



Sports/Saloon Car Championship – Rounds 6 & 7 Donington Park

ROSE BLOSSOMS AT DONINGTON TV MEETING

Paul Rose didn't have it all his own way, but despite wheel to wheel duels between Garry Watson and Joe Spencer, his Saker collected another double win.

Qualifying on Saturday afternoon was bright and dry, with Rose taking pole by over a second, "it was fine apart from the traffic as it was almost impossible to get a clear lap," he said.

Watson completed the front row, "I was running in a new diff and managed to make some space near the end of the session to set my time," he added.

Steve Harris headed the second row in his Saker with Spencer's Stuart Taylor Locosaki alongside. Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra was next quickest, "it was OK but I had some tyre vibration," he explained.

He had Paul Dobson's Mazda RX7 alongside. "It was a bit dull for me, so busy but the car went really well and I saved a new, to me, front tyre for the race," he added.

Having missed the last few rounds David Matthias was back with his Escort Cosworth, heading row four from Danny Bird's Pell Genesis. "I am not at one with the circuit yet and had no brakes at the end of the session," he said.

Peter Davies was another returnee with his Spire GTR. "It's been three months since I was in the car. We have played with it and now put it back to how it was," he explained.

Dave Harvey only had a 10 minute drive from home to get to Donington and managed to complete the top ten in his Stuart Taylor Locosaki.

Graham Saul also made his seasonal debut with the ex Ric Wood Vauxhall Calibra, "it was awesome, gradually built it up and will change the settings again for the race", he explained. He had historic racing ace Richard Evans alongside with the ex BTCC Vauxhall Astra.

Heading row seven was Mike Hurst's Seat Leon Cupra, "It took me a while to get used to the track", he admitted. He had Jon Woolfitt alongside after having engine failure on his debut at Croft with the MK Indy.



Jon Woolfitt's MK Indy (Photo : John Isgar)

Piers Grange's Escort headed the next row with Jamie Cryer's battle scarred Ginetta G20 alongside. "I had a bit of a coming together with Graeme Laslett's Lotus Elise, I thought he had

Down in 17th was a disappointed Les Kirk in his

Fisher Fury. "Too far down the grid and it's not the car it's just me. I was quicker two years ago in my Renault Clio", he said.

Richard Morris was back too with his Mini Clubman while behind him Richard Roundell's Vauxhall Vectra and Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara shared row 10. "My throttle pedal stuck down so maybe that made me faster," Roundell admitted. "I had new new tyres, not second hand but struggled to get heat into the rears and it was oversteering," Rotheroe added.

Jason Hennefer's Honda Prelude and Steven Parker's BMW Compact were just behind, "I had an exhaust problem and just drove as smooth as I could to help keep noise down," Parker explained.

Still ironing out teething problems with his new Subaru Impreza, Oliver Thomas was down in 23rd with Nicholas Bartlett's BMW M3 alongside, followed by Graeme Laslett's Elise showing scars from his collision with Cryer,"it's just a bit of a hole in the bodywork," he said,



Clive Dix prepares for 'battle' (Photo : Lucie Dix)

Clive Dix's Ford Puma managed to put four cars between him and the rest of the class F rivals, with Alastair Chilton's MK Gti, Bob Claxton's Renault 21 Turbo, Simon Sheridan's Renault Clio and Ralph Underwood's Triumph TR7 V8, lining up before Helen Allen's Fiesta Zetec, Matthew Spencer's Peugeot 106 XSi, Brian Allen's XR2i and Paul Griffin's Fiesta completing the 34 car line up.

RACE ONE

As the field lined up for Sunday mornings race, Ric Wood's BMW M3 GTR was at the back after missing qualifying with diff problems, where he was joined by Paul Woolfitt's Z Cars Mini, while Saul and Kirk both opted for a pitlane start.



Garry Watson leads the pack away in race 1 (Photo : Paul Horton)

It was Watson that led the charge to Redgate though, with Spencer in his wheeltracks as Rose and Harris gained momentum. Armiger, Bird, Harvey and Dobson were next as they headed down the Craner Curves, before Dobson ousted Harvey, with Matthias and Jon Woolfitt's Mk Indy completing the early top ten.

There were problems behind though when Grange tried to force his way passed Hurst at Coppice, they collided and Hurst received substantial frontal damage, while Grange pitted and was later excluded.

Rose was on the attack and chased Spencer through the chicane before snatching second as they completed the second lap, but Watson had managed to increase his lead.

Dobson's progress continued as he took Bird for sixth and Davies was into the top ten at the expense of Woolfitt. While Wood was upto 14th from the back of the grid and closing on both Evans and Thomas.

