



## **Sports/Saloon Car Championship Rounds 11 & 12 2015**

### **OULTON PARK**

### **SPENCER TAKES TITLE IN OULTON FINALE**

Joe Spencer and Garry Watson shared the victory spoils as the CNC Heads Sports Saloon Championship came to its customary Oulton Park finale.

But after Spencer had won the opener, Watson returned the compliment in race two, but fourth overall and a class win were enough for Spencer to seal the title, following in the footsteps of father Rob.

Watson's Westfield comfortably took pole in qualifying, over a second clear of Spencer's Locosaki. "It was very busy though and hard to get a clear lap. So I came in early but was flying," said the poleman.

"Everything was repaired from last week and I had traction. There was only one dry line early on and low grip, but didn't get the space on my best lap," Spencer added.

Steve Harris' Saker headed the second row, "I couldn't get a clear lap either," he said. While alongside Philip Duncan just "went for it on new rubber" in his Westfield.

Row three was headed by Mark Burton's Saker from Nick Cresswell's Caterham, "the battery wasn't charging so we needed to check the alternator," said Cresswell.

Having campaigned Paul Dobson's Mazda RX7 in recent rounds, Peter Davies was out in an ex RGB racing Sabre. "It's new to me and managed to have a test last week," he explained. Ilsa Cox was alongside with her Seat Leon now fixed after her Anglesey problems. "It was damper out there than I expected, just had to be aware," she said.

Caterham driver Matt Spark headed the next row from Dave Harvey. "I thought it was damper than it was, all in my head," said a disappointed Harvey.

Having solved his Anglesey problems Alastair Chalmers was well up too in his Caterham. "We put a new dashboard in, cured the misfire and had new tyres," he said after lining up 11th for his last UK race before emigrating to New Zealand.

Alongside Brian Dean had a troublefree run in his Westfield, while the Ginetta's of Stuart Pearson and Gary Wardle were next up. "It was definitely slicks for me, not damp enough

but it was offline and I took a while to get going," Pearson admitted. "I went for wets, slow but safe," Wardle added.

Debutant Philip Morris was 15<sup>th</sup> in his VW Golf Gti with Piers Grange's Escort alongside," a joy to be out in the old Escort," he reckoned. Chris Grimes was also back with his Honda Civic headed row nine from James Aukland. "Bedding in new brakes," said the Capri driver.

Les Kirk was disappointed to be down on the tenth row though with his Fisher Fury. "I had a tinted visor and was hard to tell the difference between the dry and damp track," he reckoned. He had Paul Rose alongside but not in his Saker, after possible headgasket problems from last week. "'I wanted to race so we brought out a Fun Cup car," he explained.

Jamie Cryer was hoping just to reach the finish of an Oulton Park race for the first time this year and had changed his Ginetta G20's starter motor after problems at Anglesey. Graeme Laslett's Elise was next to him, while Richard Roundell's Vectra and Mike Hurst's Seat Leon lined up behind. "I couldn't get any heat into the tyres," said Hurst.

Ric Wood's Audi only did one flying lap before pitting to look after his brakes and tyres sharing the 13<sup>th</sup> row with Steven Parker's BMW Compact. Ralph Underwood's TR7 V8 had class F poleman Barry Long next to him having returned to his old ignition system on the Metro after problems at Anglesey.

Helen Allen's Fiesta, Colin Flynn's Mini, the Fiesta's of Paul Griffin and Brian Allen, Clive Dix's Puma and Keith Wilkinson's Mini completed the qualifiers, but having initially qualified 12<sup>th</sup> Ryan Gorman was out after crashing his BMW M3 exiting Old Hall, while at the back Paul Sampson joined in after finally getting his Volvo Grand National Coupe to start.

## RACE ONE

35 cars lined up to take the start but Harris dived for the pits. "The temperature had dropped so I came in to get some tape put on," he explained.

His absence from the grid caused team mate Burton to line up in the wrong place, which earned him a 10 second penalty. "It was Steve's fault I got lost as he wasn't there," he explained.

As the lights went out Spencer flew into the lead from Watson and Duncan, with a gap to Cresswell and Burton before they had reached Cascades on the opening lap.

But there were problems behind after Morris had collected Kirk exiting Knickerbrook. "I got wiped out and Rose just missed us too, it bent the rosejoint and damaged the exhaust and wheel. Worst is I will have to paint it now which will make John Leck happy," he added.

Back at the front Duncan dived into second at Old Hall on the second lap, but a couple of laps later Watson returned the favour, by which time Spencer's lead had continued to grow.

