

BARC North Western Centre report for BARC Magazine 2020 Winter Edition

The CNC Heads season came to a conclusion after 8 rounds at Oulton Park at the end of October. On a wet, windy and sometimes sunny day when the two races were run in memory of one of our drivers Les Kirk who sadly passed away a few weeks before the event; four drivers came to the circuit with a chance of taking the overall title. These were, hot favourite, Jamie Cryer, Garry Wardle, Guy Carter and with perhaps the best chance of overhauling Jamie, Luke Armiger.

Qualifying took place in awful conditions with the rain lashing down and the wind varying from strong to gusty! All the leading contenders survived practice with Luke taking pole position though the others in title contention were all third in class. Garry Wardle suffered the most as he had changed his car before the meeting to his Mini Cooper S from his usual Porsche so was unlikely to challenge at the head of Class D.

The rain had abated come the first race, though the track was still wet and requiring wet tyres. In memory of Les Kirk the front row of the grid was left empty, this was after Chris Grimes driving Les' rapid Fisher Fury completed a lap with the Safety Car in the lunch break. In addition there was a minute's silence for Les and Phil Bunn, a respected marshal, and member of the Safety Car team who had also sadly passed away just before the meeting.

The race was unfortunately red flagged after 6 laps because of an accident involving Helen Allen, luckily Helen was unharmed though that could not be said about George, her trusty Fiesta, husband Brian is going to be busy before next season. Luke had managed to keep at the front of Class B though Paul Dobson was keeping him very honest. Jamie was suffering in the wet conditions as his Ginetta was not best suited to a wet track and was lying third in class. Both Gary Wardle and Guy Carter were also running third but these positions were not enough to keep them in the hunt, they had to improve in the second part of the race.

Paul Rose led away in the second part of the race though he didn't escape the watchful eyes of the judges and was penalised 10 seconds for a false start! Over the course of the 6 laps that comprised this part Paul managed to build up a lead over

Paul Woolfitt in his Lotus Exige of 10.791 seconds so just squeaked in by a tiny margin. Luke Armiger in his Vauxhall Tigra led Paul Dobson's Locost 7 from the line and over the 6 laps gradually pulled out a comfortable margin and took the class win and fastest lap and the 14 joker enhanced points that went with this finish. Jamie Cryer in his Ginetta G20 came home a disappointed 4th in class though saved to some extent by being able to use this as his dropped score. With Garry Wardle finishing 4th in class as well and Guy Carter in his Honda retiring it was a battle between Jamie and Luke in the final round for the Championship.

With the abacuses coming out in the lunch break it was confirmed by the championship officials (John and Duncan) that Jamie 'simply' needed a 3rd (or 4th plus fastest lap) in class to win the title (this would result in a tie but Jamie would win on count back - just!). This time the race only lasted until Old Hall corner where Paul Rose from the front row locked up and slid into the barriers. From a distance it looked a significant impact and the race was red flagged. However, even before the pack had arrived back, Paul had backed the Saker out from the barriers and was having his mirror tightened in the pits - there being no other damage!

From the restart Paul Woolfitt led away and had a lights to flag win, Paul Rose had to start from the pit lane and proceeded to make up the deficit and got back to third overall. Splitting these two at the end of the race was Luke who had also got fastest lap and consequently scored a maximum 14 points, making 28 on the day, he could do no more, it was up to Jamie. With the track now dry, Jamie seemed much more at home and able to challenge for class honours. However, discretion being the better part of valour, he had already decided that he wouldn't risk the title with an ill-advised battle for the class win. He managed to keep safe even though there were several cars around him and did not seriously challenge Ben Griffiths for the class. As the race reached its conclusion Jamie decided to go all out on the last lap and did a Lewis Hamilton and took fastest class lap to go with his 2nd in class to put the title well out of Luke's reach.

So the season finished after 8 successful rounds, an average grid of 31, as many registered competitors as in the last few seasons and Jamie Cryer as Overall 2020 Champion. We had started our season at the first race meeting after the first

lockdown and finished it just as Boris Johnson was announcing a second lockdown - good timing! It seemed from comments on social media in the days following the last round that everyone had enjoyed themselves and confirmed the reputation for this being the 'friendly championship'. Thanks go to the drivers and their teams, our Sponsor Ric Wood, owner of CNC Heads and the officials of the Championship. We can look forward to a, hopefully, successful 2021 if we are allowed to race!

John Leck CNC Heads Championship Co-ordinator.