



North Western
Centre

CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 5 & 6 - Croft

WOOLFITT & ROSE TAKE ONE A PIECE IN THE WET

QUALIFYING

It was dry for the mornings qualifying session, but that proved to be the best of the day's weather. Jon Woolfitt's Spire GTR and Paul Rose's Saker shared the front row, split by 0.861 secs, both well over three seconds clear of Paul Dobson's Cadwell Park double winning Locost. "It went quite well, even in traffic my delta said I could have gone a whole second quicker and that had been my best" said Woolfitt. "Getting a clear lap was the only problem, I came in from P1, but happy to have a front row start," Rose added.

Steve Harris' Saker was alongside Dobson, before another 2.687 secs gap to fifth best Simon Allaway in his Lotus Esprit V8, with Andy Bicknell's Ginetta G50 completing the third row. "It was going great, I had made suspension changes and it really began to feel as though my return had started. But then on the slowing down lap it overheated rapidly. The water pump pulley had broken and damaged the belts," Allaway explained.

Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20 and Guy Carter's TVR Tuscan were next up, before David Clark's Saker and Garry Wardle's Seat Leon Cupra TCR completed the top 10. Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara was 0.2 secs down on Wardle, as he headed row six, joined by Robert Wakelin giving his Peugeot 205 a seasonal debut. "I was braking too early, especially at Tower, so I wasn't really up to speed," said Rotheroe. "It was steady as I hadn't been out for a while. New engine, new tyres and I thought I had a small differ problem, but it was Ok," Wakelin added.

Richard Hall's Caterham and Jake Johnson in Grandad Chris Maries' Honda Civic were next up, closely followed by Connor Modro's Ford Fiesta, while only 0.115 secs split Steven Parker's BMW Compact and Ian Bruce Honda Civic Type R. Graeme Smith's Mazda MX5 was well up on row nine, with Mike Anderson's VW Scirocco, while Riccy Walker's JCW Mini completed the top 20. "Just looking at the class really, especially as the CRX was back out," said Smith.

Instead of his usual Sprite, Bruce Carter was out in the Honda CRX usually seen in Guy's hands and he was followed by Peter Koukoulas' Toyota MR2, Bob Claxton's VW Golf GTi and Helen Allen's Ford Fiesta.

RACE ONE

There were two casualties from qualifying, as Allaway and Parker were both absent as the now 22 car grid lined up in the pouring rain. It was dry in the build up to the first race, before with numerous slick shod cars on the grid, down came the rain. Bicknell had already spun his slick shod Ginetta at Sunny,

before losing it on the exit of the Hairpin and clattering the pitwall. He continued before losing the front of the car, which prompted the safety car.

Even in the wet Woolfitt and Dobson made their customary flying starts, with Rose and Harris settled into the top four, before a huge gap to fifth placed Wardle. "Dobbo had got me through Clervaux and Hawthorn then I got down his inside at the chicane. He got me back on the straight and then I went through again into Tower and started to get away," said Woolfitt. Clark had been in sixth but headed for the pits after two laps, enabling Wakelin to move up to sixth, having already demoted Cryer and multi spinning Guy Carter.

Rotheroe was also thriving in the conditions and was following Wakelin through the order, before going by on lap three, just as the safety car appeared. "I had got Guy's Tuscan when he had a big moment at Sunny and then Rob and I had similar pace," Rotheroe added. "I had missed the spinning Ginetta and I think we were all on slicks when the heavens opened," said Wakelin.

Both Rose and Harris pitted under the safety car, they both rejoined but Rose was only out after a few metres. "I came in for slicks and Steve followed me in, but I only got to Clervaux on wets and a driveshaft broke," said Rose.

From the green flag Woolfitt and Dobson were away and clear within a lap, with Wardle heading a duelling Rotheroe and Wakelin, from a solitary Modro and Guy Carter, who was under increasing pressure from Cryer. Woolfitt's lead continued to grow and grow, finally taking the flag over 26 secs clear of Dobson. "Once I was clear I was able to do my own thing I kept just enough temperature in the front tyres, with no real pressure from behind," said Woolfitt.

But the fight for third was considerably closer, after Wakelin retook Rotheroe for fourth on lap eight, they both closed in on Wardle. Wakelin was soon on the attack and demoted Wardle from third a lap later, before pulling a gap of almost three seconds before the flag. "It was worth staying out on slicks. I had kept with Gary into the Complex and then he was wide and I got him on the exit. The car was so grippy on full slicks still, so I just kept going. I had no idea I was third overall, just pleased to have finished," he explained.

Rotheroe pressed hard too, but Wardle managed to hold him off, while having looked set for sixth, Modro retired three laps from home. "Rob had gone and I probably could have got Garry. I didn't want to make a mistake though and I just didn't get the chance to challenge safely," said Rotheroe.

