



Sports/Saloon Car Championship Rounds 2 & 3 2015, Rockingham

TOP MARKS FOR SPENCER AT ROCKINGHAM

Joe Spencer took his first double win in the championship, as it headed south to the Rockingham Motor Speedway. His Stuart Taylor Locosaki was never headed in either race, winning by over 30 seconds in each.

Qualifying for Saturday's race was wet and began to dry towards the end, "I was sideways everywhere," said Joe as he was pipped for pole by over two seconds by Ilsa Cox's Seat Leon Cupra.

Heading the second row was multiple Ginetta G20 Champion Stuart Pearson, with returnee Danny Keenan alongside in a borrowed MK Indy RR. "The oil pressure was a bit of an issue in my own car so had to borrow one but it had less power than mine," he explained.

Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette was next up, "I tried new intermediates but would have been better on my older wets," he reckoned. But alongside Paul Rotheroe was delighted to be so far up the grid in his Citroen Xsara. "I had a little spin as it was very slippery, but enjoyed it a lot and over the moon with the grid place," he said.

It was all class E on the fourth row with Steven Hibbert's Lotus Elise just edging out Kevin Cryer's Ginetta G20 by 0.281 secs. "Full wets and I was very pleased with that," said Kevin. Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise headed the fifth row and had novice Dave Harvey alongside with his Locosaki. "In those conditions I just wanted to get a time and look after the car," Dave admitted.

Les Kirk's Fisher Fury was next quickest, with Clive Dix's Ford Puma relishing the dampness too. David Griffin's BMW shared the seventh row with Chris Grimes' Ford Escort XR3i, while Steven Parker's BMW Compact, Ralph Underwood's Triumph TR7 V8, Mike Hurst's Vauxhall Vectra, Helen Allen's Ford Fiesta Zetec S and Paul Griffin's Fiesta XR2i completed the 19 car grid.

RACE 1

Any signs of the morning moisture had gone as the grid formed up for the opening race of the weekend, with no casualties for the morning's qualifying session.

As soon as the lights went out Spencer shot off into a clear lead and was over four seconds clear by the end of the opening lap. Armiger had settled in second with Keenan and Harvey duelling for third, while Cox had slipped to fifth, with Pearson sixth and Griffin's BMW heading the rest.

While the lead continued to grow, Harvey had hounded Keenan into submission for second, but both had the recovering Cox closing in too. Keenan suddenly found himself down in fifth by the end of lap three, as the vastly experienced Mrs Cox made short shrift of novice Harvey for third.

Harvey wasn't for giving though and retook the place two laps later. Their duel allowed Spencer even more opportunity to increase his lead and Armiger to consolidate second, which they did with consummate ease. "I didn't see anyone else to race with, so I just concentrated on trying to match my own target lap times," Joe explained.

But for Armiger his comfortable second was soon to disappear. "I had been a clear second from the start but the diff seal started to leak and both Dave and Ilsa got me on the same lap as I had to back off," he said. Going into the penultimate lap Harvey had a half second cushion, but found the backmarkers to be his undoing as Cox scythed past to secure second place. "I was battling all the way but too hesitant with the backmarkers and she got me," he admitted.

Keenan retained a solitary fifth behind Armiger, "I tried to make up the time in the corners as the power difference was just too much on the straights," he said. Pearson and Griffin held station throughout in sixth and seventh, with Kirk pipping defending champion Hibbert for eighth on the last lap, after plunging to 14th on the first lap.

Hurst demoted Rotheroe on the second lap for ninth and gradually eased clear, only losing one place as Kirk's recovery peeked. "I stayed with Mike at first, then lost touch and Les came by before the battle with Kevin and Steven started," said Paul

The Citroen driver had the edge until lap 11, "Kevin had just got me and I got sucked in, tried to get him back and locked up in the Brook Esses, and was off into the gravel," he added. Parker had also spun so the pressure was off for Cryer. "The expected quicker cars got me early on but then we had the three way until Paul and Steven went off and I finished on my own," said Kevin after securing 11th.

Laslett had also made it past Parker as he recovered, while Grimes, Allen and Paul Griffin completed the finishes, after Dix and Underwood retired.

