



# Moore's FF1600 triumph

(Image: bc-photographic.co.uk)



**Castle Combe FF1600  
Championship**

**Round 1, April 9 2007**

**Josh Barnett reports**

Former champion Ed Moore started his 2007 season with a perfect day at Castle Combe – taking a lights-to-flag victory from pole, with fastest lap on the way. Moore looked like he had a worthy challenger in the form of series newcomer Robert Hall, though once the Swift driver crashed out, Moore just needed to guide the car home.

## QUALIFYING

Moore started where he left off at the Carnival by taking pole position, his time of 1min11.806s only a twentieth off absent reigning champion Matt Rivett's lap record.

Carnival winner Moore enjoyed a

session-long battle with Swift Cooper SC92 driver Robert Hall, who impressed on his FF1600 debut, finishing just 0.3s shy of the benchmark set by the motorsport-events.com Van Diemen RF00. The ex-UKFF driver led for much of the session after Moore set the early running. However the 17-year-old ultimately had to give best to the vastly experienced Moore, who set his best time after a pit visit.

Steven Jensen put in a terrific performance to line up on the second row, in third. Jensen, run by father Erling again this year, just beat former team-mate Nick Jones, who as fourth reserve had to forfeit his potential second row slot to Ben Norton, in the immaculate Wiltshire College-run Spectrum 011.

Alan Hamilton's final lap of 1min12.827s made him the last person to break the 1min13s barrier, in a career-best sixth.

Returnee Alan Slater finished seventh after running fourth for much of the session. The Swift FB89 driver was the highest Pre 1990 runner, narrowly

beating Jim Hamilton in his Van Diemen RF89.

Adam Higgins, son of four-time champion Bob, drove a very respectable session to finish just outside the top ten for his first FF1600 race.

## RACE

As the lights went out Hall drew alongside Moore, but Ed was the last of the late brakiers and held onto the lead into Quarry.

On the next lap it was Jensen's turn to attack as he had a look up the inside of Hall into Quarry, but to no avail, although he did get a sniff a lap later when Hall's attempt on the lead at Quarry opened an opportunity. Alan Hamilton had tucked into fourth, just behind Jensen, but his replacement clutch (the original had exploded in the morning) failed him.

Moore briefly pulled a slight gap over the remaining two pursuers before half-distance but Hall's superior speed through Camp brought him right back onto the leader's tail over Avon Rise.



Moore was pushed by Hall in the early laps. (Image: bc-photographic.co.uk)

The Swift seemed better on the brakes into the slower corner, but the Van Diemen appeared to have the greater grip. Soon after, though, a suspected broken left-front upright sent Hall veering off the track at Paddock, where he collided with the parked car of Glen Finn, causing extensive damage to both. His left Moore with a comfortable advantage over Jensen which he held to the finish.

That handed third to Ben Norton, who had made a poor start after he felt the car creeping. "It was an awful, awful start. It was creeping slightly and I put the brakes on at just the wrong time," he said.

The fast-starting Hamiltons (Alan and Jim) leapfrogged him into fourth and fifth respectively. From the outside of row eight, Matt McKillop (Swift SC95) challenged Norton, and when the Spectrum driver eventually got away he managed to pass Jim Hamilton approaching Quarry corner. He

established out a considerable margin over the Van Diemen RF89 only for it to be wiped out with a moment when he caught a backmarker under yellow flags. This left Hamilton right on his gearbox, at least until McKillop surged past the Class C winner and into fourth overall at Tower on the final lap. Norton held onto his podium place by only 0.1s as McKillop stormed alongside through Camp, while Jim H was fifth.

Slater started his first full season since 2004 with a very respectable second in class, and sixth overall, after enjoying one of the best battles of the race, with Andrew Jones. Jones, borrowing Wayne Poole's Mygale SJ01 while his new Ray is prepared, jumped Slater at the start and there was much place-changing until Jones inexplicably clipped the tyre-bound corner marker at Bobbies, sending him into retirement.

Places seven to nine were filled by drivers unaccustomed to getting

EVENT DATA
Result – 12 laps: 1 Ed Moore (Van Diemen RF00) 14m50.589s (89.738mph); 2 Steven Jensen (Swift SC92) +2.376s; 3 Ben Norton (Spectrum 011); 4 Matt McKillop (Swift SC95); 5 Jim Hamilton (Van Diemen RF89); 6 Alan Slater (Swift FB89). Class A: 1 Moore; 2 Norton; 3 Michael Bradley (Van Diemen RF00). Team Schemes Class B: 1 Jensen; 2 McKillop; 3 Jonathan Hoad (Van Diemen RF90). Sarik Vacform Class C: 1 Hamilton; 2 Slater; 3 Matt Devenish (Van Diemen RF89). Pole position: Moore 1m11.806s (92.750mph). Fastest lap: Moore 1m12.541s (91.810mph). Starters: 34.
Overall standings after round one: 1 Moore 31; 2 Jensen 27; 3 Norton 25; 4 McKillop 23; 5 Hamilton 21; 6 Slater 20; etc.
Next round: May 7.

among the silverware, but Jonathan Hoad (Royal Purple Oils Van Diemen RF90), Midge Bradley (motorsport-events.com Van Diemen RF01) and Matt Devenish (Wayne Poole Racing Van Diemen RF89) each took third in class.

Among the retirements were Shaun Macklin (whose Swift SC92 overheated) and Stephen Hawkins (who spun his Van Diemen RF88 on the resulting fluid). Earlier, Finn had clashed with the spinning Steve Burns SC92 exiting the Esses.



Norton and Hamilton wheel-to-wheel. (Image: bc-photographic.co.uk)

## News in brief

**Former karter** Robert Hall made the day's most impressive debut. Although the Duratec convert crashed out, the Swift Cooper driver (who is racing Alan Cooper's SC92) looks likely to challenge for outright wins throughout 2007 after taking the fight to Ed Moore.

**With so many** big names absent perennial front-runner Nick Jones might have been expected to cash in. He was fourth fastest in qualifying but, alas, did not get a race. As he had done for the last several years, he left the race entry to team boss Kevin Mills... but Mills left it to Jones. When the paperwork finally

went in, Jones was fourth reserve and consequently he missed the race.

**Adam Higgins** (Van Diemen RF89) made an impressive Castle Combe debut, finishing inside the top ten. Son of four-time champion Bob, Adam's previous racing has come in tin-tops, so he is still gaining category experience. Higgins Snr is running newcomer John Hallam – making his debut in car 40 at the age of 40 – in his 'own' RF90, under the RIADRO Racing banner. He came home 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Having swapped** from his SC92 to the Wiltshire College prepared Spectrum 011, Ben Norton was left with the

unfamiliar concept of keeping his hands clean during a race day. "There's still a bit of speed in the car, but I'm not going to shout about it yet," he said after taking a podium finish.

**Alan Hamilton** received a warm welcome from the paddock on his return, almost a year after he took victory in a heat. His 2006 season was truncated when cancer was discovered in his colon, but his course of treatment has been completed and it appears to have been successful. He ran in the top four until a second clutch failure of the day, although rookie Peter Hall-King, who Hamilton is running this year, enjoyed better reliability and finished 22<sup>nd</sup>.