



## **Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 11 & 12 - Donington Park**

### **ROSE & BIRD SHARE DONINGTON VICTORY SPOILS**

It was a day of attrition at Donington Park, as the CNC Heads Sports Saloon Championship had its penultimate weekend of racing.

33 cars set out in qualifying, but it was Danny Bird's Spire GTR that secured pole position, 0.132 secs up on Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra. "I had a couple of moments, tentative but OK," said Bird. Heading the second row was Steve Harris, on this occasion the fastest of the Saker's. "The front bodywork was vibrating though and it was hard to see on the straights. We had changed the set up for Anglesey but needed to change it back," he explained.

Dave Harvey was alongside, but in Joe Spencer's title winning Stuart Taylor Locosaki, after problems in testing with his own. "I don't know the track that well, but felt alright," he said. Fifth best Paul Dobson, has continued to develop his Locost Mazda, "I had a bit of an oil leak, but continuing to make progress with the car each time out and it's all in the right direction," he said.

Next up was Paul Woolfitt's Radical in Lotus Exige clothing. He had a manifold problem but was able to effect a quick repair. Garry Wardle had been fairly happy with his Porsche 997 too, "all good at the moment, but some noises from the back, maybe the gearbox," he reckoned. Alongside Wardle was Championship and Saker debutant Dominic Jackson, having a change from his regular Fun Cup outings. "It felt fast but when I saw the times it wasn't fast enough," he said.

After having had a difficult first half to the season, Tim Foxlow relished the performance of his Ford Escort RSR, "very pleased and improved on last year with more to come," he said. Jon Woolfitt's MK Indy completed the top 10, "the compression shaft on my flat shift snapped, so had to go back to the clutch," he explained.

Back with his BMW Compact Steven Parker was also happy with 11<sup>th</sup> and fastest in class E. "It was good but very slippery. But I was hitting the apexes, the engine was running right and I had new tyres," he said. Having raced occasionally in his Gemini Mazda this year, Tony Ellis returned to the championship again with his Mazda RX7. "It's just for fun as I am now focusing on the Gemini," he confirmed.

Jamie Cryer found that the change to a bigger engine meant the Craner Curves weren't flat in his Ginetta G20. "The time was Ok, but it didn't feel that good as the brakes were pulling to one side," he explained.

Although Mike Hurst got through qualifying in his Seat Leon Cupra, he still wasn't happy with its performance, however Paul Rotheroe was more than happy with his Citroen Xsara. "A bit slippery at first, but I like it here. The car was a bit loose at the rear, but had new brakes and two new front tyres," he said.

For Oliver Thomas though it was game over, after his Subaru Impreza had the engine blow. "Wear black and a veil to see me, I had changed from fourth to fifth passed the pits, it fluffed and then a cloud of smoke so I pulled off," he explained. Next up was Ric Wood in Graham Saul's Porsche 928 GTS. Wood has raced the ex Godfrey Jones car before, as he was the previous owner.

Chris Maries' Honda Integra, Steve Rowles' ex Philip Duncan Westfield and Karl Mason's Ginetta G20 rounded off the top 20. "The seat was too far back, the braking pulled left, but I loved it, even though I hadn't driven it before and it's my first time racing an open car," said Rowles.

Robert Wakelin's Honda Civic topped class F in 21<sup>st</sup>, "I spun at the Old Hairpin though," he admitted. Behind him Richard Roundell admitted to three spins in his Vauxhall Vectra. "The first was out of the assembly area, then at the Old Hairpin and then Coppice. I spent more time apologising to people than qualifying," he reckoned.

David Jones' Ford Focus and Tony Harman's Ginetta G20, were next before Paul Rose's multi race winning Saker in 25<sup>th</sup>. His fastest lap of four was his out lap, "it was a spark plug problem, but by the time we found it the session was over," he explained.

David Green was delighted to have out qualified Clive Dix's Ford Puma in his Honda Civic, while Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2, Dave Chilton's MK Gti and Helen Allen's Ford Fiesta Zetec completed the top 30, with Brian Allen's Ford Puma, Guy Carter's Honda CRX and Ralph Underwood Triumph TR7 V8 the rest of the grid.

