



North Western
Centre



CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

ROUNDS 1 & 2 – DONINGTON PARK – 20TH APRIL

SOUTHCOTT DOMINATES FOR WINNING DOUBLE

Just like last season's opener at Cadwell Park, Andrew Southcott's MG Midget Lenham proved unbeatable as the CNC Heads Sports/Saloons kicked off their 2024 season at Donington.

QUALIFYING

After morning qualifying Southcott was on pole by 3.775 secs, from Ric Wood, who had changed to his Ford Capri to his Nissan Primera. "It's shakedown for the Donington Historic Festival," said Ric. Roddie Paterson's Caterham C400 was next up. "I was bedding the brakes in. It's a new engine, but I am happy



with it. There's definitely more to come," he added. He had Garry Wardle alongside, first time out in his ex Oliver Cottam Audi A3 TCR. "It's about what I expected, but I am just getting used to it. It's similar to my Seat, but I think it has more potential," Garry explained.

It was an all Westfield third row on the grid, with just 0.504 secs splitting Paul Masters Wide Body version and

Connor Modro's Aero. "I just wanted an early quick lap, it was a bit loose at the back, but very good," said Modro. "A great session and think everything was OK. It was my first time in the car and a lot different to the Mallock I had before, but I am hoping to do most of the Championship," Masters added.

Seventh best was Daz Owen's Escort Mk1 RSR. "I had a transponder issue and I thought I could smell oil, but everything looked OK," he said. He had the ubiquitous Jas Sapra alongside in a BMW M3 E36, "I haven't had this one out for two years," he added. Chris Roberts' Ginetta G40 and Marshall Groves' Vauxhall Vectra completed the top 10. "It was a nice clean session. The car was good but the driver was nursing a back injury," said Groves.

Richard Hall was out for the first time in his Caterham RSR, alongside Tim Foxlow's Escort Mk1 RSR. "Now it's forward from where we are now," Foxlow added. Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 qualified 13th, which proved unlucky again for him. "I never have any luck here, an oil pipe came off and I finished up in the gravel at Coppice, so it was home time," he explained, after becoming the first of the days casualties.

Newcomer Gareth John was next in another Ginetta G40. "I had belt go in testing and didn't expect to be out. But my mates got it fixed and here we are," he said. Riccy Walker was fairly pleased too with

his Mini JCW. "I am ahead of Tom Frankland and that was the first target, then I backed off and had the session on my own," he said. A delighted David Jones was 16th in his Ford Focus. "The mapping was great, it felt really good and the pain and time have been worth it," he reckoned. Mark Primett had an issue though with his Banks Lotus Europa. "All good overall, but it was on half throttle," he admitted.

Another debutant was Wayne Spiller (pictured below) in his Mazda RX8, "delighted and really looking forward to the race and the Championship," he said. Frankland's Renault 5GT Turbo and Oliver



Thomas' Subaru Impreza completed the top 20. "I struggled to get a clean lap with yellow flags. It seemed OK though," said Frankland. Thomas was less fortunate, it lost power again after only three laps," he confirmed.

Paul Goodlad was happy with his VW Scirocco though. "The fastest I have ever been around here," he said. It was another

VW alongside him, with Tim Moll's Golf. Clive Dix's Mazda RX7 had coolant spraying onto his screen, "the pressure cap was leaking, no real drama," he reckoned. It was troublefree for Tom Church's MGF and Matt Jones' Focus though. "All good and my new graphics look great," said Matt.

Julian Wood was out in the ex Steven Parker BMW Compact, outqualifying Parker's New Fiesta ST by 0.948secs. "A boost pipe popped off, but promising," said Parker. "Step by step," Wood added. Peter Koukoulas' trusty Toyota MR2, Gary Warburton's Mini Miglia and Cliff Butler's Vauxhall Carlton rounded off the top 30, followed by Bob Claxton's VW Golf and Cavan Taylor's Renault Clio. "The brakes were so unpredictable, it was terrible," said Taylor.

Bod Buckby failed to make a lap in his new Caterham, but managed to qualify out of session. "The ignition switch failed on the out lap," he said.

RACE ONE

So it was 32 cars that lined up on the grid, with Cryer the only casualty. But from lights out Southcott and Paterson sprinted clear on the opening lap, with Wood and Modro duelling for third. Masters had also started well in fifth, followed by Owen, Sapra, Roberts and Groves. Thomas was into the pits again at the end of lap two, but Wardle was on the move, taking Roberts and Groves for ninth.

Modro was piling the pressure on Wood for third, but couldn't manage to get alongside, as their duel was leaving Masters in a solitary fifth. Sapra was into the top six, after Owen joined the retirements. "The alternator bracket broke and it was overheating so I pulled off and then wrecked the splitter," he explained.

