

CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 13 & 14 – Oulton Park

WOOLFITT TITLE IN EVENTFUL FINALE

QUALIFYING

With the title up for grabs, a capacity grid and rain, so there was no shortage of action as the CNC Heads Sports Saloon Car Championship ended another season at Oulton Park. It wasn't raining but the track was wet and greasy for the mornings qualifying session, which resulted in a fairly jumbled grid.

Garry Wardle came away with pole by over two seconds in his Seat Cupra TCR. "I love the wet, full wet tyres, greasy track, no problem," he said. Roddie Paterson was back with his Caterham C400 to share the front row, before Championship leader Jon Woolfitt's Spire GTR lined up third.

Oliver Thomas' Subaru Impreza was well-suited to the conditions too, "I was on old wets, but took it easy and no heroics," he added. Piers Grange returned for the first time this season with his Escort Mk2 to head the third row. "It was fine apart from the battery going flat," he said. He had Arron Armiger alongside in his Vauxhall Tigra. "I was a bit out of my comfort zone and just didn't have the pace," he said on his first visit to Oulton.

Connor Harvey was having his first race at Oulton, "it was my first time in those conditions too, but no damage," said the Caterham driver. Ric Wood was next up in his Holden Commodore, while on row five Ben Roberts' Honda powered BMW M3 shared with outgoing double-champion Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20. "Full wets and I felt fairly happy with that," said Cryer. "Ace, loving the wet, really enjoyed it," Roberts replied.



"Too much traffic and losing out on the straights," said Steven Parker, after his BMW Compact proved quick in the corners, only to lose out for pace on the exits. Alongside was Guy Carter's TVR Tuscan, while Ian Burrows' Toyota Celica and Andrew Southcott's race winning MG Midget Lenham shared the next row. "My first race for two years, since I blew the engine in qualifying last year. I had a spin at Shell though," Burrows admitted.

Debutant Jon Curry's Caterham 310R and Tim Foxlow's Ford Escort RSR shared row eight. "The car felt OK but there was a lot of traffic and my tyres were going off at the end," said Foxlow. Both Robert Wakelin's Peugeot 205 and David Jones' Ford Focus were only a fraction off Foxlow. "I couldn't get a clean lap though. My theories didn't work in practice and the tyres didn't seem to be working either," said Wakelin. "I got a bit sideways at Hislop's and took the splitter off," Jones admitted.

Ian Bamber still had a slight chance of pipping Cryer to the Class E title, but his Ginetta G20 had problems. "We had the engine rebuilt, but after some oil smoke it blew the dipstick out," he explained after qualifying 19th. Colin Robinson's Escort completed the top 20, while a surprised Matt Jones was

next in his Ford Focus. "It was a bit dicey in the wet and it was the wettest I been out in at Oulton so far," said Jones.

Another to be much lower down the order than expected was Mark Primett, with his Banks Europa only 22nd. "Tyre pressures were too high at the rear and it was getting a real handful, so I pitted early," he explained. Graeme Smith still had the chance of the overall title and was happy to come through his session problem free. "I used my one set of tyres, but not a lot of grip out there," said the Mazda MX5 driver.

Dave Green had opted for the wrong tyre choice on his Honda Civic. "I had to turn left at Druids after a lock up and had a few more too. Inters were the wrong tyres," he confirmed. Bod Buckby's Caterham and Connor Modro's Ginetta G40 were next, "I had a little spin at Brittens chicane, otherwise it was OK apart from a lock up at Old Hall," said Modro. A rather surprised Richard Rudd found himself down in 27th with his Ford Escort Mk1 turbo. "I really struggled for grip everywhere, just no temperatures in the tyres," he explained.

He had Julian Wood alongside, Ric's brother and a car racing debutant in the Kia Optima. "I have watched Ric for about 35 years and always fancied a go. I sat in the car for the first time in Friday's test," he admitted. Ric Walker's Mini R56 JCW and Rob Phillips' Honda Civic completed the top 20. "I was on inters and I needed wets, the car was fine though," said Walker. "I was all over the place on inters too," Phillips added. Richard Hall's Caterham and Mike Storey's Renault Clio shared the 16th row. "My slowest qualifying here ever, locking up and sliding," said Hall.

Debutant Molly Maguire's MG ZR160 edged out Brian Allen's Ford Puma on the next row, while Helen Allen's Fiesta, Peter Smith's Renault Megane and Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2 completed the 37-car line-up.

RACE ONE

There was still an element of greasiness about the track, but overall, it was dry and the sun was out as the 35 car grid lined up, with David Jones and Peter Smith missing, after the Megane had failed the noise test.



As the lights went out Woolfitt was already ahead into Old Hall, with Paterson in second. But despite an opening lap lock-up at Knickerbrook, the Caterham driver continued to pull away from Thomas and Grange, while Wood was up to fifth, from poleman Wardle. "They left a nice big gap at the start, so I went for it," said Woolfitt.

Exiting Cascades on the second lap Robinson and Green both spun, causing Burrows to spin in avoidance and had the slightest of contacts with the passing Walker. But as they came over Hilltop Woolfitt was well clear of Paterson, who had Wood challenging for second as they went up Clay Hill. "He got me into Druids, I couldn't live with them at the front though," said Paterson.

Grange was fourth, from Thomas and Wardle, while Southcott had moved rapidly up to seventh, from Cryer, Roberts and Bamber, who had been challenging Cryer for the class advantage on the opening lap. Primett had been 11th behind Curry on lap one, but he had a wild 360 spin at the Knickerbrook chicane too. Once Wood had ousted Paterson for second, the top seven were all fairly well spread, but there were spins further back, with Green at Cascades again and Phillips at Knickerbrook.

