



Sports/Saloon Car Championship Rounds 4 & 5 2015, Mallory Park

WATSON & SPENCER SHARE VICTORY SPOILS IN INCIDENT PACKED WEEKEND

Garry Watson and Joe Spencer were both winners at Mallory Park, in a weekend dominated by incidents.

Spencer's Locosaki was quickest in Saturday's qualifying session, by just under a second from Watson's Westfield. "I got my time early on and didn't really get any more clear track, but the car was spot on," said Spencer.

"I was bedding in a new diff so happy with second and knew I wouldn't beat Joe around there," added Watson who was making his seasonal debut.

Philip Duncan's Westfield headed the second row from Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra. "It was so busy, I had a moment and tried to pit to check things, but the pitlane was closed and I couldn't get out again," Armiger explained. "I haven't been to Mallory before and was on harder compound tyres so it took longer to warm up," Duncan added.

Fifth was David Fuller's best qualifying position since starting racing last year, his Locosaki had Ilsa Cox's Seat Leon Cupra alongside. Stuart Pearson's Ginetta G20 was next up, sharing row four with returnee Danny Bird in a Pell Genesis.

Heading the next row was newcomer Matt Spark's Caterham Supersport, with reigning Champion Steven Hibbert's Elise alongside. "Everything was fine but I didn't manage to get clear either," Hibbert added.

11th best was former Renault Clio Uk Cup frontrunner James Colburn who had Garry Wardle's Ginetta G50 alongside. "I hadn't been to Mallory before, so was very cautious," Wardle admitted.

Vic Lord, another debutant has his Lotus Elise just behind, followed by Richard Morris' Mini Clubman. Les Kirk continued to acclimatise to his Fisher Firy in 15th, with Paul Samspon's Volvo Grand National Coupe a fraction slower.

The top 20 was completed by Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara, Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20, Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise and Steven Parker's BMW Compact.

Kevin Cryer had his session cut short after being hit from behind by Bird. "It pitched me into the air, so I had to pit," he explained. Ralph Underwood's Triumph TR7 V8 and Jason Hennefer's Honda Prelude were next quickest, while Mike Hurst's Vauxhall Vectra was way off its normal pace in 24th.

Max Goucher's Honda Civic, Dave Chilton's MK Indy, Helen Allen's Fiesta and Bob Claxton's Renault 21 Turbo completed the 28 qualifiers.

RACE 1

It was dramatic start to the race when Spencer had only gone a few yards when the propshaft broke and punctured the cockpit. "I went for second gear, there was a vibration and rattle and it came through the side into my leg. It hurt a bit but I was more worried about my racesuit," he said.

Watson therefore had the lead from Duncan, before Armiger scythed into second place into Gerards. "I got a good start and saw Joe going backwards, so guessed it was mechanical," he replied. "I had luckily jinked to the side or would have hit Joe right in the back when he slowed," Duncan added.

Armiger kept a lot of early pressure on Watson before the gaps began to open and lappery started. Duncan had settled in third, from Fuller, Wardle, Spark, Cox, Perason, Colburn & Hibbert. "I seemed to get a better run on the backmarkers than Luke," said Watson whose lead soon grew decisive,

But the battle for second continued for the majority of the race, with Armiger holding sway until he tripped up with backmarkers. "I had managed to avoid Joe at the start and got into second, chased Garry for a while until I got held up and Philip closed on me. Then we came to the Hairpin and Steven Parker was challenging Paul Rotheroe, I half spun and Philip was through," said Armiger.

He got the place back two laps later through Gerards when Duncan was caught out by a backmarker, "I think Luke just outbraked himself at the Hairpin again," said Duncan after taking the place back again. "I misread backmarkers once more, judged it wrong at the Esses, I went one way, Philip the other and he chose right," said Armiger, which finally gave Duncan his break.

Fuller had dropped from fourth on lap eight when he spun after being pressurised by Wardle. "Garry had the line so I had to go wide, hit a bump at Devils Elbow and spun," he said.

Wardle gradually consolidated his place until Cox caught him in and snatched fourth on lap 19 at the Esses. "I had a train closing in on me so had to get past David and got away until Ilsa caught me," he added.

Wardle retained fifth with Hibbert, who was surprised to have caught and taken Pearson for his class lead, nine laps from the end. "I got quicker as the race wore on, but had to keep my eye on Spark's Caterham. We both edged towards Pearson, but I had a touch with Armiger when he lapped me," he explained.

Spark just kept Pearson at bay for seventh and Fuller fell back to ninth after running wide at the Hairpin on lap 10. "Once I had gone wide it was hard to get back in line, so they mugged me and I then had Colburn chased me for the rest of the race," Fuller explained.

Colburn completed the top ten with Kirk pipping Morris for 11th on the last lap. Rotheroe and Parker continued their racelong duel right to the flag, but the Citroen just retained his advantage.

Sampson had been as high as 11th too until he retired after 15 laps. Lord ousted Jamie Cryer from 15th on lap 15, while Laslett, Underwood, Hennefer, Goucher, Claxton and Allen completed the finishers, after Chilton retired his MK Indy from penultimate place nine laps in and Kevin Cryer had to quit early after his qualifying shunt left him with severe vibration.

