



Sports/Saloon Car Championship Rounds 9 & 10 2014

Cadwell Park

Paul Rose and Garry Watson were the pacesetters as the CNC Heads Sports Saloons Championship made its annual visit to Cadwell Park. Rose's Saker had the legs of Watson's fast starting Westfield in a restarted race one, but with clutch problems leaving Rose sidelined, Watson dominated race two.

A morning practice session had preceded qualifying, but when it counted Rose secured pole by over a second. "It just felt great and went really well," he said. Watson shared the front row, 1.8 secs up on Steve Harris in the second Saker. "I was happy with that, alright but not exceptional," Harris added.

Philip Duncan's Westfield was next up, from Steve Owen's similar car on the drivers seasonal debut. "My first race since last August and it felt really good. I had a fuel injection problem after six laps though, but Brian (Dean) helped me fix it," said Owen. Luke Armiger completed the third row as he bedded in a new engine in his Vauxhall Tigra. "We only finished it Thursday night," he added.

Brian Dean was delighted to be seventh best in his Westfield, "I outqualified Cam (Forbes) but he reckons he will put his in gear next time," he said. Paul Dobson's Mazda RX7 joined him on the fourth row, but was already in the wars. "I went off exiting Hall Bends and missed the Hairpin completely and got warned about rejoining dangerously," he explained.

Chris Whiteley's guesting Ginetta G50 headed row five with Forbes alongside. "I didn't do as well as I expected, but I am not a keen Cadwell racer," Forbes admitted. "Nothing broke," said Iain Gorrie as his Ultima qualified 11th, while in 12th Garry Wardle was delighted with his Ginetta G50 on his first visit to Cadwell. "I am still learning too," he added.

Championship leader Steven Hibbert was also a first timer at the circuit in his Lotus Elise. "It's lovely but the class is a lot closer on times here," he admitted with just over a second in hand over his rival Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20. "I feel much more settled with the car now and love Cadwell," Cryer replied.

Chris Maries' reckoned his MK Indy just wasn't fast enough, "it goes where you point it though," he said. Steven Parker's BMW Compact was fractionally slower as was Kevin Cryer's Ginetta G20. "The car feels good now after Iain Gorrie rebuilt my diff," said Cryer.

Mike Hurst was back at Cadwell for the first time in 25 years. "It was on a bike then and I fell off," said the Vectra driver. Richard Roundell's Vectra and Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise completed the top 20. "I had an off after Chris Curve, I checked my mirror for Paul Sampson, then was on the grass at the Gooseneck, touched the tyre wall and spun," said Roundell.

Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara headed the 11th row. "I am learning too as it's my first time here," he said. He had Ilsa Cox's Seat Cupra alongside, having recorded only one lap in the session. "I went for it too early, a hot lap on cold tyres and spun at the Mountain. But the starter motor had broken and I couldn't restart," she explained.

Leslie Kirk's Clio and Paul Sampson's Volvo Grand National Coupe shared the next row, with Mike Nash's Peugeot 106 Rallye behind having his session cut short. "The wheel bearing went again," he confirmed. He had Oliver Thomas' Subaru Impreza alongside him, just delighted to be still running. "I crashed at Chris Curve in the free practice, just threw it off on cold tyres. I was all for giving up and going home but virtually the whole paddock joined together to fix my car, it was an epic effort and I was very grateful to them all," he said.

Eric Bamber's Ginetta G20 and Helen Allen Ford Fiesta completed the line up.

RACE ONE

There were dramas for Gorrie and Cox before the race got underway with neither making it beyond the assembly area. "The alternator went and it wouldn't start," Gorrie explained. Cox had managed to start her car but after stalling again she was pushed clear.

Rose had made his way ahead of Watson on the second lap and was being followed by Harris, Duncan, Owen, Dobson and Forbes, when eighth placed Dean spun exiting Hall Bends on his seventh lap. "I touched the kerb when I was chasing Cam and the threw the car into the air and back into the track. It had stalled and wouldn't restart," he explained as the red flags came out and the race was stopped.

