



**North Western
Centre**

CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Round 2 - Oulton Park

Paul Rose made it two wins from two rounds at Oulton Park in the CNC Heads Sports Saloons, but on this occasion his Saker didn't have it all its own way.

There was a Saker on pole after qualifying, but it was Steve Harris. "I was surprised to get that time with all the traffic, but I have got some new glasses and can see the corners now," he reckoned. Sharing the front row was Paul Woolfitt's Lotus Exige, "I need new tyres, the rest is fine," he added. Rose was third best, but 1.199 secs off pole. "Quite happy and it's nice to see Steve on pole too," he said.

Alongside was Jon Woolfitt's Spire. "My tyre pressures were too high and had to do one quick lap, then let everything cool before I tried another one," he explained. Heading row three was Danny Bird in his Spire. "I was on the limiter in the corners and lost time with my brake set up. Fifth not good enough," he reckoned. Paul Dobson was alongside in his Locost, "the quickest I have ever been around here and got a nice clear lap," he said.

Dave Harvey made his seasonal debut in his Stuart Taylor Locosaki and completing the fourth row was Roddie Paterson's Caterham. "My first race back since a full rebuild after the accident at Cadwell in 2019, so not feeling bad," he explained.

Next up there were Fun Cup regulars David Clark and Andy Bicknell, completing the top 10 in their respective Saker and Ginetta G50. "A traffic problem, but not unhappy with that," said Clark. 11th best was another returnee, former Champion Simon Allaway in his newly built Lotus Esprit V8. "I haven't been out for 7½ years, but had a bit of an oil pressure problem and the handling wasn't quite right," he said.

Guy Carter's TVR Tuscan was next up, before defending Champion Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20, who like Dobson posted his fastest time ever. Tim Foxlow's Escort was just 0.016 secs down on Cryer, but 0.584 secs up on Steven Parker's BMW Compact. "There was a bit of knocking, a loose shocker but the handling was fine," said Parker. He had Patrick Smyth's Lotus Elan alongside. Don Hughes brought his immaculate Peugeot 306 XSi along and was on row nine, sharing with Garry Wardle's TCR Seat Cupra. "I was on treaded tyres and need slicks on the front for the race," Wardle reckoned.

Paul Rotheroe's wasn't happy with his Citroen Xsara though, "I had an off at Lodge as there was a massive loss of grip," he explained. Next to Rotheroe Rob Phillips was slower than his expectations too. "About a second off in traffic," said the Honda Civic driver. It was all Mini's on the 11th row with Ric Walker celebrating his birthday too in his R56 JCW now back on

slicks, with Garry Warburton's Miglia sharing. "All's well so far, but it is a Mini," said Warburton.

Bruce Carter's MG Midget and Chris Maries' Honda Civic Type R shared the next row. "Just happy to be here, but still got a misfire," Maries added. Behind him was the first of the casualties from qualifying, "the gearbox went, just as it started to go well," said Clive Dix after being forced to withdraw his Mazda RX7.

Graeme Smith's "scrapyard engine" Mazda MX5 secured Class F pole and Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2 came through unscathed. David Bird felt his Honda Civic's engine was "very tired." David Jones' Focus had to pull out after a driveshaft broke, but Jake Johnson's Fiesta, Connor Modro's Focus, Helen Allen's Fiesta and Colin Flynn's Mini Cooper all survived, despite Modro's suffering from excessive brake judder.

Andrew Smith's VW Beetle was also out luck, as he failed to complete a flying lap.

RACE

As the lights went out Dobson made a flying start to lead into Old Hall, but couldn't stop Jon Woolfitt's even better start. "I took him around the outside and was gone," said Woolfitt. After the initial sort out Woolfitt J led over Hilltop with an increasing lead over Dobson, with Bird third, followed by Rose, Paul Woolfitt and Harvey.

Rose was soon into second but the lead had continued to grow. Woolfitt P was into third, but a recurring exhaust problem forced him pitwards to retire after two laps. "It split the header again," he explained. So Bird was into third place, and like the lead pair running solo. Dobson was back into fourth with Harvey closing, while Paterson was also on his own in sixth.

