

# Three out of four for Moore



Moore's winning routine restarted; Davies won a thrilling heat (Images: Rod Long-Able)



**MELTON**  
CONCRETE PRODUCTS

**Castle Combe FF1600  
Championship**

**Round 4, June 23 2007**

**Josh Barnett reports**

Ed Moore overcame Pat Blakeney to take his third win in four races and tighten his grip on the championship, while the rest of the field provided some classic Combe FF1600 dicing – especially in the breathtaking qualification race.

## QUALIFYING

Rob Hall (Swift Cooper Swift SC92) took the first pole position of his fledgling Castle Combe career. Hall was the only driver to break the 1m12s barrier, with a time of 1m11.900s in dry, overcast conditions.

Pat Blakeney (Vector MG95), in his second 'one-off' return, would start alongside the Swift on the front row, with Moore (motorsport-events.com Van Diemen RF00) only third after taking pole for the previous three rounds.

Formula Palmer Audi and North West FF1600 racer Tom Bradshaw claimed fourth for his Combe debut in the Northstar Van Diemen RF04

Once again a qualification race would be held for all those qualifying outside the top 10, and it was Moore's teammate Michael Bradley who claimed the coveted 11<sup>th</sup> spot by 0.032s from Mark Davies (PA Motorsport Jamun M96).

## QUALIFICATION RACE

Davies got the best start, leaping into lead from Bradley while row two man Steve Gibbins (Rygor Commercials Ltd. Van Diemen RF01) made a poor start, leaving him vulnerable to an attack from Andrew Harris (Powerclean Ltd Van Diemen RF00). The Welshman dived down the inside at Camp on lap one and looked set to possibly challenge the leaders. However Gibbins fought back two laps later at the same spot and then an error on lap five saw Harris spin down the order to eventually finish 15<sup>th</sup>.

At the front, Bradley went down outside of Davies at Camp on lap five pulled off a stunning move to take the lead. Despite constant hassling from the Jamun and Gibbins, Bradley drove well defensively and was on course to take the top step on the podium for the first time.

But as the trio entered Camp on the last lap Davies dived to the inside and Gibbins swung to the outside - making it three abreast for the lead. Davies edged ahead only to run wide, while Bradley looked to slip back down the inside only to hold too tight a line and spin, dashing his hopes of glory. That left Davies to take the win from

Gibbins, with Bradley scrambling across the line in third, just ahead of Glen Finn – the simplykitchens.co.uk Swift SC92 driver back in action after a recent operation.

Davies was understandably excited about his first FF1600 win at Castle Combe. "A cracking race, it was absolutely brilliant all the way through!" was his verdict.

In the battle for class C honours Alan Slater (Swift Cooper Swift FB89) looked to have conceded to Adam Higgins (Riadro Racing Van Diemen RF89) but a last lap move earned the veteran the silverware.

## CHAMPIONSHIP RACE

Moore and Blakeney passed poleman Hall at the start, with the Vector taking the lead. But Blakeney could only hold on for three laps before Moore moved ahead.

The lead pack stayed close initially – with just 0.6s covering Moore, Blakeney, Bradshaw and Ben Norton (Checkpoint Tyres/Wiltshire College Spectrum 011) at one stage – but then the 2004 champion began to edge away.

Even though Moore was driving a car and engine combination tested for the first time on Thursday after his main race car developed a misfire, he looked unbeatable once out in front, eventually rolling off the power late in the race to win by 1.020s.



Another podium finish for Jensen left him in strong contention for the championship. This has been his most consistent season to date. (Image: Rod Long-Able)

#### EVENT DATA

Result – 12 laps: 1 Ed Moore (Van Diemen RF00) 14m44.831s (90.322mph); 2 Pat Blakeney (Vector MG95) +1.020s; 3 Steven Jensen (Swift SC92); 4 Robert Hall (Swift SC92); 5 Andrew Jones (Ray GRS07); 6 Stephen Gibbins (Van Diemen RF01). Class A: 1 Moore; 2 Jones; 3 Gibbins. Team Schemes Class B: 1 Blakeney; 2 Jensen; 3 Hall. Sarik Vacform Class C: 1 Alan Slater (Swift FB89); 2 Adam Higgins (Van Diemen RF89); 3 Jim Hamilton (Van Diemen RF89). Pole position: Hall 1m11.900s (92.629mph). Fastest lap: Moore 1m12.746s (91.551mph). Starters: 33. Heat – 10 laps: 1 Mark Davies (Jamun M96) 12m36.598s; 2 Gibbins +0.392s; 3 Michael Bradley (Van Diemen RF00). Class winners: Davies; Glen Finn (Swift SC92); Slater. Fastest lap: Davies 1m13.482s (90.634mph). Starters: 25.

