



North Western  
Centre

## **CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 6 & 7 - Croft**

### **WOOLFITT'S CROFT DOUBLE**

#### **QUALIFYING**

After taking pole by well over five seconds it was no real surprise that Jon Woolfitt's Spire GTR took a dominant double victory as the CNC Heads Sports Saloons made their annual visit to Croft.

It wasn't all plain sailing for Woolfitt though during the qualifying session, "I got stuck in second gear at the end, as I was struggling with an actuator problem, and was hard to change gear at all," he explained. First round winner Andrew Southcott shared the front row, with his MG Midget Lenham. "It was missing a bit though and seemed down on power," he added. Simon Allaway's Lotus Esprit V8 was 0.9 secs off Southcott's time but had concerns of his own. "I lost second gear about halfway through the session. "We've got a spare but it was worn," he said.

Richard Rudd was fourth best on his CNC debut with the ex Piers Grange Ford Escort turbo. "I was pleased with that on old tyres, but saved some new ones for the races," he said. Guy Carter's TVR Tuscan headed the third row, "I got my best time on the last lap, but had been held up a bit. It was getting a bit loose at times at the front, but controlled of course," he reckoned. In sixth Richard Hall was fairly happy with his time, "a good run and as quick as I wanted to be," he confirmed.

Despite a spin at the Complex Ian Bamber was happy with his quickening Ginetta G20 too. "The rear suspension was too hard, but the new engine and rebuilt gearbox were all good," he said. Rob Wakelin was back out in his Peugeot 205 alongside Bamber, "a bit rusty but everything seemed alright," he commented.

Mark Primett had been making changes to his Banks Lotus Europa. "I spun at the Hairpin, well it was more missed a gear and I was going off the track, so spun to stay on. I had some understeer and some oversteer and done a bit of re-design stiffening up with a new anti-rollbar," he explained.

Tim Foxlow's Escort RSR was back too after missing the last round, "we had made quite a few changes so it was a bit like learning a new car set up and got to get used to it," he said after completing the top 10. Richard Armiger had found some pace too in the family Vauxhall Tigra. "Too old for this game though," he reckoned.

Graeme Smith rung every bit of pace out of his Mazda MX5 as usual and once again was able to say, "it's quicker than I have ever been here." Alongside Smith was another returnee with David Green out in his Honda Civic. "It was too soft and kept going into limp mode," he explained.

Marshall Groves was also in trouble having completed just the one flying lap in his Vauxhall Vectra. "I locked up at Clervaux and when I went off the rear suspension broke," he confirmed. There were problems for Oliver Thomas too, "it was cutting out on me and not really sure why," said the Subaru Impreza driver.

Ric Walker was alongside Thomas in his Mini R56 JCW. "Not quick enough and not brave enough, but the car's fine," he said. In the Allen family duel it was Helen's Ford Fiesta Zetec S to the fore by 1.627 secs. "I am still exploring my limits though," she reckoned. So Brian's Ford Puma completed the 18 car grid, "I am still learning to drive this, but so long as I see the flag I'll be happy," he concluded.

## **RACE ONE**

Despite all the trials and tribulations around the pit garages, all 18 cars that had qualified made it out onto the grid for Saturday's race.

As the lights went out Woolfitt charged off into Clervaux, from Southcott, Allaway, Bamber and Carter. But Rudd came charging into Tower and by the exit had taken both Carter and Bamber for fourth and was reeling in third placed Allaway, with the lead duo long gone. Carter got Bamber on the second lap for fifth, while behind them Foxlow was up to seventh at Primett's expense, as Wakelin and Hall completed the early top 10.

Green had been 12<sup>th</sup> on the opening lap but was soon struggling. "It started cutting out again and after two near misses I decided to be safe and park it," he said after retiring to the pits. Foxlow had managed to catch Bamber and from the third lap they were into a terrific scrap that lasted for a number of laps and featured a number of exchanges too.

Wakelin and Hall were closing too, while behind them Thomas was flying. But Primett had lost five places, "it was OK until I spun, I had made places then under-estimated the understeer," he explained. Although no one was likely to catch Woolfitt and Southcott at the front, Rudd managed to take third from Allaway exiting Tower on lap four, while Bamber was busy trying to retake Foxlow, as Wakelin, Hall and Thomas all closed in.

Thomas was into eighth through Barcroft on lap six, before Bamber finally managed to reclaim sixth at the Complex, and leave Foxlow at the mercy of Wakelin's challenge. With the top five all well-spaced they held station over the remaining laps, Woolfitt's winning margin was over 26 seconds, "not my best start, but I wasn't braking for Clervaux until Andrew did," he said.

Southcott was unable to take-up the chase as he had hoped and was forced to back off after half distance, "no brakes and no clutch," he confirmed. Although Rudd had initially pulled well clear of Allaway in third, the gap began to come down again in the final laps. "I was almost out of fuel," Rudd admitted. Allaway was still delighted with his third place though. "I had lost second gear again after about a lap and a half, so used third more except at the Hairpin. The rest was fun but I was worn out," he admitted.