1 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) 15 laps in 22m03.286s (79.16mph); 2 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra) +34.761s; 3 Dave Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Danny Keenan (MK Indy RR); 6 Stuart Pearson (Ginetta G20); 7 David Griffin (BMW); 8 Les Kirk (Fisher Fury); 9 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Elise); 10 Mike Hurst (Vauxhall

Vectra). Class A: no starters. Class B: 1 Armiger; no other starters. Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Harvey; Kirk; 3 Keenan; 4 Kirk; no other starters. Class D: 1 Cox; 2 D.Griffin; 3 Hurst; no other finishers. Class E: 1 Pearson; 2 Hibbert; 3 Kevin Cryer (*Ginetta G20*); 4 Graeme Laslett (*Lotus Elise*); 5 Steve Parker (*BMW Compact*); no other finishers. Class F: 1 Chris Grimes (*Ford Escort XR3i*); 2 Helen Allen (*Ford Fiesta Zetec*); 3 Paul Griffin (*Ford Fiesta XR2i*); no other finishers. Fastest lap Spencer 1m26.187s (81.03mph).

Sunday dawned bright and dry and it provided an all Locosaki front row for race two. Spencer was on pole by well over three seconds from Harvey. "I had new rear tyres on but had a split fuel tank which spilled all over the tyres, so we had to go back to Leicester to get the spare tank to fit," Joe explained. "It was very daunting for me, on the front row in my third ever race and alongside Joe," Dave added.

Armiger just pipped Keenan for third, "it was a good session for me and didn't realise it was only Dave's third ever race," said Luke. Pearson and Cox shared the third row, with Kirk and Dave Griffin next up. Hurst headed Cryer on the fifth row, "amazing and I outqualified Steven Hibbert too," said Kevin.

Hibbert was next quickest with Parker joining him on the sixth row, while on the seventh Rotheroe headed Laslett. "Just not enough power to go any faster," Paul admitted. Grimes and Paul Griffin completed a 16 car grid, with Underwood, Dix and Allen all absentees from the previous day.

RACE 2

Poleman Spencer's dash from a quick return home to replace his fuel tank was completed with only five minutes to spare, but he wasted no time again when the lights went out. Harvey was also quick off the line and slotted into a comfortable second, as Armiger eased himself clear of Keenan for a comfortable third too after three laps.

Pearson was fifth, from Hurst, Hibbert, Kirk, D.Griffin & Rotheroe, but Cox was on a charge after she spun at Deene Hairpin and completed the opening lap in 14th place. But her progress was rapid and by lap four she was into the top six at Hurst's expense, before ousting Pearson from fifth two laps later.

By lap eight Spencer's lead was up to 16 secs but Harvey was still comfortable in second. Armiger was a clear third and Keenan fourth, with 14 secs still in hand over the recovering Cox.

But fortunes turned once again for Armiger, "I was aware of a front right hand puncture as it had gone down a little. I wasn't really sure how long was left in the race, but I had hopes of nursing it to the finish. But then it delaminated and I had to stop," he explained after pitting from ninth place.

At the front though Spencer was totally dominant, "It was good to start the race with Dave alongside and the second win just made it a great weekend," he said. Harvey also held onto a clear second, "Luke was all over me at first and then I started to get away, just before he had his puncture," Dave added.

Keenan therefore inherited third. "I hadn't been able to stay with Luke, so it had been a fairly lonely race for me," he said. Cox's charge was settled with fourth, while Pearson and Kirk complete the top six. Kirk had got ahead of the Vectra early on, but a number of exchanges followed before Kirk made it stick. However his start had been adjudged too eager and his jump start penalty dropped him back behind Hurst into seventh,

Griffin's BMW kept Hibbert and Cryer's duel at a safe distance for eighth. "I had a bad start as both Paul and Graeme got me, I soon got them back and then spent the whole race chasing Steven's Elise," said Kevin. Rotheroe just missed out on the top ten with 11th place. "A great start and I made places before racing with Steven Parker and Graeme's Elise. Graeme spun though I missed him but Steven did too only just," Paul explained. Parker recovered to 12th with Laslett similarly in 13th, while Grimes and Paul Griffin were the final finishes.

1 Spencer 15 laps in 21m57.746s (79.49mph); 2 Harvey +31.074s; 3 Keenan; 4 Cox; 5 Pearson; 6 Hurst; 7 Kirk; 8 D.Griffin; 9 Hibbert; 10 Cryer. Class A: No starters. B: no finishers. Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Harvey; 3 Keenan; 4 Kirk; no other starters. Class D: 1 Cox; 2 Hurst; 3 D.Griffin; no other starters. Class E: 1 Pearson; 2 Hibbert; 3 Cryer; 4 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 5 Parker; 6 Laslett. Class F: Grimes; 2 P.Griffin; no other starters. Fastest lap: Spencer 1m26.088s (81.12mph).

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