

## CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOON CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

### ROUNDS 3 & 4 – CROFT – 18<sup>TH</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup> MAY

#### BUCKBY DOUBLE AT CROFT

There was drama, there was incident and there was good racing too, but it was Bod Buckby that not only took his maiden victory at Croft, but made it a double too!



20 cars took part in qualifying and it was Simon Allaway's V8 Lotus Esprit on pole by 2.344 secs. "That was fun, the front tyres went off a bit, but overall it was Ok," he said. Only 0.115 secs split second and third though, with Paul Masters' Westfield just outdoing Buckby's Caterham. "It was very close with Bod, but it's a nice new circuit for me," said Masters. "I had quite a lot of understeer, so some set up work to be done and I haven't been here either," Buckby added.

Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 completed the second row, "that's better, I was happy with the set up, so no problem," he commented. Championship debutant Lee Bull was fifth quickest, "I had Tom Frankland's slicks on and my engine was only finished a couple of days ago, so delighted with that," he said.

Oliver Thomas had gone flying off at the start of the session, his Subaru looking super quick. "Then the bottom ball joint came away, flat out into the Jim Clark Esses, very scary," he explained. Despite only doing three laps, Thomas was still fifth quickest, but his weekend was over before it got started. Richard Hall's Caterham was next up, "I was in trouble for ignoring a warning flag. I think I was losing fuel from the breather," he said.

Frankland completed row four in his Renault 5GT Turbo. "I was OK once I had got rid of Riccy. I was on the road tyres as Lee was on my slicks," he said. Mark Primett's Banks Lotus Europa and Riccy Walker's JCW Mini R56 completed the top 10, but Primett only managed two laps. "The throttle stuck wide open so I had to find somewhere nice and grassy to park it safely," said Primett. "My car's handling didn't seem to suit the circuit, but more to come I think," Walker added.

Julian Wood was another first timer at Croft, in his BMW Compact. "I really like it and it's now my new favourite circuit," he said after pipping the cars former owner by 0.052 secs. But Steven Parker's Fiesta ST was still work in progress. "I only drove at half throttle, as it was still overheating," he said. Matthew Jones was delighted with his Ford Focus though, "a really good session, so I'm not changing anything," he confirmed. Clive Dix was fairly happy too with the progress his Mazda RX7 is showing too. "I had a

problem with a bolt to the turbo and lost power after a few laps, but everything else was fine," he added.

Heading row eight was Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2, with Cliff Butler's Holden Commodore alongside, before Bob Claxton's VW Golf Gti. "Just my pre-race checks, otherwise it's all fine," said Claxton. Cavan Taylor was disappointed with his Renault Clio though, "my maths were a bit wrong. The fuel gauge wasn't working and then it started as I left the assembly area. I was hoping it was reading wrong, but it wasn't and I ran out of fuel after four laps," he explained.

Only three laps into the session David Jones found his Ford Focus sidelined too. "The bottom ball joint into the hub had failed. I saw some smoke and thought it was the gearbox at first, but I was heading through the Esses at the time," he said. Helen Allen's Fiesta completed the line-up, "I got a bit over excited and went off twice, plus Simon distracted when he lapped me," she reckoned.

## **RACE 1**

There were only 17 cars on the grid however, as both Thomas and David Jones were out, while Allaway started from the pitlane with a starter motor problem.

It was Cryer that led in Clervaux from lights out, from Buckby, before Masters spun out of third place at Tower. "A bit over exuberant on cold tyres," he admitted. Bull was into third, from Frankland, Hall and Parker, while the recovering Masters completed the opening lap down in 16<sup>th</sup>.

The lead pair were in the clear on lap two, but Hall was into third, as he outbraked Bull into Tower. The Clio driver now back on his road tyres, then came under pressure for fourth too, as Frankland closed in, with the pairs slick tyres. Koukoulas had started to settle in seventh, but was demoted by Masters as his fight back continued, and Allaway closed in too. But Allaway's race was soon run, "I lost drive, I think it was the flywheel, but it sounded expensive," he said.

Buckby had started to threaten Cryer's lead, while Hall consolidated third, and on lap four Frankland was into fourth into Tower, with Masters in pursuit, after both had pushed Bull down to sixth. Buckby made his move for the lead into Clervaux on lap four, "I think Jamie had more grip at the start, then my tyres came in and they were great. Once I had got him, I just tried to build a gap," he explained.