Carter in fifth was the last unlapped runner, "I had got a bit of a loose front wheel bearing, but a fairly lonely race for me," he said. Bamber's hopes of sixth disappeared on the 11<sup>th</sup> lap, when he coasted through the Complex and stopped at the Hairpin. "The throttle had stuck open, I hit the kill switch and it wouldn't restart," he explained.

Thomas had managed to get to the front of the following battle and was in sixth with three laps remaining, "It was great and I've got my mojo back a bit more now," he said. Wakelin finally got the better of Foxlow for seventh into Sunny on the last lap, "it felt a bit loose at first, but I think I got used to it. I pushed and pushed and just had enough to get Tim for seventh," he explained. "What a fantastic race, battles all the way. My car was a bit loose at the back but it was great," added Foxlow after coming home eighth.

Hall was only just off the back of Foxlow at the flag too, "I made up for my customary bad start, but lost out to Rob at the start," he said, while the "solitary" Primett rounded off the top 10. Groves spent much of his race chasing Armiger, "my handling was very interesting, more like a tea trolley," he reckoned after finally taking his rival three laps from home.

"I stalled at the start and selected the wrong gear when Marshall got me," Armiger replied. "I needed someone to play," said Smith as the Class F winner had a solitary race too, after escaping from Walker early on. "I'm getting braver though," Walker reckoned. Helen Allen was next home with Brian completing the finishers.

<https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=BARC/2022/223127rc1nws.pdf>

## **RACE TWO**

With Southcott missing from Sunday's grid, Woolfitt's nearest challenger was Allaway's Esprit V8 and from the start it was Allaway in front. "I had a harder compound tyre on so it wasn't so quick off the line and took a couple of laps to come on," he said.

But Allaway's glory only lasted until Hawthorn's from where Woolfitt took charge again. "It felt good leading though, but I left the door open and he went through. But then said if I hadn't he would have gone around the outside anyway," Allaway added. Rudd was second into Tower too, but by the end of lap three the lead trio were clear and spread out.

In fourth though Carter and Bamber went into Tower side by side, with Thomas closing too. On the exit Carter was into fourth, with Thomas following a lap later. Although Carter started to consolidate, Thomas couldn't shake-off the determined Bamber. While behind them Hall had got ahead of Wakelin on lap two, as both began to threaten Foxlow for seventh.

Down in 12<sup>th</sup> there was a great duel too, with Walker having to be on the defensive as Smith was constantly on the attack. After Groves had got Armiger for 10<sup>th</sup> at the Hairpin on lap five, he closed in the three-way battle for seventh, with Wakelin back on Foxlow's tail after retaking Hall.

It was all cut and dry at the front again, as Woolfitt took his fifth win of the season by over 53 seconds, with Rudd an equally comfortable second. "I tried different tyres again and they lasted longer," said Rudd. Although Allaway lost second gear again, his perseverance gained him another third place, while in fourth Carter was a lap down. "Billy no mates again, but fourth wasn't bad. No tank slappers this time either," he said.

Thomas managed to edge away from Bamber to consolidate fifth, "I think the manifold had blown as it lost boost. But made some positive changes between races," said Thomas. "I had to back-off though and short-shift, as it was starting to overheat," Bamber added.

Foxlow had managed to survive Wakelin's racelong challenges for seventh, but once Groves had split them on the penultimate lap, his quest proved to be even harder. "I thought I would get away from them, but I should have pushed harder at the start. I had to work for that and then towed them along too," said Foxlow after retaining a hard-earned place, with just 0.592 seconds covering him, Groves and Wakelin.

"Tim nearly caught me out though when he braked early on the last lap, it's my last race of the year but it was a great one," said Groves. "I started to have a go at Tim towards the end, then it decided it wasn't worth it, but jarred my back too after hitting a kerb," Wakelin added. Hall had tailed off slightly, but still completed the top 10, while a determined Walker just managed to keep Smith at bay. "I just had more power on the straights, but Graeme was so quick into the corners and almost pushed me along," said Walker.

"Yes I had him under braking every time, great racing," Smith added. Helen and Brian Allen completed the classified finishers, although Primett was 16<sup>th</sup> on the road an unclassified, after pitting after the green flag lap. "I was waved into the pitlane before the start, as my splitter was hanging down, so I had to start a couple of laps down from the pitlane," he said.

<https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=BARC/2022/223127rc2nws.pdf>

<u>OVERALL</u>			
1	Jon Woolfitt	54	J
2	Graeme Smith	49	J
3	Jamie Cryer	35	
4	Ric Walker	25	
	Guy Carter	25	
	Ian Bamber	25	
7	Tim Foxlow	24	
8	Paul Dobson	23	
9	Oliver Thomas	20	
10	Marshall Groves	19	

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