the chicane," said Kevin. "I'd got Dad at the chicane and he got me back at Redgate, then I got him at Coppice and he came back on the straight. I locked up then and went over the grass," Jamie explained. "That was brilliant, the car didn't play up so no complaints after I got brave on the Craners after a bad start," Rotheroe concluded.

Aukland had an up and down race before finally coming home 16th, "I was racing with Kevin Cryer and spun at Redgate then tried to fight back, but not too steady in that one," he admitted.

Roundell spent most of his racing fighting with Ross and Laslett, he came out on top but Laslett ousted Ross two laps from home. "The best race I ever had, one off over the chicane when I had nowhere to go, but great dicing with the other two," he said.

Darlington completed his double class win over Affleck, as Underwood, Bamber and the Allen's completed the survivors, after Gorrie pulled off with more problems after five laps, joined later by Morris and Kirk, who spun his Clio at the chicane.

RESULTS

1 Spencer 18 laps in 22m22.138s (95.55mph); 2 Watson +8.575s +9.676s; 3 Harris; 4 Forbes; 5 Dean; 6 Wardle; 7 Tony Ellis (Mazda RX7); 8 Bod Buckby (BMW E36 M3); 9 Ric Wood (Honda Accord); 10 Matt Simpson (Vauxhall Tigra). Class A: 1 Harris; 2 Buckby; 3 Aukland; no other finishers. Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Forbes; 3 Dean; 4 Wood; 5 Simpson; 6 Eric Bamber (Ginetta G20). Class C: 1 Spencer; no other starters. Class D: 1 Wardle; 2 Ellis; 3 Thomas; 5 Underwood. no other finishers. Class E: 1 Hibbert; 2 Rotheroe; K.Cryer; 3 J.Cryer; 4 Roundell; 5 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise); 6 Ross. Class F: 1 Darlington; 2 Affleck 3 B.Allen; 4 H.Allen; no other starters. Fastest lap: Rose 1m10.195s (101.49mph).

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