Cresswell, Burton and Harvey settled into the top six, but for seventh Dean was under pressure from Spark and Chalmers, before Harris's pitlane start brought him into their battle.

It was a controlled but dominant drive from Spencer, taking victory by 2.1 secs. "A blinding start and then made my mind up I was going for it to the end," he said.

Despite losing second back to Watson, Duncan remained a threat for second until he tripped over a backmarker. "I was just holding on to Garry and might have stayed there but got put on the grass at Cascades when we were lapping," he explained after dropping well back to remain a solid third. "I had gone wide when Philip got me, no real excuses but I had no early grip but the tyres came in and I got lucky with the backmarkers," Watson replied.

Burton closed on Cresswell and seemed poised to challenge for a while, but kept falling back which left the Caterham driver a clear fourth. "My car was nimbler but I thought he would get me", said Cresswell. Although Burton retained fifth on the road, he dropped behind the recovering Harris after his penalty was added.

Harvey made an early challenge on Burton before losing ground to the Saker. "I thought I had him once over Hilltop, but on my own after that," he said after coming home seventh.

In eighth Dean managed to shake off the duelling Spark and Chalmers "I could them in my mirrors though," he said. Chalmers headed the duel from lap six but couldn't break the tow. "I moved over when Garry lapped us into Druids, but then Matt got me into Lodge ," Chalmers explained after losing ninth on the last lap.

Wood had made it up to 11<sup>th</sup> before pitting, "I hadn't switched the alternator on to charge," he divulged. So after being left at the start Davies just missed out on the top ten after fighting his way past the duelling Cox and Wardle. "I was revving and spinning the wheels but they all went past, then I got Ilsa at Shell and Garry into Knickerbrook on the same lap," he said.

Cox and Wardle continued their duel right to the end though, before Cox snatched it on the last lap after a couple of exchanges. "I got him and then a Mini was in the middle of the track. I stood on the brakes and Garry got me back," Cox explained. "Great race though," Wardle added.

Pearson was on his own in 14<sup>th</sup> with Grange just holding onto 15<sup>th</sup> at the flag with Hurst inches behind. "A late flurry as I had to build my confidence," Hurst explained. "I thought he was through," Grange admitted.

Rose and Grimes were next home with Cryer 19<sup>th</sup> after pipping Roundell on the last lap. "When Mike pulled away from me my tyres had gone and then Jamie got me," said Roundell. "He said I ruined his joker, but got him at Shell and at last a finish at Oulton," Cryer added.

Parker admitted to looking after his car for the last race so long as he beat Laslett, which he did and had Auckland between them too. Sampson made it through ahead of Underwood, with Long a comfortable class F winner, from Helen Allen and Dix.

Wood rejoined and came in 29<sup>th</sup> with Brian Allen, Flynn and Griffin completing the finishers after Wilkinson went off.

## RESULT

1 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) 13 laps in 22m47.178s (92.14mph); 2 Garry Watson (Westfield SEW)+2.141s; 3 Philip Duncan (Westfield SEi); 4 Nick Cresswell (Caterham R400); 5 Steve Harris (Saker Rapx); 6 Mark Burton (Saker Rapx); 7 Dave Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 8 Brian Dean (Westfield SE); 9 Matt Spark (Caterham Supersports); 10 Alastair Chalmers (Caterham R400). Stuart Pearson (Ginetta G20). Class A: 1 Harris; 2 Burton; 3 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); 4 James Auckland (Ford Capri); 5 Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); 6 Ric Wood (Audi V6 Star). Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Duncan; 3 Cresswell; 4 Dean; 5 Chalmers; 6 Paul Rose (Fun Cup Beetle) no other starters. Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Harvey; 3 Spark; 4 Peter Davies (Sabre); no other finishers. Class D: 1 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon); 2 Mike Hurst (Seat Leon Supercopa); 3 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8); no other finishers. Class E: 1 Stuart Pearson (Ginetta G20); 2 Piers Grange (Ford Escort); 3 Chris Grimes (Honda Civic); 4 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 5 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 6 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 7 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise). Class F: 1 Barry Long (MG Metro); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec S); 3 Clive Dix (Ford Puma); 4 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 5 Colin Flynn (Morris Mini Cooper); 6 Paul Griffin (Ford Fiesta XR2i). Fastest lap Harris 1m43.056s 99.403mph).

The grid for the second race was formed on the second fastest qualifying lap, which gave Watson pole again from Harris, with Spencer and Cresswell sharing the second row.

