



North Western
Centre

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

ROSE TAKES ANOTHER DOUBLE

Former CNC Heads Sports Saloon Champion Paul Rose made it five wins from eight this season in his Saker, with another winning double at Donington Park.

It was dry but overcast for qualifying, but rain was forecast for later in the day.

Rose secured pole by 1.280 secs over Croft winner Jon Woolfitt's Spire GTR. "It was alright but there was coolant down later and I couldn't get a clear lap in," said Rose. "I couldn't get a clear lap either, but happy with second," Woolfitt added. Steve Harris in the second Saker also had a good session to head the second row, "brand new tyres but I spun at the chicane on some coolant," he admitted.

Seasonal debutant Luke Armiger was alongside Harris in his Vauxhall Tigra. "It was Ok, but I have a new dashboard and don't know to read it," he said. Double Cadwell winner Paul Dobson was next up with his Locost Mazda. "I felt some understeer, so pitted to play with the suspension and it stalled," he said. David Clark in the third Saker was next to Dobson, "I think it went well, it felt good," he reckoned.

Championship sponsor Ric Wood headed row four with his Nissan Skyline and Garry Wardle's Seat Cupra TCR alongside. "Just a slight gear change problem," said Wardle. Championship debutant Jack Egar was ninth best with his BMW M3. "I haven't done any testing, so it's a lack of seat time," he admitted. Rounding off the top 10 should have been Daz Owen's immaculate Escort RSR, but engine maladies made him the first of five qualifying casualties.

With Simon Allaway's Lotus Esprit V8 another to be sidelined, Andy Bicknell's Ginetta G50 became 10th best. "My car just cut out, so I pulled off. It was an oil pump belt," Allaway explained. "I overshot the chicane on coolant, but had a bad vibration," Bicknell added. Row six was now an all class E battle, with Don Hughes' Peugeot 306 XSi heading Jamie Cryer's Ginetta G20. "I lost the brakes about half way through the session," said Cryer.

Tim Foxlow should have been next, but his Escort RSR suffered similar problems to Owen and was out for the day too. Guy Carter had no such problem with his TVR Tuscan, similarly Paul Rotheroe's Citroen Xsara. "I got my braking a bit wrong, locked up and went over the gravel at the chicane though," Rotheroe admitted. Roger Evans' Alfa Romeo and Richard Hall's Caterham were next best. "I was trying new tyres," said Hall, returning to the Championship this season after eight years.

After his successful third overall at Croft, Rob Wakelin's hopes were soon dashed when his Peugeot 205 had a brakes issue. "I had just beaten my best time at Donington and we found it had cracked the front discs," he said after joining the casualties. Ian Bruce had a fairly good session in his Honda Civic

Type R, "I did try the Old Hairpin too quickly and had to drive through the gravel after putting the rear in," he admitted.

Bruce Carter was out in the Honda CRX again and secured Class F pole and had Kingsley Ingram's Ford Mustang between him and class rival Graeme Smith's Mazda MX5. Chris Maries was back in his Honda Civic Type R after Grandson Jake Johnson borrowed it at Croft, he was a fraction quicker than Ric Walker's Mini R56 JCW. "Busy but Ok," said Walker.

David Green was out for the first time in his Honda Civic. "A bit twitchy and a fuel problem, but hopefully fixed for the race," he said. Peter Koukoulas had an "agricultural moment" at the Old Hairpin, Jake Johnson had a tyre issue in his Fiesta, but for Brian Allen it was an early exit too. "Stuck in fifth gear and oil leaks," said the Fiesta driver.

RACE ONE

It was 25 cars that lined up for the start and as lights went out, Woolfitt led the charge into Redgate, from Rose, Dobson, Armiger, Harris and Wood. Rose and Dobson were very close for second through Coppice, but Rose still tried for the lead into the chicane, but Woolfitt had it covered. As the completed the opening lap, Armiger was chasing the lead trio, with Harris and a very smoky Wood the early top six, from Clark, Hughes, Egar and Cryer. "The start was spot on, then it broke a stub axle," said Armiger.

Onto the second lap and the lead pair were clear, with Rose storming ahead past the Exhibition Centre. "I got away well, Paul did get me into the chicane on the first lap, but I got him back," Woolfitt explained. "I tried at the chicane, then thought I would leave it a bit," Rose admitted.