By the end of lap five Rose was close enough to mount his lead challenge. "He got me on the straight, but then I got him back at Knickerbrook when I think a backmarker put him on the grass. Then he got me again at Druids and gapped me. But it felt like an earthquake when he went by," said Woolfitt. "It was a good tussle and I had to work for it. I went onto the grass to avoid the backmarker, but had a little touch with Steve Harris at the start. Great race though and Jon took some catching," Rose explained.

Woolfitt spent the rest of his race in a lonely second, with Bird similarly in third, both securing class wins. "A reasonable race, but I need to sort out the gearing as I was on the limiter again before Island. Three abreast into Knickerbrook on the first lap was great though," said Bird.

For fourth it continued to be a racelong duel between Dobson and Harvey. They had a few exchanges but Dobson had his nose ahead for the mostpart. "We tended to swap when we were stuck behind backmarkers, first me and then him, but I finally held him off after getting back in front at Lodge on lap seven," he explained. They took the flag 0.764 secs apart.

Paterson's race finished as it had started with a lonely sixth, while in seventh Harris came charging back from his first lap excursion and a visit to the pits at the end of the opening, after he had been grass mowing.

Bicknell had worked his way up from 12th on lap one to oust Foxlow for eighth on lap five having demoted Smyth a lap earlier. His next challenge was Clark's Saker, but before that both had to surrender to the recovering Harris. "I had a bad start pushed too hard and went off, then rejoined stuck in sixth gear and had to pit," Harris explained, after a determined fight back to seventh. Bicknell gave Clark a "love tap" at Lodge in his quest to get by. "He was faster than me on the straights, but I forced him to outbrake himself into Brittens and I was through," said Bicknell. "Yes I overcooked it and broke the exhaust, so I was down on power," Clark replied after coming home ninth.

Behind them Smyth had started to challenge Foxlow for 10th. Onto the penultimate lap they were holding station, but Foxlow was forced out when his engine cut to add to a puncture and his race was over as he arrived at Shell.

Cryer had chased Parker for Class E honours, but it finally changed on the last lap. "So close to a class win, but the engine went again. I should have pulled over but wanted a trophy," said Parker, after losing his class lead and finally coming in third, behind Cryer and Hughes. "I really wasn't expecting that on the last lap, a real bonus for me," Cryer added.

Rotheroe was next home from Phillips and Walker. "Felt like an expensive trackday, as I had no one in front and no one behind," said Phillips. Warburton, Maries and Koukoulas followed, from Class F winner Smith, while Johnson and Allen completed the finishers.

David Bird, Flynn and both Bruce and Guy Carter were retirements, along with Modro with a front puncture, Allaway with temperature concerns and Wardle with a broken driveshaft.

Cadwell Park is the next stop for the Championship on July 10th/11th.

RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX – S1 500) 13 laps in 22m339.197s (93.10mph). 2 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR) +10.660s; 3 Danny Bird (Spire GTR); 4 Paul Dobson (Locost 7 Mazda); 5 David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 6 Roddie Paterson (Caterham C400); 7 Steve Harris (Saker RAPX- S1 400) 8 Andy Bicknell (Ginetta G50); 9 David Clark (Saker RAPX - S1 400); 10 Patrick Smyth (Lotus Elan).

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Bicknell; 4 Clark no other finishers.

Class B: 1 J.Woolfitt; 2 Dobson; 3 Paterson; 4 Smyth; 5 Chris Maries (Honda Civic Type R) no other finishers.

Class C: 1 Bird; 2 Harvey; 3 Gary Warburton (Mini Miglia); no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Ric Walker (Mini R56 JCW); no other finishers.

Class E: 1 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 2 Don Hughes (Peugeot 306 XSi); 3 Steve Parker (BMW Compact); 4 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara VTS); 5 Rob Phillips (Honda Civic) 6 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2); 7 Jake Johnson (Ford Fiesta).

Class F: 1 Graeme Smith (Mazda MX5); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec); no other finishers.

Fastest lap: Rose 1m42.021s (94.99mph).

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