

Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Oulton Park rounds 11/12

ROSE DOUBLE SECURES TITLE

A double win for Paul Rose's Saker at a soggy Oulton Park, crowned him 2016 CNC Heads Sports Saloon Champion.

It was damp for qualifying and Garry Watson made the most of it, placing his Westfield SEW on pole by 0.802secs from Joe Spencer's Stuart Taylor Locosaki. "I have still got a rear axle problem, so just hope it will last the day," said Watson. "Spot on, I just needed some clear space," Spencer added.

It was an all Saker second row, with Steve Harris out qualifying Rose. "I don't know how, as I only got one clear lap," Harris reckoned. "I was forced onto the grass at Lodge, it was a good session, but just hard to find a gap," added Rose.



Championship returnees Ilsa Cox and Luke Armiger (Photo : Phil Rainford)

In fifth Ric Wood brought out his BMW M3 GTR, "my last outing in this car this season," he said. Alongside Luke Armiger returned with his Vauxhall Tigra. "All good, glad to be back and showed my passport at Watford," he replied.

Dave Harvey was back too after missing the last round, with his Locosaki heading Paul Dobson's Mazda RX7 on the fourth row.

With her earlier season problems hopefully sorted, Ilsa Cox joined the returnees too. "So far so good," said the Seat driver. She had Jon Woolfitt alongside in his MK Indy, having admitted to reducing the power in his ex Hillclimb/Sprint car.

Garry Wardle's Ginetta G50 had a "noisy gearbox" but was otherwise Ok, while Tim Foxlow had to keep reminding himself he needed a finish for signatures in his MK1 Escort. "I would have preferred dry today," he said after studying the forecast.



VW Cup racer Philip Morris was next quickest in his Golf, before Paul Woolfitt's Z Cars Mini. Mike Hurst's Seat and Steven Parker's BMW Compact shared row eight, "I rebuilt the bottom end and bearings since Anglesey and this was the first time I had run it," said Parker, seen here autocrossing during the first

race (Photo : Phil Rainford)

Oliver Thomas had hoped to be higher in his Subaru Impreza, "I came in to clear a few things, then it seemed Ok," he said after settling in 17th. Piers Grange completed the row, "seems to be going well so far," said the Escort driver.

"Back to my usual form," said Les Kirk after qualifying his Fisher Fury down in 19th, while Paul Rotheroe's completed the top 20 in his Citroen Xsara. "I had two new front tyres on and took time to get up to temperature as it was oversteering a lot," he explained.

After a three year absence Russell Hunter was back on the grid in his MGB, heading Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20, James Aukland's Capri and Richard Morris' Mini Clubman.

Jason Hennefer was on the International circuit for the first time in his Honda Prelude, while Lee Jones' Mini, Drew Myerscough's Caterham, Nicholas Bartlett's BMW M3 and class F rivals Clive Dix (Ford Puma) and Helen Allen (Fiesta) rounded off the top 30.

Despite reckoning his MK was trying to kill him, Alistair Chilton still made it through the session, heading Bob Claxton's Golf Gti, Daniel Lenthall's Clio, Natalie Norman's Mini, Brian Allen's XR2i and Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise.

Danny Bird managed one lap in his Pell Genesis," it wouldn't go in a straight line," he reckoned. But Peter Davies was sidelined on his out lap when his Spire GTR's engine expired.

Ralph Underwood missed the session however, after filling his TR7 V8 with diesel.

RACE ONE

It was full wet as the grid formed up and both Harris and Foxlow headed for the pitlane on the green flag lap. "The temperature had dropped so I came in to have some tape put on," Harris explained.

Most drivers had opted for wets but as the lights went out it was Spencer heading Watson into Old Hall, closely followed by Rose and Dobson.



Joe Spencer leads the first race on lap 1 from Garry Watson and Paul Rose (Photo : Phil Rainford)

Rose was already into second as they crested Hilltop and led before the opening lap was completed. Wood was also attacking Dobson for fourth, while Harvey and Armiger did their best to hold on as the top five were in the clear.

Wood was into third through Deer Leap on lap two, but both he and Dobson moved up when Watson spun off at Cascades and dropped to fifth.

Harvey and Armiger were still sixth and seventh but running on their own, but Thomas started to make inroads on Armiger as Cox and Paul Woolfitt were solo too to complete the early top ten.

Watson was off again on lap four into the barrier at Deer Leap, but when Mike Hurst crashed heavily at the Water Tower the race was red flagged.

