

Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 8 & 9 - Donington Park

WINSTANLEY & ARMIGER SHARE THE DONINGTON SPOILS

Huge grids but unpredictable weather highlighted the CNC Heads Sports Saloons annual visit to Donington Park. Although Danny Winstanley took a second successive win in the first race in his Caterham Superlight, ongoing alternator problems put him out in race two, leaving Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra to take victory.

Armiger snatched pole for the first race on the final lap of an initially damp qualifying session. "I was on slicks and it must have been Ok to get pole. Very enjoyable, I just love it



here," he said. Paul Woolfitt had been the polesitter, but lost out by 1.585 secs in the end with his Lotus Exige. "I prefer being the chaser not the chased though, but everything is working," he replied.

Paul Woolfitt chased through the chicane by Danny Winstanley

Andrew Southcott's MG Modsport and Dave Harvey's Stuart Taylor Locosaki shared the second row. "Full slicks and it felt good, spot on but a bit greasy at the top of the Craners," said Harvey. Paul Dobson's Locost Mazda had a modified rear wing and headed the next row from Roddie Paterson's Caterham C400, back in the fray after last year's Cadwell accident. "I got a bit of a misfire when a wire came off the alternator," said Dobson. It hadn't turned a wheel before this session, so my first time out for 15 months after a total rebuild," Paterson added.

Former class Champion Ilsa Cox was back with her Seat Leon Cupra and reported, "no problems" as she headed row four from last round winner Winstanley. "We broke the alternator though," commented Winstanley. Sponsor, Ric Wood brought out his Nissan Skyline for a pre Oulton Park Gold Cup run and was ninth quickest, with another returnee next to him with Alistair Stenhouse's BMW M3. "I am chasing the fast boys still," he said. Out for his seasonal debut Tim Foxlow's Escort was next, "we did a quick test at Blyton but it's my first real outing since last year. It felt good but lots of traffic," he said.

Robert Burkinshaw was another to lose out in traffic. The Honda Integra driver and championship leader was still on class pole though. "Semi slicks, but it was slippery for the first few laps. Then it was just trying to string a good lap together in the traffic," he explained. Disappointed to be back on the seventh row, Jon Woolfitt had problems with his MK Indy. "I hadn't tightened up the oil cooler pipe and then got an air lock in the new radiator," he explained. Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 was next up, "we have had niggling problems for much of the year, but seems good today," he reckoned.

Garry Wardle had gone the wrong way on tyre choice, "wets so dreadful. It's still unpredictable in the gearing with the software problem, but it's driveable," he reckoned. He should have had Stephen Keenan's MK alongside, but he was one of three qualifying casualties, so Oliver Thomas was next quickest with his Subaru Impreza. "Wrong tyres, wets and a gear selection issue," he said.

Chris Maries also opted for wets on his Integra, "I just did my three laps and pitted," he explained. Heading the 10th row and his final weekend of racing was Brian Dean's Westfield. He should have had Danny Bird's Spire GTR alongside, but a broken driveshaft had him sidelined too. Steven Parker had changed the diff on his BMW Compact, "the engine is running better, more pace so hopefully better overall, but I had an off at McLeans," he admitted.

He had Mark De Spong's Ginetta G20 alongside, while Colin Robinson's Escort and Bruce Carter's MG Midget, lined up behind. Row 13 had Les Kirk's Civic Type R sharing with Neal O'Leary's Ginetta G20, while Rob Phillips' Renault Clio was next up. Guy Carter took the class F pole in Honda CRX, "one handicap was holding the window too," he admitted. Angus Eddowes' Clio and Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2 were next up, followed by Tony Harman's G20 and Ben Gough's Reliant Scimitar SS1.

Connor Modro's Ford Focus shared the 17th row with Graeme Smith, out for the first time in the ex Helen/Brian Allen Fiesta. "The new tyres came on song halfway through, I spun at the chicane, but it went onto three cylinders," Smith explained.