Owen became a casualty too when his Westfield boiled up during the halt, unaware that his fan had failed. Roundell failed to take the restart too after an oil leak was traced back to a holed gearbox and Armiger pulled out on the green flag lap with electrical problems.

So 21 cars made the restart which was a five lap sprint. Watson led into Coppice from Duncan, Rose, Harris, Forbes and Dobson. Rose was second on Park Straight and Harris followed him through to third into Park Corner, as the top six made an immediate break.

Rose soon began to push for the lead but Watson's defence was solid. Harris was firmly established in third but lost ground on the lead duo, while Duncan tried to consolidate fourth as Dobson pressed Forbes for fifth.

But on the third lap as they crested the Mountain the pressure told on Forbes. "It was a great scrap and I was really enjoying it. Dobbo outbraked me at Park but I got him straight back and I was putting the power on earlier and earlier at the Mountain. But then it was too early and I spun off into the barriers," he explained.

Rose's pressure finally told a lap later when he hit the front going into Park. "Garry's start was so good again so I just had to be patient," he said. "I had to be careful too and couldn't afford to be taken out as I was playing my joker. I was pleased I held off Paul for so long, but then I had to back off as I was running low on fuel," Watson added.

Harris retained third and tried to close again but had a slight off. "I was trying to get back to them and then went grass cutting at the Gooseneck," he explained, but still had six seconds in hand over Duncan and Dobson's duel for fourth. "I had damaged a rear wheel after glancing the barrier in the first part, so the vibration was so bad and it undid the engine cover which flew off," said Duncan. "I had felt really bad when Cam went off but knew I had to push from the restart and nearly got Philip at the end," said Dobson.

Whiteley had made his way past Wardle's similar car on the second lap and headed home in sixth, while Wardle continued to hold the gap to his rival in a secure seventh. "I was delighted with that as Chris is a lot more experienced than I am," said Wardle.

Hibbert kept his title chase on track with another class win in eighth overall. "I had a decent start but everyone in front was too fast, but Chris kept me on my toes," he said. Maries had a much stronger run after the restart and had kept the championship leading Elise in sight throughout. "I found four seconds a lap from the restart as I stopped driving it like a bike engined car. I could Stephen in front, but also Mike Hurst behind," he said.

Hurst completed the top ten but had Cryer Jnr closing in at the end. "I found it really slippery," Hurst admitted. "It was brilliant and I was definitely catching Mike too, but had also Dad behind me and then he disappeared," said Jamie.

After Parker had retired one lap in when a fuel pipe came off, Kevin Cryer had Thomas, Rotheroe and Laslett pursuing him. But on the second lap he was all crossed up at the top of the Mountain, Thomas got by as did Rotheroe briefly. "That was scary," Kevin admitted.

It was Thomas that eventually got away in 12th, "even with 2/3 power it was still great and more than I could have hoped for, but it was difficult getting past Kevin," he said. Cryer Snr just held off Rotheroe and Laslett as their trio had Nash closing at the end too. "I wanted to get to Kevin but couldn't when Oliver was in the way," said Rotheroe. Even when Thomas was clear though, the Citroen was outgunned by Cryer's Ginetta still.

Sampson followed Nash home in 17th while Bamber, Kirk and Allen completed the finishers. I was having a good race with Eric until I forgot to brake at the Hairpin," Kirk admitted. "I was going to try and stay with Nash, but couldn't," Bamber added.

RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker) 5 laps in 7m41.135s (85.36mph); 2 Garry Watson (Westfield SEW) +7.267s; 3 Steve Harris (Saker); 4 Philip Duncan (Westfield SEiW); 5 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7) +0.903s; 6 Chris Whiteley (Ginetta G50); 7 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); 8 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Sport Elise); 9 Chris Maries (MK Indy RFR); 10 Mike Hurst (Vauxhall Vectra). Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Whiteley; 4 Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); no other starters. Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Duncan; 3 Maries; 4 Eric Bamber (Ginetta G20); no other finishers. Class C: no starters. Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Wardle; 3 Hurst; 4 Oliver Thomas; no other finishers. Class E: 1 Hibbert; 2 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 3 Kevin Cryer (Ginetta G20); 4 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 5 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise); 6 Leslie Kirk (Renault Clio). Class F: 1 Mike Nash (Peugeot 106 Rallye); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec); no other starters. Fastest lap Rose 1m30.517s (86.98mph).