As well as Hurst and Watson, Grange had also gone out in the first part. "I was struggling on slicks and the rocker jumped off," said Grange.

Hunter also became a casualty when his MGB refused to restart, leaving 33 to contest a three lap sprint.

Despite the soaking conditions, Rose still managed to get away first, heading Spencer, Harvey, Dobson, Wood and Harris through Old Hall.

Rose eased himself clear to win by over five seconds, "that was possibly the first standing start I have led in the Saker, but its much better starting in the wet," he explained.

Spencer was well clear in second too, but it was team mate Harvey that had all the pressure. Harris had deposed Wood when the Championship sponsor had a grassy excursion at Knickerbrook, before both Dobson and Harris took Harvey on the second lap. "it was fun passing people from the restart, then I was pushing Ric and he made a mistake," said Harris. "I just outbraked myself a bit," Wood admitted after securing fifth from Harvey as they exiting Old Hall for the final time.

Thomas was closing on Harvey too at the flag. "I had a good start on wets, but had a sticking throttle cable. I could see Ric and tried to catch him, but there was a wall of water in between us," he reckoned,

Armiger and Cox were next home, with Paul Woolfitt edging out Wardle for 10th on the second lap. "I told the others to go for slicks and I went for wets, couldn't see much either," said Armiger. "I forgot the Fairy Liquid for the side windows," Cox admitted.

"It was the wrong tyres for me," added Wardle, who also found his anti-rollbar had broken when he returned to the paddock.

Jamie Cryer, Alastair Chilton and Jon Woolfitt all held station through the short restart, while Morris' Mini Clubman ousted Laslett for 16th on the second lap.



Rotheroe was next home, closing on Laslett. "I got put in the wrong place at the restart, so it could cost me dearly," he questioned. *Rotheroe can be seen left ahead of a group at the chicane* (Photo : Phil Rainford)

Despite his earlier dramas Underwood ran strongly into 18th, as Kirk and Dix completed the top 20.

Lee Jones made it home too, from the "careful" Foxlow, Lenthall and Philip Morris and Bartlett, while a sedate Aukland came in 26th, as Claxton, Myerscough, Hennefer and Parker completed the top 30.

Helen won the Allen family duel over Brian, who had his hands full holding off Natalie Norman's Mini.

RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX) 3 laps in 5m58.762s (81.03mph); 2 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) +5.323s; 3 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7); 4 Steve Harris (Saker RAPX); 5 Ric Wood (BMW M3 GTR); 6 Dave Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 7 Oliver Thomas (Subaru Impreza); 8 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 9 Ilsa Cox (Seat Leon Cupra); 10 Paul Woolfitt (Z Cars Mini Monte Carlo).

Class A: 1 Rose; Harris; 3 Wood; 4 Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); 5 James Aukland (Ford Capri) no other starters.

Class B: 1 Armiger; 2 P.Woolfitt; 3 Jon Woolfitt (MK Indy); 4 Richard Morris (Mini Clubman); 5 Tim Foxlow (Ford Escort RS Mk1); 6 Drew Myerscough (Caterham R400).

Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Harvey; 3 Alastair Chilton (MK Gti); 4 Les Kirk (Fisher Fury); 5 Lee Jones (Mini Toyota); no other starters.

Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Thomas; 3 Cox; 4 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8); 5 Daniel Lenthall (Renault Clio); 6 Philip Morris (VW Golf Gti); 7 Bob Claxton (VW Golf Gti).

Class E: 1 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 2 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Sport Elise); 3 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 4 Nicholas Bartlett (BMW M3); 5 Jason Hennefer (Honda Prelude); 6 Steven Parker (BMW Compact).

Class F: 1 Clive Dix (Ford Puma); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec); 3 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 4 Natalie Norman (Mini Cooper); no other starters.

Fastest lap Rose 1m57.439s (82.51mph).

RACE TWO

With no sign of respite from the rain, there was no question over tyre choice for the final championship deciding race of the year.

The grid had been formed from the second best qualifying lap, but among the absentees was Wood's BMW from the third row, along with Hurst, Kirk and Hunter. It was still a massive 34 cars however.

Watson had the best get away and headed Spencer into Old Hall, from the Saker's of Rose and Harris, Harvey, Armiger and Jon Woolfitt.

Rose was soon ahead however, "Garry waived me by so I think he was struggling," said Rose after heading the field out of Knickerbrook.