As Guy Carter continued to slip down the order, Smith's Mazda was charging forward. He was ahead of Cryer from lap eight and although they were on a similar pace, the gap closed a little, but it was Smith completing the top six. "They were all on slicks and I was on worn treaded, so a bit wet and a bit dry, but in my hands. All I had been concerned about was where Bruce Carter's CRX was. I started to make places after the safety car, then caught Jamie Cryer and got him into Sunny as I was still flat through the Jim Clark Esses and Barcroft. It was such a nice car to drive in lots of rain," Smith explained.

Walker was the last unlapped finisher, having edged out Bruce in the closing laps. Bruce Carter ousted Guy to complete the top 10, three laps from home, followed by Hall, the recovering Harris, Koukoulas, Claxton and Allen, after Johnson and Anderson had both been late retirements.

RESULTS

1 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR) 12 laps in 23m11.842s (65.18mph); 2 Paul Dobson (Locost Mazda) +26.518s; 3 Robert Wakelin (Peugeot 205); 4 Garry Wardle (Seat Cupra TCR); 5 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara VTS); 6 Graeme Smith (Mazda MX5); 7 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 8 Riccy Walker (Mini R56 JCW); 9 Ian Bruce (Honda Civic Type R); 10 Bruce Carter (Honda CRX).

Class A: 1 Guy Carter (TVR Tuscan); 2 Steve Harris (Saker RAPX S1-500); no other finishers.

Class B: 1 Woolfitt; 2 Dobson; 3 Wakelin; 4 Richard Hall (Caterham 420R); no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Wardle; 2 Walker; 3 Bob Claxton (VW Golf GTi) no other finishers.

Class E: 1 Rotheroe; 2 Cryer; 3 Bruce; 4 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2) no other finishers.

Class F: 1 Smith; 2 B. Carter; 3 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec); no other starters.

Fastest lap: Woolfitt 1m33.002s (81.29mph).

RACE TWO

It was a drying track but more rain on the horizon as race two got underway, and it wasn't long in arriving. Dobson led from lights out, from Rose, Woolfitt and Harris. "On that first lap I thought I had made the wrong decision on tyres, then it was a monsoon," said Rose after ousting Dobson from his early lead. "I had opted for wet tyres but a dry set up, Harris got me into Tower, I retook and then he got me back the Jim Clark Esses," Woolfitt explained after losing third.

The Saker's then eased themselves clear with Rose the victor, by 17.683 secs, with Harris similarly dominant in second. Dobson went fourth into a solitary third too, with fourth placed Woolfitt the only other unlapped runner. "I stayed with Dobbo for a few laps, then he just drove away and I seemed to struggle with front end grip," Woolfitt explained.

It was fairly well spaced behind too, with Clark a clear fifth, from Wardle and Bicknell. Although Modro was ahead of Cryer from the second lap, they continued to stay fairly close, with only 0.701 secs between them at the flag. Anderson worked his way past both Rotheroe and Bruce to settle in 10th from lap three, while Johnson finally overcame his duel with Smith to claim 12th. "I had no choice on tyres as I only have one set. I was following Jake but he had a problem with visibility and seemed happier following me, until it improved and he went by again," Smith explained.

Wakelin had been tailing Rotheroe as both struggled for grip. "I had gone for slicks and went well until half distance, then I had to concede as after changing to wets it was on rails," said Rotheroe. "I was on the grass at the second corner and had steering problems for the rest of the race on slicks. It would snatch but I survived and just got on with it," Wakelin added.

So Wakelin was 14th from Walker, Koukoulas, Bruce and Guy Carter and Helen Allen. Rotheroe rejoined to finish 20th, with Claxton completing the finishers.

RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1-500) 13 laps in 20m08.487s (81.33mph); 2 Harris +17.683s; 3 Dobson; 4 Woolfitt; 5 David Clark (Saker RAPX S1-400); 6 Wardle; 7 Andy Bicknell (Ginetta G50); 8 Connor Modro (Ford Focus); 9 Cryer; 10 Mike Anderson (VW Scirocco R).

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Clark; 4 Bicknell; 5 G. Carter. No other starters.

Class B: 1 Dobson; 2 Woolfitt; 3 Jake Johnson (Honda Civic Type R); 4 Wakelin; no other starters.

Class D: 1 Wardle; 2 Anderson; 3 Walker; 4 Claxton; no other starters.

Class E; 1 Modro; 2 Cryer; 3 Bruce; 4 Koukoulas; 5 Rotheroe; no other starters.

Class F: 1 Smith; 2 B. Carter; 3 Allen; no other starters. Fastest lap: Rose 1m31.067s (83.02mph).

Its only two weeks before the next rounds at Donington Park, with both races on Sunday 22nd at 13.00 and 16.15.

Published by Peter Scherer for BARC North West, August 12th 2021