The grid for the second was formed on the second best qualifying lap, which gave Watson pole over Rose. But there were a number of casualties from the first race, notably Rose who had made it down to the start before clutch problems left him sidelined. Whiteley, Forbes, Roundell and Cox were also absent and Armiger was forced to pull out too with more electrical maladies and so 22 cars lined up for the start, which included Owen in the pitlane. "I haven't got a starter motor working and what you don't do is stall on the green flag lap," he explained.

Watson and Duncan made the best getaway but Harris split them as they arrived at Park on the opening lap. As Watson romped away to a comfortable win, Harris soon consolidated his hold on second too. "It was a good race for me, but backed off a bit at the end," said Watson. "I had closed the gap but then lost my rhythm and had a few sideways moments," Harris admitted.

Dean had started strongly in fourth, but once Dobson had got by on the third lap, the Mazda driver started to close in on Duncan's third place. "He got me at the Gooseneck, I was one side of the backmarkers and he went the other, part on the grass and got through," said Duncan. But the Scot finished strongly, unaware that it was the last lap. "I didn't make the best of starts but could see the gap to Philip closing, after he backed off for yellow flags. Then he met backmarkers in the wrong places," Dobson replied.

Owen had charged through from his pitlane start from 17th on the opening lap to fifth when he took Dean into Coppice. But once past Dean stayed with his conqueror and even closed again at the end as they took the flag 0.114s apart. "I just threw my anchor out to him," Dean reckoned.

Wardle had started to well and held fifth at the end of the opening lap, Dobson and Owen both got by and on lap seven Gorrie followed. "I could almost push Iain in the corners and then he drove away on the straights, very frustrating," he admitted after taking eighth.

After a few laps of harassment from Maries, Hibbert let his rival by as they rounded off the top ten. "I was thinking of the championship," he admitted. "I knew Stephen didn't like harassment," Maries replied after holding a fractional advantage from the fifth lap.

Kevin Cryer and Hurst had an early duel, with Hurst going by into on the third lap at Barn before two further exchanges. The Vectra driver briefly opened a gap, but after a grassy excursion at the Gooseneck his splitter was damaged and he spent the rest of the race defending successfully in 11th place.

Parker was leading the chase as he brought Thomas along too to challenge Cryer Snr. On lap nine he was past Cryer into 12th and was all over Hurst in the remaining laps without prising open his defence. "I made sure I was the widest Compact ever as I kept Oliver behind but struggled to stay with Mike's Vectra under braking," Parker explained.

Cryer held onto 13th from Thomas, with Rotheroe winning a three way fight with Laslett and Jamie Cryer over 15th place. "I got ahead of the trio but spun at the Gooseneck and then Mansfield after catching up again," said Cryer. "I got past Jamie twice and neither time was he on the track," Laslett replied.

Nash, Sampson, Kirk and Allen were the other finishers, after Bamber had spun at Hall Bends on his seventh lap.

RESULTS

1 Watson 14 laps in 22m05.602s (83.15mph); 2 Harris +1.661s; 3 Dobson; 4 Duncan; 5 Steve Owen (Westfield SE); 6 Brian Dean (Westfield SE); 7 Iain Gorrie (Ultima GTR); 8 Wardle; 9 Maries; 10 Hibbert. Class A: 1 Harris; 2 Gorrie; 3 Sampson; no other finishers. Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Duncan; 3 Owen; 4 Dean; 5 Maries; no other finishers, Class C: no starters. Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Wardle; 3 Hurst; 4 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 5 Thomas; no other starters. Class E: 1 Hibbert; 2 K.Cryer; 3 Rotheroe; 4 Laslett; 5 J.Cryer; 6 Kirk. Class F: 1 Nash; 2 Allen; no other starters. Fastest lap Watson 1m31.564s (85.98mph).

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