Harris was up to third too, at the expense of Dobson and Armiger, but Wood headed pitwards after three laps, joined by Armiger, moving Clark into the top five. The lead quartet began to spread out, but Bicknell was charging into contention, pursuing Egar and Hughes. He was sixth into the chicane on lap five, with Egar ousting Hughes for seventh too. Egar was into the pits too after seven laps, which moved Guy Carter up to eighth, while behind him Rotheroe was closing in on Cryer. "A fuel problem," Egar confirmed.

Woolfitt's hold on second was lost on lap seven when he had to give best to Harris, but Dobson, Clark and Bicknell were on their own as the rest of the top six. "He got me passing the pits, but I tried to make him work for it," Woolfitt explained. "I had a good start and then they all warmed up and disappeared," said Dobson.

Hughes continued to hold onto seventh and the Class E lead, but it was second in class that got ever closer, between Cryer and Rotheroe. Cryer finally succumbed on lap 12 and Rotheroe went clear, but the defending Champion was still 10th overall. "I was better on the brakes, but Jamie had me on the Craner Curves, then he spun and I went onto the grass to avoid him," Rotheroe explained.

While Rose cruised through the final laps for his fourth win of the season, Harris had contact with Ingram at the chicane, but retained a comfortable second. Woolfitt and Dobson were fairly solitary in third and fourth, but remained on the lead lap. Similarly Clark and Bicknell too as they completed the top six. "Enjoyable lappery, Clark reckoned.

Guy Carter managed to snatch seventh from Hughes on the last lap, while Rotheroe consolidated ninth over Cryer. "I have to admit I was out of fuel," said Hughes. "Just a reliable TVR of course," Carter reckoned. "My car just wasn't behaving. It had no grip and wouldn't go around corners," Cryer added.

Bruce kept Maries at bay to retain 11th, while Hall held onto 13th from Wardle, who had made a stop at the end of the opening lap. "I had a good start but then went second to fifth, but had an early duel with Hall's Caterham," said Bruce. Hall and Walker were next home, followed by the duel for Class F, which finally went in Smith's favour, after a last lap exchange with Bruce Carter. "I had old slicks on, but they were Ok once they got warm," Walker admitted. "Mine started well and then the tyres overheated," Hall added. "Bruce was slowing and I got a hurry up from the pitwall, so I got him at Redgate on the last lap," said Smith. "I had a misfire and it just got slower and slower at the end," Carter added.

Koukoulas survived a spin at the chicane, as both he and Johnson completed the finishers, after Evans, Green and Ingram retired. "I spun in avoidance, braked too late and collided with Graeme Smith," Koukoulas explained.

"The water temperature went sky high, so I went to pit and it cleared, but it kept happening and started to misfire, so I retired" Evans explained. "I broke a fuel pump wire and it cut out at the Old Hairpin. Apart from a spin at McLeans I made progress," said Green. "I pulled off after the collision with the Saker, as I think it hit my rear wheel," Ingram added.

RESULT

1 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1-500) 18 laps in 21m33.551s (99.03mph). 2 Steve Harris(Saker RAPX S1-500) +16.371s; 3 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR); 4 Paul Dobson (Locost 7); 5 David Clark (Saker RAPX S1-400); 6 Andy Bicknell (Ginetta G50); 7 Guy Carter (TVR Tuscan); 8 Don Hughes (Peugeot 306 XSi); 9 Paul Rotheroe (Citroen Xsara VTS); 10 Jamie Cryer (Ginetta G20).

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

Class B: 1 Woolfitt; 2 Dobson; 3 Chris Maries (Honda Civic Type R); 4 Richard Hall (Caterham 420R); no other finishers.

Class C: no starters.

Class D: 1 Garry Wardle (Seat Cupra TCR); 2 Ric Walker (Mini R56 JCW); no other finishers.

Class E: 1 Hughes; 2 Rotheroe; 3 Cryer; 4 Ian Bruce (Honda Civic Type R); 5 Peter Koukoulas (Toyota MR2); 6 Jake Johnson (Ford Fiesta).

Class F: 1 Graeme Smith (Mazda MX5); 2 Bruce Carter (Honda CRX); no other finishers.