Any hope Cryer had of re-challenging ended on lap seven, "I was lapping Butler's Holden, I was almost past him and he turned in on me. The hit spun me into barriers at Sunny and then he was off too and hit me again," he said. There was an attempt to keep the race going under the safety car, but after one lap it was then red flagged. The race was declared after seven laps, as a possible restart came to nought.



Buckby therefore claimed his maiden victory, with Hall in second and Masters grabbing third from Frankland just before the stoppage. "I was

pleased to see the red flag, as I was being caught,” said second placed Hall. “That was great coming back through the field,” added third placed Masters. Frankland was fourth, which was also fourth in Class B, “I had to be patient at first, as I didn’t want to hit my mate Lee. But when his tyres went off I took him around the outside,” he said.

Bull was still fifth and won Class E, “I made Tom work for that. But I was on the road tyres and got a great start, but the grip soon started to go,” he admitted. Parker had a fairly solitary race but won Class D from sixth place. “I was managing the overheating, but the car has so much potential. It overheats at about 5000 rpm though and there’s just too much heat,” he explained.

Koukoulas was seventh overall to take second in Class E. “I had a really good start and so pleased with the result, but my camera didn’t work so I can’t relive it,” he said. Dix and Matthew Jones had an almost racelong duel, but Dix managed to retain the upperhand throughout, “I was quicker on the straights, but Matt was so quick in the corner,” he said. “He just had that extra power,” Jones replied.



Dix was the last unlapped runner in eighth, taking second in Class D, with Cryer still classified ninth, ahead of Jones. Walker, Wood, Claxton, Taylor and Allen completed the finishers. “I spun at the first corner on cold tyres and spent the race catching up,” Walker admitted.

“I drove as fast as I could and the car felt good, but it wasn’t as fast as I thought,” said Taylor. “I was just getting going and then it stopped,” Allen, pictured left, concluded.

Butler had pitted after his incident with Cryer and received a post-race disqualification for the incident, while Primett also joined Allaway on the retirement list, after he pitted at the end of the opening lap. “I had still got a sticking throttle,” he confirmed.

## RACE 2

With Allaway absent it was 16 cars on the grid for race two. Cryer and Buckby spent the first couple of laps swapping and changing for the lead, until Masters split them on lap three, with all three well clear of any threat. Hall had been fourth early on, but he lost out to Primett at the end of lap three, while Frankland was shadowing Bull again for sixth.

On lap four Masters grabbed the lead but couldn’t shake off Buckby, while in third Cryer had started to lose touch. Further down the order Taylor was hanging onto Wood in a duel for 12<sup>th</sup> and Jones was on Walker’s tail, as they contested 10<sup>th</sup>. Dix had been the first retirement when he pulled off at Tower on the opening lap, with engine failure.

Buckby had shared more exchanges, but from lap six he began to take charge. “We were really equal in the corners, but I had to try and keep him back on the straights, but he was passing me easily. I made a terrible start though, as I was in third gear,” Masters explained. By the end the gap had grown to over

two seconds, as Buckby made a weekend double win. "What a great race again, I really wanted that result and what a brilliant weekend, " said Buckby.



But the race ended under red flags again, after Frankland rolled at the Hairpin exit, just after losing seventh to Parker. Cryer retained a solid third, "great fun in those early laps, but I just lost out on the straights and short shifted at the end to look after the car," he said.

Hall was on his own in fourth too, after Primett headed pitwards on what proved to be the last lap. "After Mark got by, he did his best to give it back to me, going off a couple of times, very nice of him," said Hall. "I had no brakes and after I had gone off onto the grass at the Hairpin, I waited for clear track and went into the pits," Primett replied.

Bull and Parker completed the top six, both taking class wins. "I had the slicks this time, set some good times and had a good race," said Bull. "I had been chasing Tom Frankland, I had no temperature issues and once I got my braking right for Tower, I reeled him in," Parker explained. "I had seen Steven suddenly start to close and he went by into Tower. Then I tried to get him back at the Hairpin, went in too tight and touched the kerb on the exit and it rolled," Frankland replied.

With both Frankland and Primett out, Walker came up to seventh, "I just couldn't catch Steven and my tyres were a bit sketchy at first too," he said. Jones, Koukoulas and Wood rounded off the top 10. "Very pleased and I was chasing Riccy too until he got away," said Jones, "the camera worked this time but my lap timer didn't," Koukoulas added.



Wood took a while to shake-off Taylor, "he was hanging on until my tyres came in," said Wood. "I backed off once he had got away," Taylor admitted. Butler, Claxton and Allen were the final finishers, as we now look forward to Oulton Park on July 6<sup>th</sup> and it all starts again.

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