Rose managed to lead into Redgate a lap later but lost out again behind backmarkers at Coppice, which allowed Watson and Spencer to dive back ahead. "Paul chose the wrong side and got boxed in, so Joe and I went by," said Watson.

The lead trio headed passed the pits again as one with Rose powering back in front again at Redgate on lap five. Harris sat quietly in fourth as did Armiger in fifth for a while until Dobson began to close.

Dobson went by into Redgate on lap six, which left Armiger as Wood's next target. Harvey moved up to taking Bird for eighth, who then had Davies threatening. "My brakes had gone around half distance, so had to wave Dave by after I had earlier got away from him," said Bird.

With Woolfitt's MK expiring as he completed his third lap, Evans ousted Mathias and Thomas started to lose touch with the duo.

Rose continued to build on his advantage, taking victory by well over 14 seconds, while Watson seemed set for second until he peeled off into the pitlane a lap from home. "Joe and Garry got away at the start as expected so I didn't push it and after leading again I just controlled it through the traffic," Rose explained. "I thought I had over revved it but I was fuel, the lack of" Watson admitted from the pitlane.

Spencer therefore was back to take second, with Harris third, "I gained on Garry and Joe in traffic but then lost them again," Harris added." It got a bit interesting at times with backmarkers, but I gradually lost touch with Garry," Spencer added.

Wood clinched fourth after powering passed Dobson exiting the chicane on lap 11. "It was a good race with Ric but I lost time a bit when I let Paul Rose through to lap me," Dobson admitted.



Luke Armiger (Photo : John Isgar)

Armiger held onto sixth, from Harvey, Evans and Mathias. "From lap two I had no brakes and was just using the gearbox to stop and couldn't really defend," Armiger explained.

Bird completed the top ten after Davies retired. "It just lost drive as I started to make progress," said the Spire driver. Thomas took the flag in a solitary 11th,

while 12th was class E winner Parker, after tremendous racelong fight with Morris, Rotheroe, Roundell and Cryer.

Morris had led the quintet until he went off on lap 14, "it was me not the car," he admitted leaving Parker to consolidate after taking Rotheroe a couple of laps earlier. Morris also dropped behind Rotheroe and just held off Chilton as they took the flag. "The alternator belt

was almost stripped and I didn't have full throttle, but got places through others mistakes," Parker explained. "Steve made me go faster and I could tell when my tyres came in, so happy with that," added Rotheroe. "Better for me too as I trusted the brakes after Danny had fixed them," said Chilton.

Cryer pipped Roundell at the chicane on the last lap, while Hennefer, Laslett and Kirk completed the top 20. "I struggled with pad knock off then missed a gear at the end and Jamie got me." Roundell explained. "When Bird lapped us it gave me the chance and I took it," Cryer replied.

Underwood, Bartlett, Sheridan and Claxton were next home before the class F battle, which once again went in Dix's favour over Helen Allen and Spencer, after Brian Allen and Griffin both retired. Saul's Calibra broke a timing sensor on the crank and Woolfitt's Mini retired too at half distance.

RESULTS

1 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX) 18 laps in 21m33.666s (99.02mph); 2 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) +14.575s; 3 Steve Harris (Saker RAPX); 4 Ric Wood (BMW M3 GTR); 5 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7); 6 Luke Armiger (Vauxhall Tigra); 7 Dave Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 8 Richard Evans (Vauxhall Astra); 9 David Mathias (Ford Escort Cosworth); 10 Danny Bird (Pell Genesis).

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Wood; no other finishers.

Class B: 1 Armiger; 2 Richard Morris (Mini Clubman); no other finishers.

Class C: 1 Spencer; 2 Harvey; 3 Bird; 4 Alastair Chilton (Mk Gti); 5 Les Kirk (Fisher Fury); no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Evans; 3 Mathias; 4 Oliver Thomas (Subaru Imprez); 5 Ralph Underwood (Triumph TR7 V8); 6 Bob Claxton (Renault 21 Turbo).

Class E: 1 Steven Parker (BMW Compact); 2 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara); 3 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20); 4 Richard Roundell (Vauxhall Vectra); 5 Jason Hennefer (Honda Prelude); 6 Graeme Laslett (Lotus Elise); 7 Nicholas Bartlett (BMW M3); 8 Simon Sheridan (Renault Clio).

Class F: 1 Clive Dix (Ford Puma); 2 Helen Allen (Ford Fiesta Zetec S); 3 Matthew Spencer (Peugeot 106 XSi); no other finishers. Fastest lap: Rose 1m09.549s (102.44mph).

RACE TWO

Seven cars failed to make the afternoon race, which was five minutes shorter to fit with the Motors TV schedule.

