

## Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 10, 11 & 12 - Anglesey

### BIRD TAKES FLIGHT FOR WINNING TREBLE

It hasn't always worked out for Danny Bird this season, but his Spire GTR came good at Anglesey last weekend, taking a treble victory in the CNC Heads Sports Saloons. In a sunny and bright qualifying session Bird secured pole by a massive 3.081 secs, "no dramas, everything worked and I got my pole time fairly early on," he said. He had Paul Dobson's Locost Mazda lining up alongside him, "I came in a bit early as it was starting to overheat and then stalled in the pits and I didn't go out again," he explained.

Dave Harvey was only 0.318 secs off Dobson's best, but had tyre problems. "It was horrendous, I was all over the place so I do need new tyres," he reckoned. Although Tim Foxlow's Ford Escort RSR completed row two, it was mighty close with Championship leader Rob Burkinshaw's Honda Integra. With only 0.424 secs between them, it was a pointer of things to come. "That was my highest qualifying position overall so far, it was great, fantastic and Luke Armiger did a great job setting it up for me," said Foxlow.

Oliver Thomas should have been next up, but his Subaru Impreza was the first casualty with a collapsed bush. But Allan Davies was back out for the first time this season in his BMW M3. Jamie Cryer also had a good session in his Ginetta G20. "I got to the end of the session and went quicker than I have ever done here," he said. Nicholas Bartlett's BMW M3 and Chris Maries Honda Integra completed the top 10 qualifiers, but Ian Bruce's Honda Civic Type R wasn't far behind them.

Mark De Spong was feeling a little underpowered in his Ginetta G20 but edged out Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise for 12<sup>th</sup> quickest. "I am still getting used to the car, but it dumped the coolant when the water pump broke," said Laslett. Duncan Aukland was back out with his "Proton Pultra," heading Connor Modro's Ford Focus and Graeme Smith, back in his familiar Caterham 7 Classic. Heading row nine was Rob Phillips' Renault Clio, but the Ginetta G20's of Tony Harman and Neal O'Leary, were desperately close with less than 0.5 secs covering all three.



Les Kirk's Honda Civic Type R rounded off the top 20, before Garry Wardle debuting a new Mini Cooper S JCW. David Bird's Honda Civic was back too, while Peter Koukoulas headed

Mike Budd in the duel of the Toyota MR2's, while Steven Parker's BMW Compact, Angus Eddowes' Renault Clio and Simon Mellard's Citroen Saxo completed the 27 qualifiers.

## RACE 1

Saturday's race was still sunny and dry, but along with Thomas, there were two more nonstarters. Mellard was out, so David Bird was the sole class F runner, but also failing to take the start was Harvey. "I was doing a practice start and the clutch went. It just jammed so I had to pull off before the start," he explained.

With Harvey missing, it was a battle between Bird and Dobson for the early supremacy. "I got the best start but Danny just had me at the Hairpin and began to pull away," said Dobson. Behind them Foxlow and Burkinshaw engaged in a duel for third too, while Cryer, Maries, Davies, De Spong, Auckland and Smith completed the initial top 10.

There was safety car after two laps though, when Parker pulled off. "It had gone into limp mode after two or three laps in qualifying and did it again," he explained. The two laps gave Dobson the chance to close on Bird again, "I just couldn't get close enough," Dobson admitted. "I didn't expect the safety car to pull off when it did, so my tyres were cold and Dobbo nearly got me at Rocket," Bird replied.



Bird then began to rebuild his lead and left Dobson in a solitary second, but the fight for third had continued. "Tim had disappeared early on, but I was edging closer when the safety car came out. I think we actually slowed each other up, but it was a race to the finish," said Burkinshaw after snatching the place three laps from home. "I had a brilliant

start and was settled in third until the safety car. But my tyres had lost temperature at the green flag and Rob was all over me. We went into Rocket side by side and then I overshot and just couldn't get back to him," Foxlow replied.

Davies had also progressed after taking Maries for sixth just before the safety car. His chase continued and took him passed Cryer on lap eight, while Maries settled into a solid seventh, after a change of tyres had transformed his car. "I had tried to stay with the Burkinshaw and Foxlow battle, but brought it home for a good result, so I'm happy," Cryer added. De Spong managed to retain eighth for the first seven laps, but had to give best to Bartlett. "I had fluffed the gears at the start and lost about five places. I got most of them back but ran out of time to get Chris too," said Bartlett.

Bruce was 11<sup>th</sup> after demoting Smith a lap from home, while Laslett made steady progress to secure 12<sup>th</sup> from Auckland late on. "I had a bad start but great duels with Duncan, Alex Modro and Tony Harman for a while," said Laslett. Auckland retained 13<sup>th</sup> place and was the class A winner, as both he and Harman eased clear of Modro on the closing laps. "A great race but it was running a bit hot," said Harman. "I just started to lose places as it began to pop and bang, I think it was the alternator as I lost power," Modro added.