Overall standings after round four: 1 Moore 107; 2 Jensen 102; 3 Matt McKillop 72; 4 Hall 70; 5 Jones 66; 6 Slater 62; etc. Class A: 1 Moore 56; 2 Jones 35; 3 Bradley 23; etc. Class B: 1 Jensen 53; 2 McKillop 37; 3 Hall 31; etc. Class C: 1 Slater 54; 2 Hamilton 51; 3 Higgins 41; etc.

Next round: July 14/5 (double header).

“Pat pushes hard, he keeps you on your toes but I’m over the moon with that,” said Moore, having thoroughly made up for his round three misfortune.

Consolation for Blakeney came with victory in the Team Schemes-backed Class B.

Bradshaw and Norton slipped back from the leaders as they battled with each other. On lap three Norton dived down the inside of Bradshaw at Bobbies after the Van Diemen got a slow run out of Tower. Through the left of the chicane Norton caught Bradshaw’s front right wheel, kinking the top wishbone and putting the young driver out on the spot. This also dropped Norton into the clutches of the slow-starting Hall and Steve Jensen (A1 Tyres/Jensen Racing Swift SC92).

The trio dived for six laps, with Norton spectacularly four-wheel drifting through the Esses. On lap six Hall out-braked his opponent at Bobbies, but Norton repaid the favour two laps later. Driving side-by-side from Camp to Avon Rise, Norton made the move stick under braking into Quarry. This unsettled Hall, who was passed by Jensen at Camp on the very next lap.

Jensen was on a charge and he later dived up the inside of Norton – at Camp yet again – to take the final podium place. Hall saw a chink in Norton’s armour but a last lap scrap for fourth was denied when a broken left front brake disc broke sent Norton spinning off at the Esses. Although Hall then closed to within 0.3s of

Jensen at the flag, the pair were 14s behind the two leaders.

Andrew Jones, Coachstyle Ltd. Ray GRS07, came out on top in a closely fought battle with Gibbins. Starting from the sixth row, Gibbins made a considerably better start than in the qualification race to appear behind fourth row starter Jones. Soaking up all the pressure Gibbins could muster, Jones didn’t crack and took fifth overall and second in class.

Two of the stars of round three didn't make it to the end after a significant tangle. Josh Fisher (Wayne Poole Racing Mygale SJ01) hit the rear right of Matt McKillop's Swift SC95 under braking over Avon Rise, spinning the Whitsun winner into the barriers.

After winning the Sarik Vacform Class C tussle in the qualification race, Alan Slater did it again in the points paying race. Yet again his main challenger was son of four time champion Bob, Adam Higgins. After a near carbon copy of their earlier scrap, Higgins looked set for victory after getting ahead on lap 10. However as the pair entered Tower backmarkers spoiled Higgins’ run and Slater was able to nip by into Bobbies and hold off the Van Diemen on the final dash to the line.

Starting in 25<sup>th</sup> position after his qualification race error, Andrew Harris wouldn’t have dreamt of making up eight positions in the first lap, let alone 16 places throughout the race distance. The Caerleon driver put in a sterling performance to finish ninth.

The first woman to race in Combe

FF1600 since Mary Elliott, Kay Carter, drove very respectably to finish 26<sup>th</sup>.

Rich Wadner was unlucky not to make the final race after gearbox problems in the qualification race meant the team had to work exceptionally hard to repair the problem. Despite their best efforts – working while on the dummy grid – the Swift pilot was not able to make the race start.

The next meeting is crucial, being the only double-header event of the season. Moore and Jensen are separated by five points, but are effectively a win or more clear of the chasing pack, headed by McKillop. When scores are dropped, Moore looks even more handily placed.



Alan Slater found a jaunty way to wear his Castle Combe winner's hat and garland. (Image: Rod Long-Able)