

Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 4, 5 & 6 - Anglesey

BIRD TAKES FLIGHT FOR WINNING TREBLE

Danny Bird's Spire GT3 has often proved to have the pace, which results haven't shown. But as the CNC Heads Sports Saloons made its first visit of the year to Anglesey, he proved unstoppable on his way to a winning treble.

It was bright and dry for qualifying and Bird gave an immediate indication of intentions by taking pole by 2.516s secs. Andrew Southcott's MG Modsport had a recurring misfire but still managed to join Bird on the front row, having pipped Dave Harvey's Stuart Taylor Locosaki by 0.281s. Alongside Harvey was seasonal debutant Luke Armiger in his Vauxhall Tigra, while Paul Dobson's Locost 7 and Rob Burkinshaw's Honda Integra shared row three.

Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 was 1.3s off class E poleman Burkinshaw and headed the next row from Stephen Keenan's MK Indy RR, while Steven Parker's BMW Compact and Nicholas Bartlett's BMW M3 completed the top 10. Chris Maries' Honda Integra and Graham Saul's Porsche 928 were next up, followed by David Jones' Ford Focus and Garry Wardle's Mini Cooper S.

In 15th Neal O'Leary was back with his Ginetta G20 having debuted at Cadwell, and had Graeme Smith's Caterham alongside. Colin Robinson's Ford Escort headed the next row with Tony Harman's Ginetta G20, before a quartet of Honda's, led by Les Kirk, Ian Bruce and Oliver Thomas's Civic's, followed by Guy Carter's CRX. Rob Phillips' Renault Clio and Connor Modro's Ford Focus were on the 12th row, while David Bird's Honda Civic, Angus Eddowes' Renault Clio, Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2. Brian Allen's Ford Puma and Paul Griffin's Ford Fiesta completed the 29 qualifiers.

RACE 1

With Robinson and Griffin both absent, it was 27 cars taking the start.



Harvey made a flying start, but Bird and Southcott were soon hunting him down. "Dave's start was like lightening, but mine was better than usual too," said Bird. But the lead only lasted for one lap. "I got him and he got me back, so I had to do it again," Bird added. With his defence

breached, Harvey had lost out to Southcott too and began to fall away to a solitary third. "After they got by it was just me," he admitted. Although Southcott's misfire affected him, he managed to stick with Bird until lap five, when the gap doubled.

Behind the fight for the overall podium, Dobson and Armiger ran in close formation during the early laps. "He was quicker than me in some places, but I had managed to hold him off until the gap started to open," said Dobson. "I was down on power and couldn't stay with him," Armiger replied as the gap had grown to 1.935 secs by the flag.

Burkinshaw topped the massive class E entry but was another who had a fairly solitary race. Sixth overall from the start, he was lapped on the last lap. "It was good at the start as I was battling overall and for the class with Jamie's Ginetta, until he pitted and retired," he explained. Cryer was the only retirement when he pitted from seventh, after three laps.

The battle for the rest of the top 10 was somewhat closer, with Keenan initially heading Parker and Maries. But after Keenan fell to the back of the trio on lap two, Bartlett and Jones began to close. It took until lap 11 for Keenan to find a way past Maries again, which had left Parker in seventh. "Chris drove a very wide car," said Keenan. But the MK driver continued his recovery to retake Parker three laps from home, while Maries lost ground too in ninth. As Jones' threat fell away Bartlett was left to complete the top 10. "My tyres were awful and I had no grip on cornering," he said.

The Ginetta's of Harman and O'Leary were never far apart throughout the race, but Harman had to fight his way passed Wardle and Smith before challenging his rival again. By lap five he had succeeded and two laps later ousted O'Leary too, before they both closed in on Jones. Harman went by on lap 12 to seal 11th with O'Leary finally following a lap from home. "I was ahead of Tony but he got me back," O'Leary admitted.

Jones and Smith were next home, with class D winner Wardle just holding off Thomas for 15th on the last lap. "My tyres were going and we crossed the line so close," said Wardle. Bruce had lost out to Thomas with a lap to go, having led him for the whole race. It was a battle all the way but at least I got away from Les," he said. Kirk had been another to lose out to Thomas on lap 10 and had Modro closing at the end. "Every battle I had I lost," Kirk reckoned. Carter topped class F in 20th place, followed by the Clio's of Phillips and Eddowes and second in class F David Bird's Civic.

Koukoulas, Saul and Allen completed the finishers.

RESULT

1 Danny Bird (Spire GTR) 18 laps in 21m22.577s (78.31mph); 2 Andrew Southcott (MG Modsport) + 12.456s; 3 David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Paul Dobson (Locost 7); 5 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Rob Burkinshaw (Honda Integra); 7 Stephen Keenan (MK Indy RR); 8 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 9 Chris Maries (Honda Integra) 10 Nick Bartlett (BMW M3).

Class A: 1 Keenan; 2 Graham Saul (Porsche 928 GTS) no other starters.

Class B: 1 Southcott; 2 Dobson; 3 Armiger; no other starters.

Class C: 1 Bird; 2 Harvey; 3 Graeme Smith (Caterham Classic); no other starters.

Class D: 1 Garry Wardle (Mini Cooper S); no other starters.

Class E: 1 Burkinshaw; 2 Parker; 3 Maries; 4 Bartlett; 5 Tony Harman (Ginetta G20); 6 Neal O'Leary (Ginetta G20); 7 David Jones (Ford Focus); 8 Oliver Thomas (Honda Civic); 9 Ian Bruce (Honda Civic Type R; 10 Les Kirk Honda Civic Type R; 11 Connor Modro (Ford Focus); 12 Rob Phillips (Renault Clio); 13 Angus Eddowes (Renault Clio); 14 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2); 15 Brian Allen (Ford Puma).

