



CNC HEADS SPORTS SALOONS – 2018 Championship review

An engine failure in round 12 at Donington Park was the only time Paul Rose's Saker failed to secure a win in this year's CNC Heads Sports Saloons Championship.

It took until the final double header at Oulton Park before the title was secured however, with Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 in particular, keeping the pressure on Rose season long. But Rose's Donington Park demise gave Danny Bird's Spire GT3 a first visit to the top step overall.

It was usually Bird and Dave Harvey's Stuart Taylor Locosaki that got the best of the starts, before becoming the prey to Rose's hunt.

Harvey and Bird had some challenging duels throughout the year in class C. Having missed Cadwell and a disastrous first visit of the season to Anglesey, with a collapsed front hub in race one and being stuck in gear and pushed off the grid in race two, Bird was always playing catch up. Harvey's 10 class wins from the 14 races netted him third overall in the championship, despite his own problems, which brought a swap to Joe Spencer's 2017 title winning car for the later part of the season.

But it was Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 that took the runner up spot, only six points behind Champion Rose. Closed season changes to his car soon proved positive for Cryer, although his fourth in class in the opening round at Oulton, was soon followed by a confident double win at Cadwell. With only the odd spin and a few minor problems, his eighth win gave him the class E crown.

If the title was awarded on perseverance then Garry Wardle would be champion. He tried with both his Porsche and his Mini Cooper and collected five wins in class D, enough for the class title. He was second in class with his Porsche at the season opener, but his Mini just wouldn't start at Cadwell. Then it became gear selection problems with the Porsche, which meant a last minute change back to the Mini for the final double header at Oulton.

The duel for class F completed the top six overall positions, with season long rivalry between Robert Wakelin's Honda Civic and Clive Dix's Ford Puma. Wakelin won the first three rounds and kept his nose ahead for much of the season. But a late loss of power in a couple of races forced Wakelin to sacrifice race leads. It became seven wins for Dix and six for Wakelin, with Dix taking the class and fifth overall.

In class A Steve Harris started the year with his customary hopes of beating Saker rival Rose, but after retiring after contact at Oulton in round one, he retired with diff problems at

Cadwell and had engine problems a couple of times. He led a few laps, but overall it was a disappointing season as he finished a distant second in class.

James Aukland's Capri did the beginning and end of the season to secure third in class, saving his best finishes for the Oulton finale, where he was second in both races. Duncan Aukland's Proton was fourth in class, but only did the second Anglesey and Oulton finale, with Guy Carter fifth in his TVR Tuscan.

Tony Ellis made a brief appearance in his Mazda RX7, while Ric Wood's Porsche 928 GTS, Stephen Keenan's MK, Piers Grange's Escort and Darren Smith's Tuscan also appeared. There was also a class win and a second though for Dominic Jackson, guesting in a third Saker at Donington.

There were six different winners in Class B. Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra was absent from the first round which gave Jon Woolfitt's Mk Indy it's win, and after a big pile up at Cadwell in round two when Roddie Patterson's Caterham blew its engine, Armiger failed to score there too.

A double class win at Anglesey though brought the Essex driver back into the reckoning. But Paul Woolfitt's Lotus Exige was a strong threat and both Paul Dobson's Locost Mazda and Tim Foxlow's Escort had topped the class podium too. But as well as a couple of overall podiums, Armiger took three more class wins, to secure eighth overall and take the class title with five points to spare over Dobson, who had been a three time victor.

Foxlow was third in class, but if Paul Woolfitt had managed to find the reliability to match his pace, he could have taken the class title and maybe challenged overall, but had to settle for fourth. Jon Woolfitt followed his brother to take fifth in class, with Tony Ellis' Gemini Mazda completing the top six.

Andrew Southcott's Sprite led races but was caught up in shunts at Cadwell and Anglesey and engine problems at Oulton, while Karl Mason's Ginetta ended the season early crashing out at Donington.

Steve Rowles joined the class late on with the ex Philip Duncan Westfield and Roddie Patterson failed to reappear after the engine failure and accident at Cadwell.

With Harvey and Bird out front in class, it was left to Alastair Chilton's Mk to take third in class C, after a win in round six at Anglesey. His father Dave was next home, with only Peter Davies' Spire and Sam De Hann's Caterham the only other to turn out in the class.

Oliver Thomas' Subaru Impreza was the nearest challenger to Wardle for class D. They both had five wins, but on occasions Thomas struggled to use the power and an engine failure at Donington probably settled it. Mike Hurst struggled all year with his Seat Supercopa but still managed to take third in class, with Dan Crossley's VW Golf fourth.

Allan Davies came out a couple of times in his BMW and took fifth in class, with Philip Morris' Golf completing the top six after a couple of big incidents at Oulton and Anglesey. Ralph Underwood's TR7 V8 had a number of problems throughout the year which reduced his outings, while Alastair Stenhouse's BMW only appeared at Anglesey but took two

podiums. A guesting Jack Young was also a class winner, taking a double in the finals at Oulton.

Although Cryer dominated class E there was plenty of competition behind him, which finally settled second place in favour of Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara. Rotheroe took three wins, but sometimes a lack of constancy seemed to let him down. The evergreen Chris Maries was third in class, and although he didn't get a class win with his Integra, he was usually in the top three.

Nick Bartlett's BMW M3 excelled in the damper conditions, but didn't do the Donington rounds. He did however have wins on both visits to Anglesey, which was enough for fourth in class.

In his first season with the Ford Puma Brian Allen had a season of ongoing development. But it kept him ahead of Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2. Steve Rowles had started to get results with his Honda Civic, but changed to his Westfield before the end of the year.

Kristian Rose's Honda Integra won the first round but wasn't seen again, but the class was fairly well supported with David Jones, Connor and Alex Modro in Ford Focus'. Ian Bruce's Honda, Richard Roundell's Vectra and Graeme Laslett's Elise.

While Dix and Wakelin duel for the class F crown, Helen Allen's Fiesta fought with David Green's Honda for third. Allen got a class win in the final round of the year, with Green absent, and third place was hers.

With only the Cadwell rounds having failed to beat the 30 car mark, it was another successful year and with only three months to the opening 2019 round at Oulton Park, hopes are high for the continuing success.

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