




Fisher wins as Moore reels in title

(Image: David Webster)



MELTON

CONCRETE PRODUCTS

Castle Combe FF1600
Championship

Round 9, September 15 2007

Ian Sowman reports

and Fisher (Wayne Poole Racing Mygale SJ01) topped the lot of them, being just 0.08s away from breaking into the 1m10s. He'd broken into that territory during testing on Thursday.

"It is a good cool day for the engines, so everyone has gone a lot quicker," he said. "I'm faster than last time but still only four-tenths faster than the rest."

Fisher also attributed his excellent time to set-up changes that had been made to the Mygale, but he was left fretting over whether he'd be able to get it prepared in an identical fashion for the race after turning in too early at the Esses and taking a corner off the car.

Fisher's time was set on his eighth flying lap, just after half-way through the session. He knocked Moore (motorsport-events.com Van Diemen RF00) off pole position with that effort, with Moore losing further ground when Hall went two-tenths quicker than him with just four minutes left to go. That also pushed Jensen (Jensen Racing/A1 Tyres Swift SC92) back to fourth.

Adam Higgins (Riadro Racing Van Diemen RF89) set himself up for the Pre 1990 championship showdown by being the only driver to qualify directly for the final, squeaking in by way of being tenth fastest. Alan Slater (Swift Cooper Swift FB89) set the pole time for the heat, but Jim Hamilton was back in 17th with engine problems on his Van Diemen RF89.

HEAT



Hamilton led at first in the qualifier.
(Image: David Webster)

The qualification race was actually the better of the two. From the outside of row two Alan Hamilton (Hamilton Motorsport Swift SC92) somehow converted excessive wheelspin off the line into the lead of the race by Quarry Corner, with Combe returnee Nick Jones (Kevin Mills Racing Van Diemen

Ed Moore clinched his second Castle Combe FF1600 title in four years on Saturday with an almost invisible drive to fourth position. It was a result to put the title beyond Steven Jensen whatever score the 23-year-old could muster, but in the event the Swift SC92 was a late retirement due to clutch failure. Amid all of this, Josh Fisher scored his second win of the season.

QUALIFYING

Thirty-nine cars took part in what must surely have been the fastest Combe FF1600 qualifying session since chicanes were installed in the late 1990s. The top four drivers were all under Matt Rivett's 2002 lap record,



Jim Hamilton eventually got the better of Nick Lay to confirm his Class C title. (Image: David Webster)

RF01) climbing into second from sixth on the grid by driving around the outside of Slater at Camp corner.

Hamilton – one of only two drives to break the 1m14s barrier in the race – charged away from the field and looked to be a firm favourite for victory until a safety car intervention on lap six for some tidying up. That allowed Jones onto his gearbox, and it got rather too close for comfort before the resumption when Jones made contact with the rear of Hamilton's car.

With a wishbone deranged, it was unsurprising that the Swift handled rather oddly, but Hamilton managed to keep the lead for half a lap before Jones and Matt McKillop – driving Alex Ames' Swift SC93 while his own SC95 is mended following an accident at Brands Hatch a week earlier – went through on the approach to Tower. Hamilton was fourth at the end of the penultimate lap, dropping to 12th by the end.

With Nick Lay (Reynard 89FF) closing in on the leaders, the last lap was a thriller. McKillop – winner of a final earlier in the year – nosed ahead through Old Paddock and had the inside line into Tower, but Jones overcame the challenge to take his first FF1600 win.

From seventh on the grid, Jim Hamilton came through to fourth in the final to ensure he wasn't too far behind Higgins on the grid for the vital Class C clash later in the day.

FINAL

With Jensen openly admitting that the overall championship title would be a nice bonus, some of the tension going into the title decider was alleviated. With the two contenders sharing a row on the grid – and with a situation whereby if neither driver finished Jensen would take the title – it would have been easy for this race to descend into something rather unpleasant in other circumstances.

As it was, the most unfortunate aspect of the race was a frightening incident for Oliver Roberts, who had qualified a superb fifth in his Wayne Poole Racing Mygale SJ01. It appeared his throttle stuck open into Camp on lap three, and Roberts speared into the wall at barely abated speed. A few minutes later, to tangible relief, he was able to walk into a rescue vehicle.

With the race having been immediately red-flagged, a restart grid for a six lap race was hastily prepared. The top four remained unchanged, although Jensen had just snatched second place from Hall on the approach to Quarry when the break came. In the fight for Class C honours, Higgins and Jim Hamilton were alongside each other on row six, with Lay ahead of them both.

Fisher picked up where he left off and led through Quarry corner, with Hall and Jensen following him through, Moore having dropped back a little. There was a brief moment when it

EVENT DATA

Results – round nine: 1 Josh Fisher (Mygale SJ01) 6 laps in 7m20.357s (90.745mph); 2 Robert Hall (Swift SC92) +1.823s; 3 Andrew Jones (Ray GRS07); 4 Ed Moore (Van Diemen RF00); 5 Ben Norton (Spectrum 011); 6 Matt McKillop (Swift SC93). Class A: 1 Fisher; 2 Jones; 3 Moore. Team Schemes Class B: 1 Hall; 2 McKillop; 3 Alan Hamilton (Swift SC92). Sarik Vacform Class C: 1 Jim Hamilton (Van Diemen RF89); 2 Nick Lay (Reynard 89FF); 3 Adam Higgins (Van Diemen RF89). Pole position: Fisher 1m11.079s (93.699mph). Fastest lap: Steven Jensen (Swift SC92) 1m12.088s (92.387mph). Starters: 34. Heat: 1 Nick Jones (Van Diemen RF01) 8 laps in 10m47.935s (82.230mph); 2 McKillop; 3 Lay. Class winners: Jones; McKillop; Lay. Fastest lap: McKillop 1m13.350s (90.798mph).

Final overall points: 1 Moore 213; 2 Jensen 200; 3 Hall 195; 4 Andrew Jones 179; 5 Norton 145; 6 Higgins 132; etc. Class A: 1 Moore 108; 2 Andrew Jones 89; 3 Norton 65; etc. Class B: 1 Jensen 108; 2 Hall 103; 3 McKillop 67; etc. Class C: 1 Jim Hamilton 104; 2 Higgins 99; 3 Slater 93; etc.

Next event: Carnival, Saturday October 6

was thought that Moore might have crashed out, but it was soon realised that the yellow flags at Tower were for Kevin Mills (Swift SC92), who had been spun off by contact from Andrew Jones (Coachstyle Ray GRS07).

Jensen repeated his move on Hall at the beginning of the penultimate lap but almost immediately he found himself with no clutch and he retired. That promoted Jones onto podium and Moore into fourth – more than enough to guarantee him the crown.



Champ Moore (Image: David Webster)

Following clutch problems that delayed his appearance in practice, Ben Norton (Wiltshire College/Checkpoint Tyres Spectrum 011) salvaged a respectable fifth, with McKillop passing the Class C battle to claim sixth.

Jim Hamilton was confirmed as Class C champion by the five points that marked the difference between Hamilton's first in class and Higgins' third on the day. Lay led the class until the fourth lap when Hamilton – who was ahead of Higgins from the opening lap – went through. Higgins followed him through next time round but the resilient Lay scuppered Higgins' chances of pipping Hamilton.