Class F: Guy Carter (Honda CRX); 2 David Bird (Honda Civic); no other starters.

Fastest lap: Danny Bird 1m09.734s (80.01mph).

RACE 2

The opening laps of the second race bore a strong resemblance to the first, with quick starter Harvey beating poleman Bird away from the lights. But Southcott was struggling with his worsening misfire and pitted at the end of the opening lap, which left Dobson and Armiger duelling for third. It took Bird three laps to get the measure of Harvey on this occasion. "I got him before the Corkscrew and then managed to escape in the traffic," he explained. "I was still struggling for grip but managed to hold Danny off for a couple of laps, then I was lonely again," Harvey added. The gap opened lap by lap until Bird took win number two by over 14 seconds from Harvey.

But the duel for third was shortlived after Dobson pulled off on his eighth lap. "Dave had got away from us and I had got a slight gap to Luke when my steering felt out," he explained after pulling off when the lower arm broke. Although Armiger was still lacking pace, he had enough in hand over Burkinshaw to complete the overall podium having been lapped on the final tour.



Keenan and Maries (left) were duelling again for much of the race, with Maries holding the advantage from the second lap, only for Keenan to snatch it back a lap from home. Jones came home clear in seventh, with Bartlett and O'Leary sharing a couple of exchanges behind, while Smith took the flag and complete the top 10, having lost out to both in earlier

duels.

Harman and Wardle were next home, with Bruce coming out on top of a three way fight with Kirk and Modro, behind them. "Tony and I had a few swaps before he got away near the end," said Wardle. "Brucie had got away a bit and Modro had a big wobble at Church, which scared me a bit," Kirk admitted. "It was a struggle for grip again but a great race," Bruce added.

Saul was a solitary 16th, while David Bird took class F and 17th after ousting Phillips on the last lap. Eddowes, Carter, Koukoulas and Allen were the other finishers, after Thomas joined the retirements with a smashed screen after his Honda's bonnet flew up.

RESULT

1 Bird 18 laps in 21m30.785s (77.81mph); 2 Harvey +14.439s; 3 Armiger; 4 Burkinshaw; 5 Keenan; 6 Maries; 7 Jones; 8 O'Leary; 9 Bartlett; 10 Smith.

Class A: 1 Keenan; 2 Saul; no other starters.

Class B: Armiger; no other finishers.

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

Class D: 1 Wardle; no other starters.

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

Class F: 1 David Bird; 2 Carter; no other starters.

Fastest lap: Danny Bird 1m09.786s (79.95mph).

RACE 3

24 cars survived to Sunday morning's third and final race of the weekend, but just to add interest it had rained.

Harvey again shot away as the lights went out. Although Bird was second initially, Armiger charged passed him out of Church, while Dobson came from 24th on the grid to fourth by the end of the opening lap. Burkinshaw was into fifth from Maries, Bartlett, Wardle, Bruce and Modro, but was soon struggling as a queue of cars formed up to pass him.



The track had started to dry but only on one side, but it was enough for Bird to scythe back ahead of Armiger (left) and reign in on Harvey's lead. It took until the 10th lap for the lead to change however, with Bird charging by on the straight as they headed to Rocket. By the flag he had built a lead of over 13 seconds, but it was more than enough to secure his winning treble. "At the start it

was like driving a bar of soap, just no grip at all. But when it dried it was great, but Dave and Luke were long gone," said the victor. "I had a good start again and when Danny got me I tried his inside at Rocket and we had a little touch," Harvey added after taking a clear second.

Armiger had held onto third until the 12th lap. "It was OK at the start, but the tyres went off and I lost power again," he explained after losing out to Dobson. But Dobson almost came unstuck too on the last lap. After swinging like a pendulum through the Corkscrew, his showboating went awry exiting the last corner and he spun wildly. He retained third but later bore the wrath of the officials. As Burkinshaw began to slip down the order, Bartlett settled into fifth and soon consolidated on his way to class E victory. "I nailed the start and

was feeling very confident until the accelerator pedal broke. All I had was a little lever by the top bracket, but managed to get my toe on it and continue," he explained.

Maries also completed an excellent weekend with sixth overall and second in class. "I was circumspect after a good start and it was my reward for the hard work we have done on the car," he said. Bruce was equally delighted with his third in class and seventh overall. "It was hard at the start with lots of cars all very close. But my tyres worked and I got away for my first ever trophy," he said.



Wardle (left) and Parker were next home, both having demoted Burkinshaw on lap 10. "Two laps in and my tyres had it," said Burkinshaw after just holding off Modro to complete the top 10. "My first few laps were mega in the wet, but then it dried, the tyres had gone and no grip," Wardle added. Modro missed on a top

10 finish by 0.6 secs, while having started from the back of the grid, Southcott only made it home in 12th. "I went out on slicks, it was OK at the end. By the second lap I was closing up on one side of the track but it was still so wet on the other," he explained.

Smith and Harman were next home before David Bird took another class F win, aided by Carter retiring with misfire and a gear linkage problem. Eddowes, Kirk, Koukoulas, O'Leary and Jones completed the top 20, with Keenan 21st having started on slicks. Saul and Allen completed the finishers.

RESULT

1 Bird 17 laps in 21m52.487s (72.27mph); 2 Harvey +13.053s; 3 Dobson; 4 Armiger; 5 Bartlett; 6 Maries; 7 Bruce; 8 Wardle; 9 Parker; 10 Burkinshaw.

Class A: Keenan; 2 Saul; no other starters.

Class B: 1 Dobson; 2 Armiger; 3 Southcott; no other starters.

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

Class D: 1 Wardle; no other starters.

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

Class F 1 David Bird; no other finishers.

Fastest lap Danny Bird 1m14.897s (74.50mph).

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