Southcott was soon on the move again though, after taking Thomas and Wardle on lap three, he took third from Paterson a lap later, before closing in on Wood too. There were spots of rain in the air again though, but before the clouds erupted the race was red flagged after fourth placed Grange crashed heavily approaching Cascades, after contact with Julian Wood. "I was closing in to lap Julian, the blue flags were out and I assumed he had seen me, so I went for the outside and as I pulled back across we touched, As I spun it went into the tyres front and rear, so it looks like a right off," said Grange,

Woolfitt was a clear winner, but had backed off at the end. "I could see the rain coming in, so was glad I had a good gap," he said. Southcott had managed to snatch second on the last lap that counted. "Absolutely fantastic, but I didn't realise I was that far up. Then I closed in on Ric at Druids and got him at Lodge, but he was still on the back of me," he explained. Wood and Paterson completed the top four and Wardle had started to close on fifth place Thomas again when the race was red flagged. "It was difficult getting the car off the line at the start, but another lap or two and I think I would have caught Oliver," said Wardle.



Armiger made steady progress after a poor start to claim seventh from Cryer, "I messed up the start again, so just had to try and make up the lost places," said Armiger. Carter and the recovering Primett completed the top 10, after Roberts lost out, both closing in on Cryer too. "I made more progress than I expected," Primett admitted. "Trying as hard as I could," Roberts replied.

Wakelin was next home, having been close to some battles, without being involved. "I got blocked at the start and then just drove around, uneventful," he reckoned. Although Rudd continued to struggle for grip, he still managed 13th, taking Modro on the last lap. Bamber had a steady and cautious race after being close to a couple of incidents. "I nearly lost it at Hilltop and then went over the grass when Mark spun at Knickerbrook," Bamber explained.

Curry just beat Harvey for the Class C spoils in 16th overall, but class rival Buckby had been an early retirement, while Parker, Foxlow and Hall rounded off the top 20. "I was going well until I spun at Knickerbrook," Foxlow admitted. Walker was the last unlapped runner, with Smith 23rd and Class F winner, but not enough for the title. Phillips, Robinson and Burrows recovered from their spins to follow Smith to the flag, while Green, Koukoulas, Storey and Brian and Helen Allen completed the finishers.

RACE TWO

It was still a 31-car grid for the second race, despite casualties Grange and Julian Wood, being joined by Southcott and Ric Wood as non-starters.



Paterson shot away into the lead, with Thomas second into Old Hall, from Woolfitt and Cryer, with Wardle playing catch up again. By the end of the lap Wardle was back into third, from Woolfitt and Roberts, while Armiger took Cryer for sixth as they crossed the line.

While Paterson's lead grew, Wardle was into second after Thomas spun. "I was already catching Oliver and then he spun in front of me at Shell and I just missed him," Wardle explained. "It was a big spin, it just went, but I enjoyed chasing back," Thomas replied after recovering in 11th. Woolfitt was doing his best to stay away from any threat in a steady third, while behind him Roberts had Armiger closing in.

Cryer was in sixth, just ahead of a five-car battle, headed by Curry, from Bamber, Foxlow, Parker and the recovering Thomas. Brian Allen was an early casualty after his brakes stuck on and Rudd gave up his fight after two laps heading pitwards to retire, before Foxlow soon joined them. "The throttle cable snapped at Shell and it was going well," he said.

While the top three remained settled, Armiger managed to get Roberts for fourth on lap six, but they had two more exchanges before he finally broke the tow. Paterson eased his way through the final laps for a 13 second plus victory. "I had six year old Avons on the front and three year Michelins on the back and they worked. A nice clean start and a nice balance so I could drive the car," he said.



Wardle retained a solitary second, with Woolfitt's third placed securing the title, despite a late challenge from Armiger. "I could see him coming and didn't want to get into a fight, then looked again and he'd gone," said Woolfitt. "I got over excited as not many chances to get Jon and I spun at Brittens chicane after clipping the kerbs," Armiger replied.

Roberts was on his own in fifth. "The first half was brilliant, then understeer on the exits, but still great," he said. While Thomas managed to recover from his early spin to complete the top six. Cryer had been sixth for much of the race, but after Thomas got by, he was then caught by Carter and Wakelin, who both went ahead on the last lap. "I didn't realise it was the last lap, but third for a while to the first corner was great at the start," Cryer explained. "I had to work hard to keep Rob behind me, then I got Jamie at Island on the last lap," said Carter. "I could catch Guy in the corners, then he just pulled away, and I had a pipe off the inlet manifold to," Wakelin added.

Parker had also slipped from an early eighth to follow Cryer and complete the top 10. "I had to let them go as I was holding then up. But I think that's the closest I have been to Jamie all season," he said. Harvey, Bamber, Curry, Modro and Green all remained unlapped, while Burrows, Primett, Jones and Robinson completed the top 20.

Buckby, Phillips, Smith, Hall, Maguire, and Storey were next home, with Koukoulas and Helen Allen both two laps down and the final finishers. "I lost the filler cap at Lodge, but want to thank the marshalls for bringing it back," Koukoulas concluded.

So another season is consigned to the history, with a new champion in Jon Woolfitt, while after two seasons on top, Jamie Cryer has to settle for being Class E Champion.

Results at <https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=BARC/2022/224127nws.pdf>

The Final Points Positions are as follows -

<u>OVERALL</u>			
1	Jon Woolfitt (1st Class B)	106	J
2	Graeme Smith (1st Class F)	103	J
3	Jamie Cryer (1st Class E)	90	J
4	Ian Bamber	63	J
5	Ric Walker (1st Class D)	62	J
6	Helen Allen	46	J
7	Oliver Thomas	45	J
8	Tim Foxlow	43	J
9	Connor Harvey (1st Class C)	42	J
10	Steven Parker	38	J
11	Guy Carter (1st Class A)	35	J

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