Burton and Duncan shared row three, from Harvey and Davies, with Cox and Spark completing the top ten. Wilkinson was the only absentee but on the back Wood joined Sampson having not completed a second flying lap.

## RACE 2

It was Watson that made the quick getaway as the lights went out, leaving Duncan and Spencer to duel for second.

As the lead grew Spencer's dilemma was clear to see. "I could see Garry and wanted to race him, but had fun chasing Philip and had to think of the title," he said.

Watson's lead was never challenged and finished his season on a high. "It was like fireworks with my brakes though, every time I touched them. I pushed hard though and set a good pace early on," he explained after clinching third overall in the championship and class B.

But the second place duel continued for much of the race until they were caught by Harris. "I made a terrible start and just couldn't get it off the line," he said. After ousting Cresswell on lap three it took another six laps before he split the duelling pair ahead. "I finally got Philip at Lodge, ultra-late braking though," he added.

So Duncan completed the podium, "brilliant, loved that and made the car very wide for Joe as everything was spot on," he exuded. Fourth was enough for Spencer to be crowned 2015 Champion though. "It's been just brilliant, a great season and Dad's worked so hard to make the car work for me, it's all his work really," said Joe. "He has done everything I never did myself really," Rob replied.

Although Harvey started well chasing Cresswell for fourth, he settled a solitary sixth after Harris took them both, until Burton reeled him midrace.

Cresswell kept Burton at bay again to retain fifth, "the gap closed again when I relaxed at the last lap board," Cresswell admitted. "Maybe another lap, but I lost out in traffic," Burton added.

Harvey finally came in seventh, "I had been chasing Nick until Mark got me, then lost touch," he said. Davies also fared better, "I only lost three places at the start this time and loved the fightback," he said after taking eighth on the last lap when Wood pitted after a spin at Cascades with his brakes "on the limit."

Dean had headed a four car train early on, but once again had the legs of Chalmers and Spark. "Alastair nearly got me up Clay Hill, he was alongside," Dean admitted.

Cox and Wardle resumed their duel from race one, but Ilsa led the way from lap seven and pulled away. "Great dice again but I couldn't keep up in the end," Wardle explained. "It looked good seeing Gary get smaller in my mirrors, but was worried that I had enough fuel, but didn't tell Brian," she replied. Both drivers also clinched their class titles, Isla in D and garry in class A.

Pearson was on his own again and from 14<sup>th</sup> sealed class C and runner up in the overall standings. After colliding in the first race Kirk and Morris had a great scrap for 15<sup>th</sup> with a few exchanges before Morris made it stick. "The car wasn't straight still but he beat me fair and square," Kirk admitted.

Parker's late surge netted him 17<sup>th</sup> in the last two laps after demoting Roundell and Rose, who were busy duelling with each other.

Cryer completed the top 20, from Grimes, Laslett, Sampson and Underwood. Behind them Long took a comfortable second class win of the day over Dix, Class F Champion Helen Allen, Flynn, Brian Allen and Griffin, with Hurst, Auckland and Grange all failing to go the distance.

RESULT

1 Garry Watson (Westfield SEW) 13 laps in 22m54.603s (91.64Mph); 2 Steve Harris (Saker Rapx) +4.240S; 3 Philip Duncan (Westfield SEi); 4 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 5 Nick Cresswell (Caterham R400); +24.948s; 6 Mark Burton (Saker Rapx); 7 Dave Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 8 Peter Davies (Sabre); 9 Brian Dean (Westfield SE); 10 Alastair Chalmers (Caterham R400).

Class A: 1 Harris; 2 Burton; 3 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); 4 Paul Sampson (Volvo Grand National Coupe); no other finishers. Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Duncan; 3 Cresswell; 4 Dean; 5 Chalmers; 6 Paul Rose (Fun Cup Beetle) no other starters. Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Harvey; 3 Davies; 4 Matt Spark (Caterham Supersports); 5 Les Kirk (Fisher Fury); no other starters. Class D: 1 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon)); 2 Philip Morris (VW Golf Gti); 3 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8); no other finishers. Class E: 1 Stuart Pearson (Ginetta G20); 2 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 3 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 4 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 5 Chris Grimes (Honda Civic); 6 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise). Class F: 1 Barry Long (MG Metro); 2 Clive Dix (Ford Puma); 3 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec S); 4 Colin Flynn (Morris Mini Cooper); 5 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 6 Paul Griffin (Ford Fiesta XR2i). Fastest lap: Watson 1m43.325s (93.78mph).

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