Kirk once again started from the pitlane, but it was Watson with the initial advantage again as they rounded Redgate for the first time, from Spencer, Rose, Harris, Woolfitt and Armiger.

Armiger took Woolfitt on the Craner Curves, and further back Underwood grabbed his TV moment by being the first to explore the grass at the Old Hairpin.

Into the chicane for the first time Rose locked up and Harris went by into third. "It was slippier than I had anticipated, locked up and just managed to scramble around, but the vibration was horrendous after that from a flat spot," Rose explained.



The battle between Garry Watson and Joe Spencer was as intense as ever (Photo : John Isgar)

Spencer was really on the attack and led into Redgate on the second lap before Watson retook into the chicane. Rose was back chasing Harris for third, with Armiger in fifth and Dobson sharing a couple of exchanges with Woolfitt for sixth.

Bird, Mathias and Evans were next up, but back at the front Rose reclaimed third into the chicane, before Woolfitt pulled off with a blown engine to vacate seventh.

With Watson and Spencer continuing their duel, Rose managed to split them at Coppice on the fifth lap, but there was more action behind where Rotheroe managed to oust Cryer from the class E lead, but had Parker and Roundell close too.

Into Redgate for the sixth time Rose had the lead, which left Watson and Spencer to resume their duel under the watchful eye of Harris in the second Saker.



Paul Rose in his Saker heads for win number 2 (Photo : Paul Horton)

Harvey found his way passed Bird into Redgate for eighth, but while Thomas was alone in ninth, Rotheroe had Cryer and Parker on his heels, as Roundell fell back to have his own fight with Morris and Hennefer.

Just after Harris had darted into third at the chicane, Spencer pulled off on the entry to Redgate with a blown engine, leaving the new third man to hunt down Watson.

Into Coppice a lap later Harris was through and made it a Saker one-two, while Watson was left with a safe third. "I had new tyres on, a world off difference, the car was transformed," said Harris. "That had been such a good race with Joe, he really pushed me but it was OK and no problems," Watson replied.

As in the first race Armiger's safe fourth was suddenly threatened by Dobson. "The alternator light came on and it cut out and then back again, so I waived Dobbo by and then had to race him again," he explained.

Harvey got ahead of Matthias on lap eight to secure sixth, "I really had to struggle to get passed Bird, hard work but worth it," said Harvey. "Better for me too as I had the boost right for this race unlike the first," Matthias added.

Bird settled in eighth," 10 minutes in and the brakes went again, so just did what I could," he said. Thomas had a better run into ninth place well clear of the ongoing battle behind.

Rotheroe managed to hold the class lead from lap five, but couldn't shake off Parker's car, complete with his onboard TV camera. "That was fantastic, I can't put into words how it feels getting my first class win. A real fight though, he was quicker but I just managed to hold the line," he explained.

"I just couldn't get him, I was alongside but just hadn't got enough to go by. He covered the Craner Curves well and just cut me off if I tried anywhere else," Parker replied. And it looked great on TV.

Cryer had a good view of the duel too. "I was with them but lost ground with backmarkers and couldn't get back and still had some brake issues too," he added.



Morris (left, Photo Paul Horton) managed to edge away from Roundell. "I had a brake problem on the green flag lap and thought about pulling out, but glad I didn't," said Morris. "I could see in front but nothing behind as my mirror fell off," Roundell added.

Chilton, Hennefer, Laslett, Kirk, Sheridan and Bartlett rounded off the top 20, while Claxton and Underwood headed home the class F quartet of Dix, Helen Allen, Spencer and Brian Allen, after Griffin retired.

RESULTS

1 Rose 14 laps in 16m54.342s (98.20mph); 2 Harris +6.041s; 3 Garry Watson (Westfield SEW); 4 Dobson; 5 Armiger; 6 Harvey; 7 Mathias; 8 Bird; 9 Thomas; 10 Rotheroe.

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; no other starters.

Class B: 1 Watson; 2 Armiger; 3 Morris; no other finishers. Class

C: 1 Harvey; 2 Bird; 3 Chilton; 4 Kirk; no other finishers.

Class D: 1 Dobson; 2 Mathias; 3 Thomas; 4 Claxton; 5 Underwood; no other finishers.

Class E: 1 Rotheroe; 2 Parker; 3 Cryer; 4 Roundell; 5 Hennefer; 6 Laslett; 7 Sheridan; 8 Bartlett.

Class F: 1 Dix; 2 H.Allen; 3 Spencer; 4 Brian Allen (Ford Fiesta XR2i); no other finishers. Fastest lap: Rose 1m10.828s; (100.59mph).

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