



North Western  
Centre

## CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 3 & 4 - Cadwell Park

It was a disappointingly low turn out for the first double-header of the CNC Heads Sports Saloons season at Cadwell Park, with only 18 cars setting out in qualifying.

The session didn't last long however as it was red flagged on the first lap when the Spire's of Danny Bird and Jon Woolfitt collided on the pits straight.

"I was following Danny and we caught Allan Davies' BMW. Danny went to the right and I went to the left, but there wasn't quite enough room and Danny was on the grass. It then spat him back across the track right in front of me, I hit the brakes but t-boned him," Woolfitt explained.

"I moved slightly trying to give them room, but they went either side of me," Davies added. Both cars were out for weekend and qualifying then recommenced at the end of the days programme.

Paul Dobson's Locost Mazda set the pole time, 5.116 secs ahead of Roddie Paterson's Caterham, with reigning Champion Jamie Cryer third best in his Ginetta G20. "It was a good run, no issues," said Cryer. Davies was alongside, but cut his session short. "It was overheating so I only did a few laps and decided to come in," he explained.

Steven Parker's BMW and Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara shared the third row. "I took my time as I was scrubbing in a new slick, once it had been through the heat cycle it was Ok though," Rotheroe added.

Returning to the Championship after a long absence to head row four was former Championship front runner Mark Primett, still in his Banks Europa and he had Ian Bruce's Honda Civic Type R alongside. "I had tested the day before and just wanted knock a few seconds off, which I did, so all good," said Bruce,

Chris Maries was next up in his Civic Type R, just 0.7 secs off Bruce's time. He had Richard Hall sharing the row in his Caterham. Riccy Walker Mini R56 JCW rounded off the top 10. "I went well, and was happy with my time on slicks," he said. Graeme Smith's Mazda MX5 was 11<sup>th</sup> best, from Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2, and the Fiesta's of Jake Johnson and Helen Allen.

### RACE 1

Fortunately there were no more casualties before the start of the first race on Sunday morning and it was both sunny and dry as the 15 cars lined up. Dobson made his customary rapid start as both he and Paterson were well clear at the end of the opening gap, with Dobson over two seconds clear of his rival.

Behind it was Cryer from Primett, with Davies and Rotheroe nose to tail in fifth, closely followed by Parker. Maries led the next group, from Bruce, with Walker doing his best to hold on too, while behind

them it was Koukoulas, Smith under pressure from Hall and then Allen fending off Johnson for second in class F.

As the lead trio continued to consolidate, it became a four-car battle for fourth. "I had managed to get away in third," said Cryer. "It was a great battle, but Primett got me, Paul and Stephen at the start, he was flying," Davies added. "Stephen had been hassling me a bit from the start, then we caught the battle ahead of us for fourth," said Rotheroe.

Maries and Bruce continued in close formation too over eighth, but Walker had lost the tow and was on his own in 10<sup>th</sup>. "I had started well and tried hard to stay latched on to them," said Walker. Hall was making progress after issues at the start, finding his way past both Koukoulas and Smith on lap two, with Johnson ousting Allen too in their duel.

By lap five Dobson's lead had grown to nearly 12 seconds over Paterson, before another 25 seconds to third man Cryer. But Primett was sidelined after an initial mistake at the Gooseneck, allowing Davies through. "He was so quick on the straights, but the mistake at the Gooseneck had put him on the grass," Davies explained.

Primett then pulled off with a broken cv joint, but a lap later Davies joined him. "I had a header tank leak in qualifying and had tried to repair it, but when I started hearing noises from the engine I decided to park it," he explained shortly after taking fourth.

Rotheroe and Parker's duel was now for fourth, still very close. "When Primett stopped I slowed and Stephen nearly went into the back of me," said Rotheroe. Maries also lost pace on lap seven and after being past by Bruce and Hall, he pitted and rejoined, which moved Walker up to eighth, with Maries rejoining ahead of Smith to complete the top 10, after Koukoulas had lost ground.

Dobson had issues too having started lap 10 with an 11.503 secs lead, he ended it only 0.462 secs up on Paterson. His response was swift however and having lost 11 secs of his lead, he built it back to just over a second in the final four laps, taking the flag 1.065 secs clear of Paterson.

There had been dramas over third place too, "I had a big spin at the Gooseneck into the middle of the track, and for a while I was going backwards down the track," Cryer explained after losing his third place on lap nine. Rotheroe was now up to third, but with Cryer soon re-challenging, "I was through but he was all over me and went by on the next lap, down the inside as we came onto the Mountain," Rotheroe added.

So Cryer held onto third by just 0.545 secs in their duel for both third overall and Class E. "I just managed to stay in front of him, but when we got back to the paddock we found a rear wheel bearing had gone," Cryer added.

Parker held onto fifth, one lap down, but Bruce's hold on sixth came to an end with a lap to go, when Hall's recovery reached its peak. Walker was another to lose out at the end too, "I was eighth and was aware that with the BMW out I was leading the class. But I got put off the track on the Park Straight when I was passed and lost out to Graeme Smith," he explained.

Smith's newly earned eighth netted him the Class F spoils again, with Walker still in ninth and the Class D victor. Koukoulas rounded off the top 10 and after Johnson had pitted on lap five, Allen regained second in class, with Johnson completing the finishers, after Maries retired.

## RACE 2

Both Primett and Davies were unable to make it to the grid for race two, so it was only 13 cars that started to line-up, before Dobson was dramatically heading into the pitlane with seconds to go.

With Paterson on his own at the front, he shot off as the lights went out, with Cryer and Rotheroe heading the chase through Coppice. Dobson finally got away after the rest of the field were well into their opening lap, well over a minute down on the leader and almost 40 secs off last place too.

The numbers were further reduced when Parker was out on the opening lap, and after only one lap Paterson pulled off too with recurring fuel issues. Cryer was the new leader, with a 6.371 secs gap to Rotheroe, with Bruce, Maries, Koukoulas and Smith the early top six.

“I couldn’t see anyone chasing me, so thought maybe I could win this one,” said Cryer. But having latched on to the back of the field by the end of lap two, Dobson’s progress as expected was rapid. Ninth on lap three, seventh on lap four and then he managed to take Koukoulas, Hall, Maries and finally Bruce to hold third by the end of lap five.

It took three more laps for him to demote Rotheroe, before setting his sights on his second victory of the day. “It was a couple more laps before I could see his head lights and he just drove past me on the pits straight on lap nine and after that I was on my own in second,” Cryer added. Dobson still managed to win by 44 seconds, while in third Rotheroe was the final car to stay unlappped.

As in race one Bruce lost out to Hall on the last lap, but this time for fourth. “I’d had a great start and having held third overall for a few laps early on, I thought it might give me a nose bleed,” he reckoned. But then the Caterham got me again, he went for the inside at Coppice, but I backed out as I couldn’t really see him,” he added after taking fifth.

Maries was sixth and after seeing off Koukoulas on the eighth lap, and Smith sealed seventh and his second class win of the day.

Walker had spent most of his race in ninth, “I had a bit of frontal damage after the off in the first race, the steering was out and there was some vibration at the back too,” he explained, after losing his place to Johnson with a lap to go. Allen had briefly headed Johnson early on, but was 14 secs down on her rival at the flag.

The next rounds of the Championship and the second double-header of the year are at Croft on August 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> when hopefully the grid will be restored to its more expected numbers.

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