

BARC North Western Centre report for BARC Magazine 2017 Autumn edition

Writing this in August makes it seem as though the year has shot by! Our CNC Heads sports saloon championship has run 9 of its 14 rounds and there are only two meetings left to see the final 5 rounds off. Rounds 8 and 9 were run at the end of July at Donington Park with a capacity grid of 40 cars and a handful of reserves. The next race meeting will be early September on Anglesey when 6 races for three rounds will be run as the grids will be split to accommodate the large number of entries. Then there is a big gap to late October for the final two rounds when the grids cannot be split due to the full programme. It will probably be getting dark for most of the day then anyway! Entries will be at a real premium for the final rounds and it will be a real challenge to make sure that the rules for priority places are applied accurately to the large number of entries which have already been received.

Driver registrations at the time of writing stand at 102 which sounds great but the fact that about 80% of the drivers have actually raced this season is a real achievement by all concerned. We have good reason to believe that this will be the case again in 2018 so have already made plans to book two grids at most race meetings next season.

The regular full grids are not without their problems however in a championship with such a wide speed differential as ours. There can be 20 seconds covering the grid at a circuit such as Donington but that increases to 30 seconds at a tight place like Cadwell Park. It is to the credit of the drivers that there have been relatively few incidents over the years due to this although there may have been plenty of complaints about slow cars getting in the way on a quick lap! The speed difference is less of a problem than unpredictable moving around on track so we operate the principles that slower cars should stay on line and it is the responsibility of the quick cars to find a safe way past. Having said that, a full grid at Cadwell was quite daunting and made the track seem very narrow compared with the open spaces of Donington and Oulton.

With a very large grid there is a real need for drivers to be very sharp and watch out for flags and other signals as our Clerk of the Course Chairman Ray Sumner explains : “In the North West I believe that we have the best Saloon and Sports Car Championship in the country although others might disagree.

“In the CNC Heads Championship, so generously sponsored by Ric Wood for 10 years we have an eclectic mixture of cars with a very wide speed differential which appeals greatly to the marshals, especially the flag marshals, due to the constant overtaking. They get a good work out, especially with the blue flag and are not redundant as with many one make championships. It also appeals to the spectators who see many different shapes, sizes and colour schemes; that is the cars not the drivers! “The wide speed differential does however cause problems on occasions and it is essential that the drivers make good use of the flags, which for most of the time they do. “The blue is vital to the slower cars when the faster ones approach, stationary blue meaning someone is closing fast, waved blue they are overtaking.

“The yellow flag causes most controversy but it is absolutely essential it is obeyed as it signifies danger and covers a driver who may still be in the car and marshals who will be working at the scene on an incident. Yellow flags mean no overtaking slow down, although if the flag has only just come out it is not always possible if pole man is coming steaming up on the slowest in the field, but after this there should be no excuse for doing it. Also fastest times set in a sector showing yellow flags cannot be condoned or accepted. “Finally some warning flags are shown at the start/finish line, some advisory, some compulsory, please make sure you know where they will be displayed. “Above all make sure you know all your flags and what they mean.”

We have four people at the top of the overall points lead after 9 rounds with Piers Grange leading in his 2ltr class E Mk2 Escort. 10 points behind in second is Joe Spencer in his Kawasaki 1.4ltr class C Locosaki but only one point ahead of Iain Gorrie in his Toyota 1.6ltr class F Raw Striker. 10 points behind Iain is Dave Harvey in his 1.4ltr

class C Locosaki. It shows that cars from any class have an equal chance of winning the championship.

With a maximum of 7 points for a class win, these points could change significantly over the weekend's three races at Anglesey, particularly as Joe, Iain and Dave have not yet played their jokers for double points in one race. As there are only two rounds left to run after this meeting, many drivers will be doing the best they can to maximise their points score.

In the classes, Paul Rose has a comfortable lead of class A in his 2ltr turbo Subaru engined Saker. Class B is a different affair with Garry Watson leading in his 2.2ltr Westfield SEi with 48 points but second place Luke Armiger in his 2ltr Vauxhall Tigra silhouette also has 48 points! Class C is led by Joe Spencer but Dave Harvey is doing his best to keep him honest.

In the modified classes, class D is led by Garry Wardle in his gorgeous Porsche 997 with 51 points but Oliver Thomas has 47 points in second place with his equally gorgeous white 2ltr turbo Subaru Impreza WRX; but he has only 2 points more than Alistair Stenhouse's 3.2ltr BMW E36 M3 Evo. Plenty of fun to be had there then! Class E is led by overall leader Piers Grange with class F being led very comfortably by Iain Gorrie.

When the grids are split, cars from the Specials classes run a separate race to the one run by all the Modified cars. One benefit of this is that more drivers get a chance at an overall win and others are able to run much higher up the grid.

Peter Gorrie NW Centre Secretary