

BARC North Western Centre report for BARC Magazine 2019 Summer Edition

The CNC Heads championship has run 5 rounds at 2 meetings in April and May. The Cadwell Park races were some of the most spectacular seen for some time. To say that Andy Southcott won them both does no justice to the intensity and closeness of the racing throughout the races. 4 cars were involved with the lead battle in both with regular changes of position. There was a massive midfield group of cars going at it hammer and tongs and several drivers making their ways through the field from unrepresentative grid positions.

Anglesey saw three races with only 3 cars not making it through the day. Again there was much dicing through the field in all 3 races which ultimately saw Danny Bird win all 3 in his Spire GTR with some spectacular driving. Great racing and no incidents!

John Leck concludes his overview of the NW Sports Saloon Championship as it enters its 36th Season.

The previous part of this article brought us up to 1993 and up until then there had been alterations to the class structures and some slight changes to the technical regulations but over the next few years there was stability on both fronts. It was at this time that the committee realised that stability was one of the strengths of the championship. Not only was there some stability but the class structure was such that in the years 1993 - 1997 each of the five classes provided a champion. After these years the championship was taken for three years from the top modified class and it was thought time was right to make some changes to the class structure.

We had stopped having the end of season driver's meetings by this time as they had become counter-productive as drivers were only really considering their positions rather than the championship as a whole. It was decided to increase the number of modified classes to three with classes split by date of manufacture. This had the desired effect of spreading the overall champions across the classes as well as spreading the cars more evenly across the classes.

Since 1988 the championship had been sponsored. At all times by companies associated in some way with the series. These sponsors included the 1275GT Centre and Howley Racing, followed by Gresham Assurance & Spartan Financial Services, Clearway Filters, Delostar Electronics and Lynton Trailers. It was in 1996 that the first of two long standing

sponsors came on board in Ace Vehicle Deliveries. They were extremely supportive for eight seasons although these were not consecutive as Europa Engineering and K&N Filters provided support for two years each and Hillside of Heywood BMW were co-sponsors with Ace for two years. It was in 2008 that our current sponsor took over, CNC Heads have supported us since then and are currently in their 11 season - many thanks go to Ric Wood who owns the company for his loyal support.

It was in the mid 'noughties' that the championship hit its nadir. In the first six years of the new millennium the number of starters held up quite well, however, registrations were falling significantly and the situation became quite serious. In fact by 2006 we were down to 41 registrations and in danger of receiving a 'yellow card' from the MSA as we were down to an average just 16 starters! It called for some significant actions to be taken. After listening to the drivers and several committee discussions it was decided to slightly adjust the class structure to remove the year of manufacture split and revert to capacity splits - this class split is the same today. With regard to the technical regulations we agreed to strive to as much stability as possible and never make a change that excluded a car. As far as the sporting regulations were concerned we removed the registration fee, moved to more double (and now triple) headers, gave a reduced fee at the last meeting for loyal racers and adjusted the points structure to give more points for away rounds.

Although individually these were small changes, all of them together were significant and had to work! They did - in the next ten years the number of registrations more than doubled to a then record of 106 in 2014 and the number of starters rose to average more than 30 on a regular basis. Perhaps the strength of the championship was the constant 'churn' of drivers, as some retired or moved to pastures new there were always new ones wanting to join what had become one of the (if not the) friendliest championships.

In addition to the racing there are a number of additional awards that the drivers compete for during the season. The two most prestigious and most sought after trophies are the David Gledhill Driver of the Year and David Simpson Memorial Trophies. The first voted for by the marshals and the second awarded to the best performing class winner at specified round. In addition to these we have more recently instigated the Spirit of the Championship Trophy as well as the Cam Forbes Memorial Trophy and the Jock Sinclair Newcomer of the Year Trophy. All these are greatly prized by the recipients each year.

So what of the future? The main thing to guard against is complacency, although we are still averaging over 30 at each meeting the numbers are dropping off slightly and the class

structure is showing signs of needing slight changes perhaps some classes are short of numbers whilst others, particularly Class E have, perhaps, too many. The committee not sitting on their laurels and are actively thinking about the future and what, if any, changes may be required. One thing is certain stability, friendliness and cost effectiveness will always remain the bedrock of the championship. If any readers of the article whether drivers, marshals, officials or spectators have any ideas, comments or suggestions then let me know. Contact details can be found at barcnorthwestern.co.uk.