Graeme Laslett's Elise, David Green's Civic, Paul Griffin's Fiesta and Brian Allen's Puma completed the next two rows, with Duncan Auckland's Proton Pultra on the back, joined by Graham Saul, who opted for the place to debut his Sierra RS500 after a seven year rebuild. David Bird should have been there too, "three wheel studs sheared off my front wheel," said the Civic driver.

RACE ONE

It was already slippery and there were a few spinners on the green flag lap, but as the race got underway down came the rain and Wood opted for a pitlane start. Paul Woolfitt led into Redgate from Armiger, before the Tigra driver had his first spin on the Craner Curves., which left Winstanley in a clear second. Dobson was third, as Harvey and the recovering Armiger swapped and changed, while Paterson completed the opening lap top six, from Jon Woolfitt, Foxlow, Burkinshaw and Southcott.



With the lead pair well away, Armiger had settled in fourth and was poised to challenge Dobson, while in eighth, Burkinshaw had charged ahead of Foxlow exiting the

chicane, as Cox had them both in sight. On lap three Winstanley was right with Woolfitt for the lead though, while in third it was nose to tail between Dobson, Armiger and Harvey, with Paterson solo in sixth. Exiting the chicane for the fourth time Winstanley powered ahead, but it was just Dobson and Armiger for third. "Luke spun in front of me first, then I went off backwards onto the grass at Schwantz Curve," Harvey admitted.

Paterson was now fifth, from Jon Woolfitt, who had Burkinshaw and Cox closing in, while Southcott was up to ninth, after demoting Foxlow. The rain started to get heavier and the Woolfitt Exige was back in front, but Brother Jon was under increasing pressure for sixth, as Southcott latched onto the Birkinshaw and Cox train, and all three began to challenge. Cox managed to take both Woolfitt and Birkinshaw a lap later, but up into 10th had come the recovering Harvey, with Foxlow losing ground having lost out to Thomas too.

The lead was to change again however, "I had been very cautious to start with, having seen Luke and then Dave Harvey spin. But I don't know what I was doing at Coppice and just went straight off and through the gravel," said Woolfitt P as he vacated his lead." He wouldn't have caught me otherwise," he added. "The conditions were continuously changing, so it was full concentration that was needed. Paul had retaken me at Redgate but then seemed to lock up at Coppice. I knew I had the pace but kept well inside my comfort zone," Winstanley replied after taking the win by 27.673 secs over the recovering Woolfitt.



Dobson was left in a clear third after Armiger had another spin. "I was catching for second until I spun exiting the Old Hairpin near the end," Dobson admitted. Paterson had been fourth, but lost out to the recovering Armiger and Harvey. "I had a high revs misfire and not too much traction, but just looked after it," he said after taking

sixth. But the double spinning Armiger came home fourth, "one at the Craners and another at Schwantz Curve, so I was a bit of an animal, very exuberant," he reckoned after he had to battle passed Cox and Paterson in the second half.

Southcott had made it up to seventh before retiring three laps from home and with Wood's flame spitting Skyline demoting Cox in the closing laps they took seventh and eighth respectively. "It's on the pace," said Wood. "I could see him closing, so should have got my

finger out," Cox replied. Burkinshaw and Woolfitt J completed the top 10. "A cracking start after the shower, but so easy to be caught out," said Burkinshaw. "I had to back off and short shift as it was overheating again," Woolfitt added. When the rain had stopped Thomas and Wardle had closed up. "It was my first time with slicks in the wet ever, so unknown and had spun on the green flag lap," Wardle admitted. Thomas retained 11th, but Wardle was demoted to 13th behind Maries after being given a 10 second penalty for a "false start."