Spencer was still in second as they completed the opening lap, from Harris, Armiger, Dobson and Harvey as Watson headed pitwards with more rear axle problems. "I knew the car wasn't really ready, but I still wanted to come and do the last rounds," he said.

Cox and Bird had also been first lap retirements. "I was flat out on the straight and the bonnet flew up and smashed the screen. I will be having words with Mr Cox," promised Ilsa.

It had become fairly spread out on the second lap but the safety car was called into action after Auckland had an off at Lakeside.

Two laps followed behind the safety car but although Rose and Spencer started to go clear again as the green flag was waved, it was Armiger on the attack, scything passed Harris for third onto the Avenue.

Within a lap Spencer's second place was under threat too, only for the outgoing champion for see all of his title hopes for this year disappear, with a spin into the gravel at Cascades.

"I wasn't defending from Luke, I was prepared to let him go. It just locked up on me, I wasn't pushing hard and don't know whether I touched the white line," he said.

With only two laps left Rose's lead proved sufficient, taking the flag for his second win of the day by 12.486 secs and with it the title. "Once I had got the the clear it was fairly easy," he admitted,

Armiger was delighted with his second overall, "I like the wet and it was my first time on some different wets, so I think they worked Ok," he reckoned.

Harris was still on the podium, despite having dropped 20 secs to Armiger. "I didn't have the front end softened as suggested, wish I had now as I had some understeer," he said.

Having held fifth in the early laps Dobson lost out to Harvey on lap five when he straightlined the Knickerbrook chicane, but then got him back on the last lap for fourth. "I was being careful, didn't want to risk outraking myself and going off," claimed the four time champion.

Wardle was close to stealing sixth from Harvey too, after a late charge. "I had the right tyres and tried to catch them, but had to zig zag between the backmarkers," he explained.

Thomas had seventh from Deer Leap on lap seven, after taking three places in one lap. "I could see Garry ahead of me too, so I used full boost at the end but couldn't get there," he said.



Bartlett, Aukland and Hennefer three abreast into the chicane (Photo : Phil Rainford)

Jon Woolfitt was on his own for much of the race in eighth, while Rotheroe took a class win and ninth overall from Parker. "Excellent, loved it. I pushed my way to the front and went for every gap, but had to get Piers from the green flag and I did it at Lodge," he explained.

Grange joined the retirements after five laps, as did Bartlett and Paul Woolfitt, which left Parker clear to chase Rotheroe. "Just couldn't get him today, I think his front wheel drive made the difference," said Parker.

Morris' Golf was next home but a jump start penalty dropped him to 12th behind Foxlow. Hennefer had kept class mate Cryer at bay, but after the Ginetta lost its its alternator belt, Laslett, Richard Morris and Jones followed him home, before class F Champion Dix. "The car was just phenomenal today," said the victorious Dix.

Claxton and Underwood completed the top 20, from Lenthall and Helen Allen, while Norman got the better of Brian Allen on this occasion, as Myerscough completed the finishers.

RESULTS

1 Rose 10 laps in 23m01.973s (70.12mph); 2 Armiger +12.485s; 3 Harris; 4 Dobson; 5 Harvey; 6 Wardle; 7 Thomas; 8 J.Woolfitt; 9 Rotheroe; 10 Parker.

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Wardle; no other finishers.

Class B: 1 Armiger; 2 J.Woolfitt; 3 Foxlow; 4 R.Morris; 5 Myerscough; no other finishers.

Class C: 1 Harvey; 2 Chilton; 3 Jones; no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Thomas; 3 P.Morris; 4 Claxton; 5 Underwood; 6 Lenthall.

Class E: 1 Rotheroe; 2 Parker; 3 Hennefer; 4 Laslett; no other finishers.

Class F: 1 Dix; 2 H.Allen; 3 Norman; 4 B.Allen.

Fastest lap Rose 1m56.523s (83.16mph).

Overall Championship Positions

1	Paul Rose	104	J
2	Paul Dobson	103	J
3	Joe Spencer	101	J
4	Clive Dix	88	J
5	Paul Rotheroe	76	J
6	Steve Parker	74	J
7	Dave Harvey	72	J
8	Steve Harris	69	J
9	Piers Grange	68	J
10	Garry Watson	64	J

Class Winners

Class A Paul Rose

Class B Garry Watson

Class C Joe Spencer

Class D Paul Dobson

Class E Paul Rotheroe

Class F Clive Dix

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