

Flawless Squibb triumphs



Squibb stayed on while Sean Dillon dealt with a cloudburst; Will di Claudio took the overall points lead (Images: Rod-Long Able)

**National
MOBILE
WINDSCREENS**

**Castle Combe Saloon Car
Championship**

Round 4, June 23 2007

Josh Barnett reports

After a troubled start to his Castle Combe Saloon racing career, rallycross convert Barry Squibb put together the performance he had been threatening all season in round four and took a flawless win in a tricky race.

QUALIFYING

In dry yet overcast conditions Russell Humphrey (Interceptor Racing Mitsubishi Evolution) took his second pole position of the season, setting himself up perfectly to replicate his win at the previous round.

Humphrey was the early pacesetter and despite finishing the session just 0.044s clear of Mark Harrison, the championship leader was never headed at the top of the timing screen.

Harrison (Owen Developments Mitsubishi Evolution) was never more than 0.05s behind his fellow Mitsubishi pilot, but try as he might, the Southmoor driver could not find that

split second that would put him in P1. Barry Squibb rounded off the top three, who were separated by a scant 0.052s.

Tim Hanlon, finally out in his Seat Ibiza Cupra R, showed his new package's promise by qualifying fourth in a time of 1min16.702s, the best of the front wheel drive parade.

Mark Wyatt (Mark Richard Insurance Vauxhall Astra) and Bill Brockbank (Badger 5 Seat Ibiza Cupra) made an all front-wheel drive third row with times of 1m17.082s and 1m17.416s respectively.

A bright start to qualifying promised much for Keith Murray (Audi A4 Quattro) but he couldn't turn the early pace into a strong grid position, eventually finishing seventh.

In class C, Carleton Williams beat crowd favourite Tony Hutchings to pole by a mere two tenths of a second.

RACE

The first hurdle the competitors encountered was a delayed start after Kevin Bird's Seat Leon Cupra R pulled off on the warm-up lap. With the knowledge that there would be no second green flag lap, the drivers faced a long, nervous, wait on the grid before going straight into racing.

When the lights eventually went out Squibb got the jump from row two,

leading into Folly and away over Avon Rise. Humphrey lost out and dropped down to fourth, behind the lightning-starter Murray and Harrison.

Harrison was back ahead of Murray on lap two and promptly pulled up to the bumper of Squibb. The pair then gapped the rest of the field, leaving Murray under intense pressure from Humphrey.

Despite Harrison looming in his mirrors throughout the race, Squibb always stayed sufficiently far ahead to avoid being challenged for the lead. He then stayed calm when heavy rain began to fall on lap seven, and with the race red-flagged due to the increasingly dangerous conditions, Squibb duly claimed his first win by a comfortable 2.344s.

Back in third, Murray was hounded by a recovering Humphrey, with the Mitsubishi man looking inside at the Esses on lap three, before pressuring him all the way to Tower. But despite Humphrey's best efforts, it was proving impossible to get past the red machine, even though Murray was struggling with a broken waistgate. "I was running pretty much naturally aspirated," he explained.

Humphrey bided his time and on lap six an opportunity presented itself and he dived down the inside at Camp. This unsettled the Audi and Mark Wyatt capitalised - drafting past on the run to Folly.



Deteriorating conditions sent cars skittering and brought an early halt. (Image: Rod Long-Able)

EVENT DATA

Result – 8 laps: 1 Barry Squibb (Mitsubishi Evolution) 10m22.870s (85.540mph); 2 Mark Harrison (Mitsubishi Evolution) +2.344s; 3 Russell Humphrey (Mitsubishi Evolution); 4 Mark Wyatt (Vauxhall Astra); 5 Keith Murray (Audi A4); 6 Tim Hanlon (SEAT Ibiza). Class A: 1 Squibb; 2 Harrison; 3 Humphrey. Class B: 1 Wyatt; 2 Hanlon; 3 Bill Brockbank (SEAT Ibiza). Class C: 1 Tony Hutchings (MG ZR); 2 Alex Ferguson (Peugeot 205); 3 Carleton Williams (Vauxhall Corsa). Class D: 1 Will di Claudio (Peugeot 106); 2 Russell Poynter-Brown (Vauxhall Corsa); 3 Olly Lewis (Peugeot 106). Pole position: Humphrey 1m16.391s (87.183mph). Fastest lap: Squibb 1m16.076s (87.544mph). Starters: 35.

