

## CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

FINAL ROUNDS - 12 & 13 – OULTON PARK – 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER

### RACE REPORT

#### PARKER'S TITLE, AS WOOD & ROBERTS TAKE THE VICTORY SPOILS

##### QUALIFYING

It was both early and rather chilly as qualifying got underway at Oulton Park, for the final rounds of the 2024 CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Car Championship. There was an early red flag when Stuart Connolly's Honda Civic locked up and went straight on at Old Hall. "The car had been parked overnight and was fine, but when I went out there were a few problems and I think they distracted me," he explained.

Ben Roberts secured pole in his Locost, with 0.786 secs to spare over Roddie Paterson's Caterham C400. "It didn't feel that quick, but it felt really slippery. I had an oil issue again, blowing from the rocker cover, so pulled off at Lodge. I didn't know I had pole though," said Roberts. "I hadn't driven the car since May and was getting used to a new suspension set up. It felt lovely, but then I spun on oil, but fortunately no damage," Paterson added.



After missing Anglesey, Connor Modro was back with his Westfield Aero, just 0.464 secs slower than Paterson. "I didn't really get a clean lap and felt I went better when it was cold at the start," he reckoned. Paul Masters' Westfield completed the second row, another 0.046 secs off Modro. "It was cold and I struggled for grip. But it felt OK after my Anglesey repairs, so pleased to be in fourth," he said. Ric Wood was out in brother Julian's Kia Optima again, heading Garry Wardle's

Audi A3 TCR on the third row. "It went in and out of gear now," Ric confirmed. "It was bang on for me, very good, but a bit of a chaotic session. There seemed to be a lot of mud and oil on the track, plus the usual traffic," Wardle replied.

Mark Primett's Banks Lotus Europa was next up, "the fuel problem has gone, but I had very few chances of a clear lap. There seemed to be flags and oil all over the place, but overall my grip was OK, but I had to compromise. I had a spin near the end though, so pitted," he explained.

Alongside was Deri Davies in his Darrian, with Chris Petch's Ginetta G50 and Jamie Cryer's G20 completing the top 10. "I had an off avoiding traffic, but ran on treaded tyres, to save the slicks for the

racers,” said Petch. “My new bonnet rubbed a bit on the tyres, but otherwise Ok. I struggled for a clear lap too though,” Cryer added.

Ryan Nelson was delighted to top Class D in his Mini F56 Challenge car, “I got everything right today,” he reckoned, just 0.203 secs up on aspiring Champion Steven Parker’s Ford Fiesta. “No heat in the tyres, plus a few electrical issues again, but OK really,” Parker replied.

Paul Rotheroe’s Citroen Xsara VTS had Class E pole, “surprised to be first in class as I found it quite slippery. It wasn’t a good session as I had a big lock up at Knickerbrook chicane on my best lap as the rear tyres were still cold,” he explained. Bod Buckby was next in his older Class C Caterham 310R, following his Anglesey incident. “It just felt nice and comfortable to be back in old bluey, so no pressure,” he said.

Colin Robinson’s Escort Mk1 headed row eight, with Lee Bull’s Renault Clio sharing. “It was alright, I qualified roughly where I expected on my new second hand slicks,” said Bull. Gary Warburton gave his Mini Special Saloon it’s CNC debut, “it’s quite difficult to drive and needs a full set up doing. It’s improving though,” he confirmed.



He was followed by Clive Dix who is still having issues with his Mazda RX7. “The turbo was coming loose again, I thought we had solved it but it’s losing boost again too,” he said. Delighted to be inside the top 20 though was 19<sup>th</sup> placed Cavan Taylor with his Renault Clio. “I had a steering issue too, it was pulling left. I didn’t think my session was that great, but seemed to be better,” he reckoned.

Riccy Walker’s Mini F56 rounded off the top 20, “no temperature in the engine and it wouldn’t rev. The grip was OK though,” he said. Jon Madoc-Jones’ BMW E46 330 was alongside him. “I didn’t think I would be doing the race this weekend, but the car wasn’t as damaged as I thought after Anglesey, so we’re here,” he explained. Alek Modro had a “steady session,” with his Fiesta ST150, while behind him Julian Wood’s BMW Compact and race debutant Chris Reynolds’ Honda Civic shared the 12<sup>th</sup> row.

Next up was Peter White’s Vauxhall Carlton, followed by a trio of Fiesta’s, with Louie Dobson and Nick Haynes’ ST150’s and Helen Allen’s Zetec S. William Bartlett was having his race debut in a Renault Clio, while Matt Jones’ Ford Focus and Conolly completed the 31 car line-up. “We had a plug issue as soon as it got warm,” Jones confirmed.

## **RACE ONE**

Roberts made a tremendous start and led Paterson and Modro down the Avenue into Cascades, but as the dual for second came over Hilltop, Paterson defended and Modro went off spectacularly. “Roddie closed the gap and I locked up, went off onto the grass on the right and from there I had no control,” Modro explained after clattering a marker and breaking the front suspension. So Masters was into third, from Wood, Davies, Wardle, Cryer, Primett and Rotheroe.

The lead group soon began to spread out with Wood taking third from Masters. Wardle and Primett had both taken Cryer, while Petch moved into the top 10 behind Rotheroe. It was suddenly all change at the front though, "I had started to short shift and couldn't rev it. So I had no choice but to drop back and try to finish," said Roberts, after surrendering his healthy lead on lap five.

Paterson was now the clear leader, with four seconds in hand over Wood, while Davies had taken Masters for fourth too. Wardle was still a comfortable sixth, from Cryer and Rotheroe. Robinson was up to 10<sup>th</sup>, after taking Parker, who now had Bull closing on him, but it was game over for Warburton's Mini. As he approached Knickerbrook there was an ominous amount of smoke from the engine bay, forcing him to park up.