RESULT

1 Garry Watson (Westfield SEW) 26 laps in 21m15.079s (99.09mph); 2 Philip Duncan (Westfield SEi) +13.304s; 3 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra); 5 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); 6 Steven Hibbert (Lotus Sport Elise); 7 Matt Spark (Caterham Supersport); 8 Stuart Pearson (Ginetta G20); 9 David Fuller (Locosaki); 10 James Colburn (Renault Clio). Class A: 1 Wardle; no other finishers. Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Duncan; 3 Armiger; 4 Richard Morris (Mini Clubman); no other starters. Class C: 1 Spark; 2 Fuller; 3 Les Kirk (Fisher Fury); no other finishers. Class D: 1 Cox; 2 Colburn; 3 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8); 4 Bob Claxton (Renault 21 Turbo); no other starters. Class E: 1 Hibbert; 2 Pearson; 3 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara VTS); 4 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 5 Vic Lord (Lotus Sport Elise); 6 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 7 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise); 8 Jason Hennefer (Honda Prelude). Class F: 1 Max Goucher (Honda Civic VTec); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta); no other starters. Fastest lap Watson 47.713s (101.85mph).

RACE 2

Spencer had been home to nearby Leicester and fitted his new propshaft for Sunday's qualifying, "I got a good time early on and was surprised to get the space," he said after securing pole again.

Armiger had a new engine for the weekend and admitted to be a little cautious during Saturday. But he went for it and came away with second fastest, despite only doing five laps. "I was pleased with second though," he said.

Watson and Duncan made it an all Westfield second row. "I just did my three laps and pitted as I had hit my wheel into the Hairpin," said Watson. "There were just no clear laps," Duncan added.

Fuller was on the pace again in fifth with Cox alongside, while Spark headed Hibbert on row four. "Not sure how I out qualified Pearson, but I did. Think it was stealth or just a surprise," Hibbert reckoned.

A cautious Wardle headed the next row, "it was a bit damp but I had treaded tyres on and it gave me more confidence," he said. He had Morris alongside, who just outqualifying Bird and Pearson.

Colburn and Lord shared the next row, from Kirk and Jamie Cryer, while Rotheroe and Parker continued their duel from the first race, by sharing the ninth row, 0.184 secs apart.

Laslett had Kevin Cryer sharing row ten, "I had worked on the suspension but still had vibration," said Cryer. Hennefer, Sampson. Goucher, Allen and Underwood were the final qualifiers, with Chilton, Claxton and Hurst having been first race casualties.

The race had barely got away when it had to be red flagged after Rotheroe had pulled up when his bonnet flew open. He was hit in the back by Jamie Cryer, while Hennefer then hit Kevin Cryer.

Although Spencer had started from pole he was adjudged to have jumped the start and when the grid reformed he was demoted after a penalty was added.

From the restart Watson was in control, but Spencer had come from seventh to snatch second as they went around Gerards.

Armiger was third, from Duncan, Spark, Wardle, Pearson, Bird, Colburn and Morris.

But at the front Spencer was threatening. "I was getting close and then got a run on Garry out of the Hairpin on lap three and got ahead around the outside at Gerards," Spencer explained. "Joe was putting me under pressure and so I thought let him lead a bit and then come back at him, but didn't anticipate another red flag," Watson replied.

So the race was classified after four laps with Spencer the winner over Watson, after Bird had spun at the Esses and was beached on the kerbs.

Armiger was third for the whole race, "just trying to chase Joe and Garry," he said. Duncan was fourth, "Joe shot past at the start but I never really got going," he reckoned.

Wardle had a good start and ousted Spark for fifth on the second lap, "I think I was into third briefly, but made three places straightaway," he said.

Pearson was seventh with Cox eighth, after she stormed past Colburn as Bird spun out. So Colburn became ninth with Hibbert 10th. "A terrible start," Hibbert admitted.

Lord, Kirk and Fuller finished almost nose to tail, after the Locosaki driver lost a couple of places backing off after Bird's spin. Morris was next home, with Parker, Laslett, Hennefer, Underwood, Goucher and Allen all making it to the finish too.

RESULT

1 Joe Spencer (Locosaki) 4 laps in 3m15.552s (99.41mph); 2 Watson +0.919s; 3 Armiger; 4 Duncan; 5 Wardle; 6 Spark; 7 Pearson; 8 Cox; 9 Colburn; 10 Hibbert. Class A: 1 Wardle; no other finishers; Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Armiger; 3 Duncan; 4 Morris; no other finishers. Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Spark; 3 Kirk; 4 Fuller; no other finishers. Class D: 1 Cox; 2 Colburn; 3 Underwood; no other starters. Class E: 1 Pearson; 2 Hibbert; 3 Lord; 4 Parker; 5 Laslett; 6 Hennefer. Class F: 1 Goucher; 2 Allen. Fastest lap Armiger 47.290s (102.77mph).

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