"I think experience kept me on the track. I couldn't stay with Oliver and Garry, but didn't need to," said Maries. Having running inside the top 10 Foxlow finally took 14th, with Dean next home after an earlier spin at Coppice. Stenhouse had been having a storming finale to his race and had been ahead of Wardle, Maries, Foxlow and Dean as he started the penultimate lap. "Then I touched the rumble strip at the Old Hairpin, went onto the grass and went round and round," he admitted after losing five places.

Modro was 16th, "quite a few spun off in front of me, so I was able to make places up," he explained. But behind him was a surprised Guy Carter taking a class F win and 17th overall. "No issues and it just felt right, not much grip but it felt neutral but quicker," he explained. The G20's of Cryer and De Spong followed Stenhouse to round off the top 20. "After about six or seven laps the clutch was going and I couldn't change gear," Cryer explained after slipping down the order.



Parker was glad to see the flag, while behind him was Bruce Carter, with Kirk 23rd after "visiting the Craner scenery." Smith had been going well in class F until his Fiesta went onto three cylinders again, but still gave him second in class. "I spun on the Craners chasing Guy for the class lead," he admitted. Auckland and Laslett

followed Smith to the flag, before Green came home after his "big style spin at McLeans."

Koukoulas, Saul, Griffin and Allen completed the finishers, as Gough had crashed out, Phillips had been off at the Craners and pitted, Harman and O'Leary went off at Starkey's Bridge and Robinson and Eddowes also retired.

RESULT

1 Danny Winstanley (Caterham Superlight) 15 laps in 21m36.626s (82.31mph); 2 Paul Woolfitt (Lotus Exige) +27.673s; 3 Paul Dobson (Locost 7 Mazda); 4 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locost); 6 Roddie Paterson Caterham C400); 7 Ric Wood (Nissan Skyline); 8 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra); 9 Robert Burkinshaw (Honda Integra); 10 Jon Woolfitt (MK Indy).

Class A: 1 J.Woolfitt; 2 Duncan Auckland (Proton Putra); 3 Graham Saul (Ford Sierra RS500); no other finishers.

Class B: 1 Winstanley; 2 P.Woolfitt; 3 Dobson; 4 Armiger; 5 Paterson; 6 Tim Foxlow (Ford Escort RSR); 7 Brian Dean (Westfield SEi).

Class C: 1 Harvey; 2 Bruce Carter (MG Midget); no other starters.

Class D: 1 Wood; 2 Cox; 3 Oliver Thomas (Subaru Impreza); 4 Garry Wardle (Porsche 911 GT3); 5 Alistair Stenhouse (BMW M3); no other starters.

Class E: 1 Burkinshaw; 2 Chris Maries (Honda Integra); 3 Connor Modro (Ford Focus); 4 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 5 Mark De Spong (Ginetta G20); 6 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 7 Les Kirk (Honda Civic Type R); 8 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise); 9 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2); 10 Brian Allen (Ford Puma).

Class F: 1 Guy Carter (Honda CRX); 2 Graeme Smith (Ford Fiesta); 3 David Green (Honda Civic); 4 Paul Griffin (Ford Fiesta); no other starters.

Fastest lap: Winstanley 1m21.042s (87.91mph).

RACE TWO

With 10 absentees from the original grid it was still a healthy 31 cars for race two and a hint of sunshine. Woolfitt won the charge to Redgate at the start but by Coppice it was nose to tail again with Winstanley, while Dobson was all over Armiger for third. Paterson had slotted into fifth, from Harvey, the fast starting Foxlow, Burkinshaw, Cox and Stenhouse.

The lead duel was soon over however as Winstanley pulled off on the inside of Coppice on his second lap, leaving Woolfitt with a huge lead. Armiger had shaken off Dobson for what was now second, but Harvey was edging closer to challenging for third. Foxlow was up to sixth but the threat of Birkinshaw and Cox loomed large in his mirrors, while Danny Bird was charging from the back on the grid to end the second lap in 10th behind Wardle.