Standings after round four – Class A: 1 Humphrey 14; 2 Harrison 12; 3 Murray 10; etc. Class B: 1 Wyatt 21; 2 Tony Dolley 15; 3 Ian Craig 14; etc. Class C: 1 Hutchings 23; 2 Williams 18; 3 Ferguson 17; etc. Class D: 1 di Claudio 25; 2 Poynter-Brown 23; 3= Lewis & Peter Weston 12; etc.

Next round: July 15.

Although Humphrey easily pulled away from Wyatt, he couldn't quite bridge the gap to Harrison and had to settle for the final podium spot. Having won an early dice with Hanlon, Wyatt claimed fourth and the class B win. Murray held on to fifth position ahead of a fading Hanlon.

Bill Brockbank followed his fellow Seat Ibiza pilot home after battling with the fast starting BMW M3 of Angus Dawe. Brockbank slipped inside Dawe at Camp, on lap three, after a mediocre start. But once back in front the Seat pulled away to finish in seventh, nine seconds ahead of Dawe.

Tony Hutchings (Team Turnpike MG ZR) won class C after a race-long battle with the Peugeot 205 GTi of

Alex Ferguson. The pair passed Carleton Williams at the start and the Carbits UK/AEX Motorsport Vauxhall Corsa GSi failed to keep up with the relentless pace of the leaders, falling seven seconds down by the time the end.

In class D, William Di Claudio (Turnpike Racing Peugeot 106 Xsi) saw off his nearest rival, Russell Poynter-Brown by six seconds. Di Claudio was understandably happy with his win. "It was brilliant, especially after I had an awful qualifying when we popped a head gasket," he beamed.

Rob Ballard was unable to find his usual scintillating pace after qualifying out of position in eighth. An

unexplainable lack of power hindered his chances of progressing in the race. His TMTI/Norris Designs Mitsubishi Evolution 7 RS Sprint proved reliable but off the ultimate pace, finishing in 13th.



Nick Mizen (Rover) finished a disappointing 22nd, but Paul Gardner (Citroen) retired. (Image: Rod Long-Able)

2WD focus

With the regular overall pacesetters in this championship invariably being the four wheel drive cars, it can become easy to overlook the efforts of those drivers persevering with two wheel drive. This weekend saw some particularly impressive performances from the two Seat Ibiza Cupra drivers, especially Tim Hanlon. Tim's car was finally ready for this fourth round of the championship and he drove a sterling lap in qualifying to put himself amongst the big boys in fourth. His race pace was slightly lacking, however yet another two-wheel driver was able to capitalise. Mark Wyatt's omnipotent Vauxhall Astra provided a formidable foe to some competitors, especially Keith Murray (albeit with the Audi hampered by a turbo problem). Bill Brockbank in another Seat Ibiza Cupra recorded his best result of the year, qualifying sixth and finishing seventh.

Two out of the three two wheel drive classes had drivers tied atop their respective championships entering round four. In class B, Mark Wyatt and Ian Craig both had 14 points before Saturday's meeting. In Class D, Russell Poynter-Brown and William Di Claudio both had 18 points prior to the fourth race of the season. Such

unpredictability proves that the two-wheel drive contingent remains a major draw for the local spectators. Despite not having the ultimate pace around Castle Combe, their reliability (amongst the front-runners) has usually proved superior to the four-wheel drive cars. Will there be a two-wheel drive winner atop the overall podium at one of the remaining rounds this year?



Tim Hanlon and Mark Wyatt are leading 2WD contentders. (Image: Rod Long-Able)