## **RACE ONE**

Paul Woolfitt hit the front on the opening lap, from Harvey, Bird, Dobson, Jon Woolfitt and Armiger. But as Mason came through the chicane he lost it spun and was collected by the following Roundell.

The safety car was out but Bird had managed to oust Harvey and Armiger had taken both Dobson and Jon Woolfitt for fourth, but it all came to nought when the race was red flagged.

When the race restarted Jones was unable to rejoin after breaking a driveshaft and Underwood was in the pits too, which left 28 starters.

From the restart Harvey led into Redgate, from Woolfitt P, and Bird, but Woolfit went ahead again into the chicane. Harris was an immediate pit caller though, after contact at the chicane with Parker, after Rotheroe had overshot. The top six started to go clear on the second lap, but as Woolfitt continued to lead, Harvey was crossed up into the chicane which let Bird through for second.

Woolfitt J and Armiger were still in the lead group too, while Foxlow was already going solo in seventh, with Rowles escaping from a great scrap with Cryer, to join another one with Ellis. Armiger began to push hard and managed to take both Woolfitt J and Harvey, before he slowed. "The halfshaft broke and left it in the diff," he explained.

Woolfitt J then began to challenge Dobson for third, but had Harvey inches behind. "I had a huge lock up at the chicane and nearly took them all out. I had decided not to brake until they did, then outbraked myself," he explained. A lap later he was in the pits though, "something rattling in the diff," he reckoned.

For a while Dobson was clear in third, but by lap six Harvey was re-challenging, but both had Rose closing in. Bird was well clear, but Woolfitt P was caught by the Harvey and Dobson duel, which had swapped on lap eight.

Rose managed to take all three in a lap and suddenly Bird's lead was wiped out. "I had struggled to get it off the line at the start, but thought I had this one. I had been looking in my mirrors to see if Paul was coming and he just shot passed on the exhibition straight," said Bird.

"Danny is always looking in his mirrors, but never sees me," Rose reckoned. "I enjoyed the race though, starting from the pitlane and seeing people scrapping with each other," he added, after taking victory by over 14 seconds.

Bird was still comfortably in second, with Woolfitt P third. Harvey was also left on his own in fourth over the final laps, after Dobson had gone off at Coppice. "I had a good start but Danny got me at Coppice, I spun at Redgate though challenging Woolfitt around the outside," said Harvey. "I clipped Brian Allen at Coppice and spun off, while I was trying catch Woolfitt too," Dobson added.

Jackson claimed a late fifth from Foxlow, "fantastic, loved it and starting from the pitlane went well," he said. Foxlow was still delighted in taking sixth however, "a bit lonely, but my best overall result and the car really worked today," he said. Ellis finally escaped from Rowles to take seventh after running wheel to wheel for a few laps. "No heroics but I missed a few gears trying to get away from Steve," said Ellis. "No expectations but really pleased, I just need to get comfortable now," Rowles replied.

Cryer also had a fairly solitary race into ninth, but comfortably won class E. "Spot on, a good start, got my head down and went clear in the class," he said. Wood was next home, "I managed to avoid contact at the start by going on the grass, but otherwise it was good," he said. Rotheroe had been involved in the start incident, "someone in front started slowly and I was on the grass avoiding them. But Jamie got away at the front of the class, when I had locked up at the chicane trying to outbrake Steven Parker," Rotheroe explained after finishing 11<sup>th</sup> and second in class.

Maries was next home before the duel for class F honours. Although Wakelin had led the way for much of the race, he started to lose ground. "It was comfortable and then it started cutting out and at Redgate the back started to step out. So Clive caught me and went by on

the Craner Curves,” said Wakelin after losing his lead on lap nine. “I was giving it everything, I think we were both on the limit,” said Dix after clinching the class win.

Green followed his rivals to the flag in 15<sup>th</sup>, “the car is much better but I need more speed,” he reckoned. Despite trailing home 15<sup>th</sup> Wardle still managed a class win too, despite a seriously slipping clutch. “I even had to start the race in gear, but just kept going,” he admitted. Koukoulas, Chilton and Helen and Brian Allen completed the finishers, but among the retirements had been Parker with contact damage, Hurst unable to go above second gear, Carter overheating and Harman too.

## RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX) 14 laps in 17m05.933s (97.09mph); 2 Danny Bird (Spire GTR) +14.112s; 3 Paul Woolfitt (Lotus Exige); 4 Dave Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 5 Dominic Jackson (Saker RAPX); 6 Tim Foxlow (Ford Escort RSR); 7 Tony Ellis (Mazda RX7); 8 Steve Rowles (Westfield SEi); 9 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 10 Ric Wood (Porsche 928 GTS).

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Jackson; 3 Ellis; 4 Wood; no other finishers.

Class B: 1 P.Woolfitt; 2 Foxlow; 3 Rowles; no other finishers.

Class C: 1 Bird; 2 Harvey; 3 Dave Chilton (MK Gti); no other starters.

Class D: 1 Garry Wardle (Porsche 997); no other finishers.

Class E: 1 Cryer; 2 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 3 Chris Maries (Honda Integra); 4 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2); 5 Brian Allen (Ford Puma); no other finishers.

Class F: 1 Clive Dix (Ford Puma); 2 Robert Wakelin (Honda Civic); 2); 3 David Green (Honda Civic); 4 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec); no other starters.

Fastest lap: Rose 1m09.437s (102.60mph).

## RACE TWO

Casualties from qualifying and the first race had reduced the grid by eight, but only 23 cars were on the grid as Rose and Jackson opted for pit lane starts again. Harvey got the better of Bird again from the start, with Armiger snatching third at the chicane after going in side by side with Dobson.

Foxlow was soon heading for another solitary race in fifth, but it began to spread down the field. Bird had darted ahead of Harvey on the second lap, but Armiger was soon sidelined again. With Harvey gradually losing touch with Bird, but consolidating second over Dobson, the top three held station for the rest of the race. “I had to play catch up again after lighting up the tyres at the start. I managed to get away from Dave but had an off at the Old Hairpin avoiding Paul Rotheroe,” said Bird.

“I had been with Danny then he gapped me when we caught some backmarkers, after some doubts with yellow flags,” Harvey added. Dobson remained a distant third, “a bit lonely, but I made a mistake and lost a lot of ground on them,” he said. In fourth Jackson had charged

from the back of the grid, finally ousting Foxlow on lap 11. "A class win too and I enjoyed the start more as I was better prepared for the speed differential," Jackson said.

Jackson was the only Saker to finish, as Harris didn't start and Rose had his engine go after climbing to sixth after two laps. "It started smoking so I switched off and parked it," he explained. Foxlow had a similar race to the first, but finished one place higher in fifth. "A good start, lonely again though and quite hard to stay focused," he said. Rowles and Ellis had another skirmish too, with Rowles holding the upperhand until he retired. "The brake pedal went soft so I pitted, great debut though," said Rowles.

Ellis retained sixth from lap nine, but had Wood closing slightly, after he had demoted Cryer on the fourth lap. "I needed more traffic to get any closer," said Wood. The class E trio of Cryer, Rotheroe and Roundell completed the top 10, all fairly well spread. "I am going home happy and with a smile on my face after that," said Roundell.

Maries, Jones and Harman were next home, before Dix claimed his second class F win of the weekend, after trailing Wakelin for the first nine laps. "I was comfortably ahead again and it started cutting out even earlier," said Wakelin after finishing a disappointing second in class again. Green had been closing too until a scare at the chicane. "I just didn't see Dave Harvey coming, it was so quick and I was all out of shape," he said. Chilton, Koukoulas and Helen and Brian Allen also made it to the flag.

## RESULTS

1 Bird 17 laps in 20.58.383s (96.14mph); 2 Harvey +15.906s; 3 Paul Dobson (Locost 7 Mazda); 4 Jackson; 5 Foxlow; 6 Ellis; 7 Wood; 8 Cryer; 9 Rotheroe; 10 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra).

Class A: 1 Jackson; 2 Ellis; 3 Wood; no other finishers.

Class B: 1 Dobson; 2 Foxlow; no other finishers.

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

Class D: no starters.

Class E: 1 Cryer; 2 Rotheroe; 3 Roundell; 4 Maries; 5 David Jones (Ford Focus); 6 Tony Harman (Ginetta G20); 7 Koukoulas; 8 B.Allen.

Class F: 1 Dix; 2 Wakelin; 3 Green; 4 H.Allen; no other starters.

Fastest lap: Rose 1m12.032s (98.90mph).

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