The dramas were far from over though, as Paterson found himself on the grass over Hilltop on lap nine. "I was lapping a car and I don't think he saw me, we made contact, I spun onto the grass and stalled," he explained.



Wood was the new leader with Roberts back in second, from Masters, who had also retaken Davies. "Deri got me into Old Hall as he was better on the brakes, but then I got him back at the same place three laps later, it was very close," said Masters. It was only 11 laps, but Wood was surprised when he found he had won. "I thought I was second and

still chasing someone, but I was luckier than Roddie when I was almost put on the grass by the same car at Hilltop," Wood explained.

Roberts managed to hold on for second place, from the battling Masters and Davies. "What a really good race, I had no idea I was third either," Masters admitted. "I had a very good start, but I was losing oil from a union. I had got Paul, then my brakes went off and he got me back," Davies replied. Primett had spent a number of laps chasing down Wardle, "I got jumped at the start by Garry and Jamie. I soon got Jamie back, but I missed second gear a few times. I managed to get alongside though at Cascades, stayed outside and got him at Island," he explained after coming home fifth.

Wardle and Cryer were comfortable in sixth and seventh, "I got Mark at the start, but once he got me back I couldn't hold on. So quite uneventful, which suited me," Cryer admitted. Despite his spin and stall, Paterson managed to recover to retain eighth from lap eight. "I tried to restart about five times and was about to give up," he said. Behind him it was a solitary race but a class win for Rotheroe, "the first couple of laps were interesting and then I was on my own," he explained.

Parker had successfully reeled in Robinson too, with Bull not far behind. But a couple of laps from the end Robinson spun at Knickerbrook and Parker was through, finishing 10<sup>th</sup> with another Class D victory. "I put him under quite a bit of pressure, but he was quick in the corners. I had lost half of the clutch though and the tyre pressures had gone sky high," Parker explained.

Bull was the last unlapped finisher, "I hung on to the others for a while, but they got through the traffic better than me. It felt good though and it was my fastest around here," he said. Petch was next home followed by Dix, "well I still had a bit of turbo boost, but not much," Dix admitted. Buckby was also delighted to have a troublefree race and a Class C win, while Walker, Taylor, Madoc-Jones, Julian Wood and White completed the top 20. Dobson was next, from race debutant Reynolds, "unbelievable, mind blowing and I was so excited on the grid," Reynolds admitted. Haynes, Allen and Bartlett were the rest of the finishers, after Nelson and Jones were early casualties, before Alek Modro joined them with a broken throttle cable near the end.

## RACE TWO

After a couple of light showers, there was a variation in tyre choice as the grid lined up. Missing though were Ric Wood, Connor Modro, Warburton and White.



Roberts led from lights out, but Paterson hesitated and it was Primett heading the pursuit at the end of the opening lap, from the recovering Paterson, Davies, Masters, Petch, Wardle, Cryer, Bull and Rotheroe. The lead quartet soon broke clear, with both Paterson and Davies taking Primett on lap three. "I was missing gears again, the linkage balance had gone and they both got me," he explained. Behind them Masters led a four-car train for fifth, before Cryer started to lose touch.

Paterson had closed enough to challenge for the lead though on lap three and dived ahead on the inside of Old Hall. But he ran wide on the exit and roles were reversed again. Primett had closed again on Davies again and had just gone ahead when the Darrian headed for the pitlane. "We had been three abreast at the start into Old Hall, but then the oil was getting me, while mine was getting others, so I pulled out," Davies explained.

Primett was then back to fourth, well clear of Masters, who had managed to break from his challengers too. Roberts held on to take his maiden victory by over five seconds, from an oil covered Paterson. "I wasn't aware I was losing oil this time, but a flying start though and I am speechless over the win," he reckoned. "I was getting covered in oil from Ben and at one point I thought it was raining, so I started to avoid what I thought were wet kerbs though. A great chase though," Paterson replied.

Primett and Masters both stayed clear in third and fourth, "I just wanted a good finish, to end a great season and I got it," said Masters. In fifth it was a great duel between Petch and Wardle, with Petch just holding on with 0.169 secs to spare. "He got me once into Old Hall on the brakes," Petch admitted. "That was a great duel, side by side at the end and I didn't know if I had got him or not," Wardle replied.

Cryer had another fairly solitary race in seventh, "I went on wets, a safe bet. They were mint, but after about four laps I just dropped away," he said. With Parker being an early casualty, Bull just needed a finish for the title. "I saw Steven parked up and knew the situation, then something collapsed at the



front corner, and all I had needed to do was get to the end. If it had been the last lap I would probably have tried to make it," he said, after pulling off four laps from home.



Rotheroe, Robinson and Nelson therefore were the final top 10, "I had a spin at Cascades and when I saw where I was I was on the grass. I didn't lose any places though," said Rotheroe. "I was on my own with a screen full of someone oil," Nelson added. In 12<sup>th</sup> Dix headed a train of cars, from Walker, Jones and Modro. "I had turbo gasket failure and it just got worse," Dix

explained. "Clive still just had too much pace for me still," Walker added.

"That'll do for me," concluded Jones. "So much understeer in the end, but fun though," said Modro.

Next home was Madoc-Jones, from Connolly, Julian Wood, Taylor, Dobson, Bartlett, Haynes and Allen.

Rob Phillips pitted to retire a lap from home, but despite his retirement after four laps, it was still Parker's title. "I had gearbox problems and then engine let go, so I parked up and waited," said the 2024 Champion.

<https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=BARC/2024/244127nws.pdf>

Published by Peter Scherer for BARC NW, October 13th 2024.