Wardle was still progressing but it was getting close behind, as Hall came under pressure from Primett for eighth, before exchanging on lap five. It was becoming a five-car battle for eighth, but the pitlane was busy too, as Dix, Groves and David Jones had come in after four laps, with Sapra and Matt Jones following two laps later. "The gear stick snapped off going from fourth to third at the chicane and left me in neutral," said Sapra. "My car loosened it's front strut, I knew something wasn't right when I

braked and it pitched up,” Groves explained. David Jones had a wheel bearing issue and Matt had a throttle body problem starving it from fuel.

While Southcott, Paterson, Wood, Modro and Masters were still well clear as the top five, Wardle was now in sixth, with Primett and Hall’s duel still following, as they exchanged a couple of times. Roberts had a wild spin exiting the chicane but carried on, dropping him out of the train for ninth, which Foxlow led from Walker, Moll, Frankland and John.

Southcott cruised through the rest of the race to take the flag almost 23 secs clear of Paterson. “I slowed a bit midrace when there were yellow flags, but Roddie seemed to close on me. At one stage I looked for seventh gear, but haven’t got one,” he admitted. The fight for third continued right to the flag with Wood just holding on by 0.379 secs from Modro. “Great fun,” said Wood. “I had one chance to take him on the Craner Curves, but couldn’t do it, great race though,” Modro replied.

Masters continued his lonely race in fifth, “no one to play with, but I finished where I started,” he confirmed. Although Wardle completed the top six, he was running one wheel drive at the end and crawled to the flag. “A driveshaft failed, at first I thought I had hit oil,” he explained.

Primett finally broke the tow from Hall, “I got him on the inside at McLeans, a good clean race and enjoyable,” he said. “I was too circumspect an once Mark got me, he edged away,” Hall replied. Foxlow’s defence managed to hold off any challenge from Walker, as the completed the top 10. “A demon start and a busy race and my car seemed to move around a lot,” said Foxlow. “I wasn’t close enough to be silly, but close enough to be interesting, and I was ahead for about five yards,” Walker added.



John was close in 11th too, keeping Frankland at a distance, after they exchanged a few laps from home. “I had a touch with the RX8 and lost ground at the end when the tyres went off,” said Frankland. Spiller, Goodlad and Church were next to the flag, with Butler, Warburton (pictured left), Parker, Koukoulas, Julian Wood, Taylor and Claxton rounding off the finishers, after Roberts retired with mangled front bodywork, Buckby with coil problem and Moll after losing drive.

RACE TWO

22 cars had survived for the start of the second race and with Wood one of the non-starters, Southcott led Paterson and Modro into Redgate, with Masters and Primett and Wardle the early top six. Wardle limped pitwards after two laps, which moved Sapra up to sixth, with Foxlow, Hall, John and Frankland in formation for sixth.



Sapra's charge took him past Primett and with Paterson pulling off on his fifth lap, Southcott's lead doubled, with Modro now the chaser. "Coolant was spraying onto my visor and then the throttle linkage broke," Paterson explained. With the lead quartet looking settled before half distance, most of the action came from lower down the order. Foxlow had been defending well again, but the train of cars made it somewhat easier for Buckby to progress from the back of the grid.

As Primett managed to consolidate fifth, Foxlow and Hall had continued to duel, with John just behind, before Hall finally got by into the chicane on lap nine. John then spun off and Walker closed in on Foxlow for ninth, with Spiller not far behind too.



Parker had pitted to retire with overheating and Frankland joined him a few laps later. "A driveshaft went. I think the vibration got to it," he reckoned.

Southcott (shown left) took the flag over a minute up on Modro, "we made a few set-up changes and they worked," he said. But Modro was still delighted with his second podium of the day. "Roddie was spraying me with coolant, but delighted with the car and the race," he added.

"So many backmarkers, but still racing on my own again, but I enjoyed it," said third placed Masters. Sapra was happy with his fourth place too, and a class win. "I just need a quicker car to get nearer the front," he reckoned. But in fifth Primett had some late pressure from Buckby. "I could see him catching, I didn't go much faster but he didn't close any more. A blinding start though," said Primett.

"Was I really sixth", asked Buckby, who was totally exhausted after his drive through the field. If I had known I would have tried harder to catch Mark," he added. In seventh, Hall was ruing his start. "I made a bad start and then got stuck behind Tim. I eventually got by and gapped him though," he explained. Foxlow, Walker and Spiller were the final top 10 finishers. "There were some wild battles, but I stayed out and looked after my tyres," Spiller admitted.

"A brilliant battle, the old fox is still sly up to a point," said Foxlow after taking the flag 0.203 secs clear of Walker. "A poor start, but I could soon see them messing around, so I got them but Tim backed me up," Walker added.

Goodlad, Matt Jones and Butler were next home, after Church lost out on 12th place, when he spun at the chicane on the last lap when a rear hub failed.

Koukoulas, Julian Wood and Taylor were the final finishers.

<https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=MSVR/2024/241651nws.pdf>

The next round of the Championship is at Croft on May 18/19th

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