Paterson shot passed Harvey into the Esses on lap three for third, while behind them Cox had taken both Foxlow and Burkinshaw for sixth, while Bird was now ninth and closing. Just outside the top 10 both Stenhouse and Dean were solo, while further down the order Auckland was harassing Kirk for 19th place.



The lead pair were well clear but the three way fight for third continued to rage, as Harvey lay in wait with Dobson and Paterson alternating. Bird had made it into sixth after five laps and a lap later Wardle took Cox for seventh into the chicane.

Armiger then suddenly closed the gap on the leader and heading down to the Chicane on the seventh lap he had the lead but ran wide on the entrance and Woolfitt retook. Harvey started to lose touch with the second place duel, but having lost out to Bird and Cox earlier on, Foxlow had Burkinshaw challenging him for ninth too and a lap later they swapped at the Esses.

Since their earlier exchange Armiger had stayed in touch with Woolfitt's lead and on lap 14 the lead changed again. Woolfitt had lost sixth gear on the second lap and then he lost fifth and was forced to park up and retire. But the dramas weren't over as Armiger was struggling to keep his door shut. "I saw some smoke from Paul's car and then he pulled off, but I was almost driving one handed holding the door shut too," Armiger admitted after taking the win by 13.666 secs.

Dobson and Paterson continued their duel to the 15th lap, before Paterson's excursion left Dobson to take second. "A cracking race, we were swapping three times on some laps, then he outbraked himself, but really close," said Dobson. "Mine was understeering but much quicker. I had a trip over the gravel at Coppice, but had pace and kept my line, so whoever was in front was quickest," Paterson replied after slipping to fourth behind Harvey. "Roddie just flew on the straights, but I had been right with them through the Craners. So just waited and he went off," Harvey replied.

Bird's charge from the back got as far as fifth with four laps to go. "An interesting start, with people spinning. Then I spun at McLeans when I was catching Dave for fourth," he explained. Wardle, Cox and Burkinshaw were next home. "It had been close with Ilsa, but I could brake later," said Wardle. The top 10 was completed by Foxlow and Stenhouse, "I went on the grass at the Craner Curves during lappery, very scary," Foxlow admitted.

Dean was 11th in his last race ever before retiring for good he reckons. Behind him was Maries, while Modro had worked hard to take De Spong, only to lose out again a lap from home. "It just cut out on me in the corners," he said. So Modro fell back to 15th, with Kirk, Auckland, Harman, Laslett and Eddowes completing the top 20.



Guy Carter won his class again but didn't have such an exciting race, but had Koukoulas between him and class F rivals Green and Smith, who were almost rubbing door handles at times. Philips was 25th after a pitstop, while Allen completed the finishers.

Cryer retired after one lap with his clutch

problems, and Griffin retired to the pits too. Bruce Carter was a half distance casualty too, after Eddowes lost it at the Chicane and put him in the tyre wall.

RESULT

1 Armiger 18 laps in 22m23.950s (95.32mph); 2 Dobson +16.668s; 3 Harvey; 4 Paterson; 5 Danny Bird (Spire GTR); 6 Wardle; 7 Cox; 8 Burkinshaw; 9 Foxlow; 10 Stenhouse.

Class A: 1 Aukland; no other starters.

Class B: 1 Armiger; 2 Dobson; 3 Paterson; 4 Foxlow; 5 Dean; no other finishers.

Class C: 1 Harvey; 2 Bird; no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Wardle; 2 Cox; 3 Stenhouse; no other starters.

Class E: 1 Birkinshaw; 2 Maries; 3 Parker; 4 De Spong; 5 Modro; 6 Kirk; 7 Tony Harman (Ginetta G20); 8 Laslett; 9 Angus Eddowes (Renault Clio); 10 Rob Phillips (Renault Clio). 11 Allen;

Class F: 1 G.Carter; 2 Green; 3 Smith; no other finishers.

Fastest lap: P.Woolfitt 1m12.045s (98.89mph).

Published by Peter Scherer for BARC North West, August 12th 2019