Fastest lap: Rose 1m10.539s (101.00mph).

RACE TWO

Neither Armiger, Ingram nor Egar made it for the second race, so it was 22 cars that assembled in torrential rain, so no question over tyre choice. Harris, Clark and Maries all pitted on the green flag lap and made their starts from the pitlane.

Dobson was off into the gravel at Redgate, but Woolfitt had the lead onto the Craner Curves, but a twitch exiting McLeans allowed Rose to storm ahead on the climb to Coppice. "I had a worse one than that at Coppice, sideways, downshifted and just held it," Woolfitt admitted. Bicknell was already a clear third by the end of the opening lap, but after the second lap Rose was already 7.754 secs in the clear.

Rotheroe led Cryer and Wardle in the top six at the end of the opening lap, but the Citroen driver soon started to close on Bicknell too, while the recovering Dobson closed on both. Wardle became isolated in sixth for a while Evans had started well in seventh. Dobson ousted both Bicknell and Rotheroe approaching the chicane for the fifth time, emerging in third, with Bicknell losing out.

Wood was charging through the order too, taking almost a place a lap before taking sixth from Wardle on lap seven. But Harris was following after his pitlane start and the pair swapped a lap later. It was all too easy for Rose, until the penultimate when he spun and rejoined at Redgate and still won by just under a minute. "It had all been quite easy until I hit the water across Redgate. Tried to take it tighter and spun, got the back wheels in the gravel but managed to get out Ok," he explained.

Woolfitt was the only other driver on the lead lap, while Dobson completed the overall podium. "I was looking for gap and hit the river at Redgate sliding off. But I kept going, rejoined and had some fun," Dobson explained. Harris ousted Rotheroe from fourth at Redgate on lap 11, but Rotheroe continued to fend off Bicknell, after a tremendous racelong duel. "I started from the pits as I had tried to get the wipers fixed, but at the end I nearly spun at Redgate too," said Harris

"My only problem was the chicane again. I kept outraking myself, I think I did it three times, but otherwise great," said Rotheroe. "I could get him back on power, but it was good fun," Bicknell replied. Wood's early progress left him seventh from lap eight, followed by Wardle and Clark. "I spun the wheels on full wets, but couldn't close on anyone," said Wardle.

Completing the top 10 Walker had a strong second half to his race, taking Cryer and Guy Carter on lap 11. Carter was next home, followed by Cryer and Green, while Evans slipped to 14th after good start. "Two spins but I managed to finish," said Evans. "I just got grip with the front wheel drive and began to catch the cars ahead," Walker admitted.

"I had repaired a broken damper and got a good start, but couldn't stay with Paul in the wet," Cryer admitted. "I was catching Jamie at the end as my car suited the wet. There was a bit of brake vibration early on too, but it cleared," said Green.

Bruce had kept Maries at bay, but a lack of visibility made him surrender a lap from home. Hughes, Hall and the class F pair of Bruce Carter and Smith completed the finishers, with all 22 starters taking the flag. "I just couldn't see and had slow motion wipers, so waved them by," Bruce admitted. "I could have done with my new wet tyres, they're on order," said Smith.

RESULT

1 Rose 15 laps in 21m07.927s (84.17mph); 2 Woolfitt +59.023s; 3 Dobson; 4 Harris; 5 Rotheroe; 6 Bicknell; 7 Ric Wood (Nissan Skyline); 8 Wardle; 9 Clark; 10 Walker.

Class A: 1 Rose; 2 Harris; 3 Bicknell; 4 Clark; 5 G.Carter; 6 Roger Evans (Alfa Romeo Giulietta).

Class B: 1 Woolfitt; 2 Dobson; 3 David Green (Honda Civic); 4 Maries; 5 Hall. No other starters.

Class C: no starters.

Class D: 1 Wood; 2 Wardle; 3 Walker; no other starters.

Class E: 1 Rotheroe; 2 Cryer; 3 Bruce; 4 Hughes; 5 Koukoulas; 6 Johnson.

Class F: 1 B.Carter; 2 Smith; no other starters. Fastest lap: Rose 1m22.464s (86.39mph).

The next round of the Championship is at Knockhill on September 18/19th

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