Kirk was next home but had a touch with O'Leary. "We had a ding as neither of us would give way until he spun," said Kirk. He missed his braking point, spun me off and left me on the grass," O'Leary replied. Phillips therefore nipped ahead while O'Leary recovered, as Eddowes and Koukoulas rounded off the top 20. Wardle, class F winner David Bird and Budd completed the finishers. "It cut out on me, but I managed to restart but ran in limp mode," said Wardle.

## Results

1 Danny Bird (Spire GTR) 13 laps in 21m43.294s (75.40mph); 2 Paul Dobson (Locost 7 Mazda) +10.579s; 3 Rob Burkinshaw (Honda Integra); 4 Tim Foxlow (Ford Escort RSR); 5 Allan Davies (BMW M3); 6 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 7 Chris Maries (Honda Integra); 8 Nick Bartlett (BMW M3); 9 Mark De Spong (Ginetta G20); 10 Ian Bruce (Honda Civic Type R).

Class A: 1 Duncan Aukland (Proton Pultra); no other starters.

Class B: 1 Dobson; 2 Foxlow; 3 De Spong; no other starters.

Class C: 1 Bird; 2 Graeme Smith (Caterham 7 Classic); no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Davies; 2 Garry Wardle (Mini Cooper S JCW); 3 Mike Budd (Toyota MR2 Turbo); no other starters.

Class E: 1 Burkinshaw; 2 Cryer; 3 Maries; 4 Bartlett; 5 Bruce; 6 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise); 7 Tony Harman (Ginetta G20); 8 Conor Modro (Ford Focus); 9 Les Kirk (Honda Civic Type R); 10 Rob Phillips (Renault Clio); 11 Neal O'Leary (Ginetta G20); 12 Angus Eddowes (Renault Clio); 13 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2).

Class F: 1 David Bird (Honda Civic) no other starters.

Fastest lap: Danny Bird 1m31.312s (82.79mph).

## RACE 2

Harvey was back to share the front row of the grid with Bird for the first of Sunday's, after a trip to Leicester for a new clutch. It was Harvey that got away first too, to lead Bird, Dobson, Foxlow, Burkinshaw and Cryer through Turn One. But Foxlow couldn't hold off his rival on this occasion and Burkinshaw shot by at Seaman's, before Bartlett followed. Bird was doing his best to challenge Harvey but the Locosaki driver had it covered. While Dobson and Burkinshaw had settled in third and fourth.

With Bartlett fifth, Foxlow continued to lose ground as Cryer went by through Church, with Modro following, while Bruce and De Spong completed the top 10. While the lead quartet held station, it all began to hot up behind as Foxlow had regained his pace. Modro, Cryer and Bartlett had all been retaken by lap five, while Bartlett and Cryer had also exchanged with Modro beginning to lose ground. Davies was also charging through the field and having taken De Spong for eighth on lap six, he began to close in on Bartlett and Cryer's battle.

Back at the front Harvey held on for 11 laps before succumbing to Bird's challenge at Rocket. "I had a full dry set-up and it was still greasy under braking. He did get me back briefly but I saw him sideways in my mirrors," said Bird. "I locked up at Rocket and Danny

got me. But I had a great start and tried getting the lead back, but four abreast into Peel doesn't work and I ended up on the grass," Harvey replied. The gap at the finish was up to 6.974 secs, but Harvey had plenty of time to recover and retain second over Dobson, who once again had a solitary race." A Sunday drive for sure," said Dobson.

Burkinshaw was also on the lead lap after consolidating fourth and although Foxlow was fifth, he only just held on from Davies, who had seen off Cryer and Bartlett on lap nine. "I just couldn't get any heat into my slicks in the early laps, but stuck with it, then got Nick and Jamie back and had grip. It was Ok until Davies got me on the inside of Rocket, so I had to take it back," said Foxlow. "My slicks weren't working either at first, then I got a dry line and went for it," Davies added.



Cryer and Bartlett continued their duel right to the flag with Cryer getting the verdict by only 0.155 secs. "I got caught out a bit with backmarkers and went a bit sideways, but a real handful at the end on old slicks," said Cryer. Although Bartlett made it to the flag in eighth, on returning to the paddock he found a damper had collapsed. "I didn't feel a thing, but a great race," he said.

De Spong had a solitary race too in ninth, "the diff had broken so I was losing power and had to drive aggressively," he explained. Bruce completed the top 10, while Wardle came home 11<sup>th</sup>, having got to grips with his new Mini. Modro had been inside the top 10 but had dramas too, "the steering boss appeared to have broken and it was very hard to steer," he said after finishing 12<sup>th</sup>, fractionally ahead of Laslett.

Smith was next home, with Maries having slipped to 15<sup>th</sup>, after being on the edge of the top 10 in the early laps until he was stuck in gear. Kirk, Auckland and Phillips completed the top 20, with O'Leary, David Bird, Budd and Eddowes the rest of the finishers. Parker was the only retirement, lasting six laps before heading pitwards with his recurring limp mode problem.

#### Result

1 Danny Bird 14 laps in 22m56.799s (76.87mph); 2 David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) +6.974s; 3 Dobson; 4 Burkinshaw; 5 Foxlow; 6 Davies; 7 Cryer; 8 Bartlett; 9 De Spong; 10 Bruce.

Class A: 1 Auckland; no other starters.

Class B: 1 Dobson; Foxlow; 3 De Spong; no other starters;

Class C: 1 Bird; Harvey; 3 Smith; no other starters.

Class D: 1 Davies; 2 Wardle; 3 Budd; no other starters.

Class E: 1 Burkinshaw; 2 Cryer; 3 Bartlett; 4 Bruce; 5 Modro; 6 Laslett; 7 Maries; 8 Kirk; 9 Phillips; 10 Koukoulas; 11 Harman; 12 O'Leary; 13 Eddowes.

Class F: 1 Bird; no other starters.

Fastest lap: Danny Bird 1m35.570s (79.10mph).

### RACE 3

Although Bartlett, Davies and Budd had joined the absentees, the Honda Civic's of Chris Grimes and Richard Steele had joined in. It was a familiar start as Harvey led into Turn One from Bird and Dobson, but Burkinshaw was straight into fourth at Foxlow's expense, while De Spong got the better of Cryer too. Cryer was back into sixth at Seamans, but it was already beginning to spread out as the first lap was completed.

Bird was on the attack for the lead much earlier however, and led out of Peel on the second lap, while further down the order De Spong had lost out to Wardle, with Maries tucked in ninth and Bruce under pressure for 10<sup>th</sup> from Laslett and Smith.

But having solved his problems Parker was flying, from the back of the grid he made seven places by the end of lap three, to hold 10<sup>th</sup>, having taken both Smith, Laslett and Bruce. Bird soon began to build on his lead over Harvey, as Dobson, Burkinshaw, Foxlow and Cryer all began to consolidate too. But De Spong had retaken Wardle for seventh and both Maries and Parker had followed, leaving the Mini driver back in 10<sup>th</sup>.

There was no stopping Parker as De Spong and Maries were his next victims and suddenly he was in seventh. Wardle then squeezed passed Maries, before the Honda driver started to slip down the order. It was more cut and dry at the front however, as Bird eased to his third victory of the weekend by 11.687 secs over Harvey, with Dobson closing in on second at the end after another solitary race. "I had to push hard really from halfway again to make sure I shook Dave off in the traffic," said Bird. "I had missed a gear near the end and Dobbo closed right up on me," Harvey added. "I just kept pushing, but it was close again at the end," Dobson admitted.



Burkinshaw was on his own for much of the race too, "I managed to get Tim from the start but he nearly got me back through Church with a better run from the Banking Hairpin. I knew I had the advantage on brakes, but had to get away from him," he explained.

It was still a comfortable fourth for Foxlow though, "my only chance of getting Rob was that

first lap, then lonely as I had a flat shift problem," he said. Cryer had also got away from the battling behind to hold sixth from the opening lap. "Fairly lonely but a good result," he added.

For Parker his rapid progress came to an end though when he started to slow. From seventh, he made way for way for De Spong on lap nine, but managed to hold onto eighth until the penultimate lap. "It was great but then the brake fluid boiled and I was having to pump the brakes. The engine management was great this time though," he explained.

Wardle, Grimes, Laslett, Bruce, Modro and Smith had all gone by before Parker finally took the flag in 14<sup>th</sup>. "No complaints this time, apart from just needing to soften it up a little," said Wardle. "Everything worked, including the driver," Laslett added. Maries was next home, but there were three casualties after a collision at Rocket. "I got hit hard by Kirk, I was already passed him and as I turned in and he didn't seem to brake and he hit me hard enough to roll my car," said Phillips. Kirk's Honda made it back to the pits to retire and Steele followed a lap later. Auckland followed Maries home in 16<sup>th</sup>, with O'Leary, Harman, Eddowes, Koukoulas and David Bird the final finishers.

It's all down to the Oulton Park finale now on October 26<sup>th</sup>, where the double points final race of the double header will see this year's CNC Heads Sports saloon Car Champion crowned.

#### Result

1 Bird 14 laps in 21m37.136s (81.59mph); 2 Harvey +11.687s; 3 Dobson; 4 Burkinshaw; 5 Foxlow; 6 Cryer; 7 De Spong; 8 Wardle; 9 Chris Grimes (Honda Civic Type R); 10 Laslett.

Class A: Auckland; no other starters.

Class B: 1 Dobson; 2 Foxlow; 3 De Spong; no other starters.

Class C: 1 Bird; 2 Harvey; 3 Smith; no other starters.

Class D: 1 Wardle; no other starters.

Class E: 1 Burkinshaw; 2 Cryer; 3 Grimes; 4 Laslett; 5 Bruce; 6 Modro; 7 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 8 Maries; 9 O'Leary; 10 Harman; 11 Eddowes; 12 Koukoulas.

Class F: 1 Bird; no other starters. Fastest lap: Danny Bird 1m31.454s (62.66mph).

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