



(Image: David Webster)

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Castle Combe Special GT Championship

Round 2, May 7 2007

Josh Barnett reports

Louis Davidson was victorious in an attritional second round of the savesometax.co.uk Castle Combe Special GT Championship.

QUALIFYING

Guy Parr (Radical SR8) blew his opposition out of the water (almost literally, given the appallingly wet conditions) setting a blistering pole time of 1m18.743s to beat his nearest rival, Radical Prosport driver Davidson, by nearly six seconds.

Davidson made the early running, followed by Richard Fearn (Revolution Racing Juno SS3). However Parr jumped to the top of the leader board while the session was still in its infancy and was never challenged, consistently bettering his lap time.

The battle for the other front row grid slot was a lot more frenetic with

Davidson eventually holding off the challenge of Jonathon White (JWR Radical SR3) and Thomas Richardson (Bristol Motor Company Nemesis RME02). Davidson's best time of 1m24.627s was enough to narrowly see off the SR3 pilot. Fearn, after running as high as second for a time had to settle for fifth with a best time that was nearly nine seconds slower than the Herculean lap of Parr.

Two of the championship's perennial frontrunners, Shane Marshall and Guy Woodward struggled in the less than ideal conditions. In the end Marshall (Mallock P21) saw off the challenge of Woodward (Motorvations Ltd Jade Trackstar) by 0.350s to line up 13th and 14th respectively.

Mike Roberts' Radical SR8 battled to 17th place after pitting early in the session.

RACE

Davidson got the jump on a creeping Parr as the Union flag fell. From then on the Pyrford driver was never going to be caught as he pulled an eight second gap of the chasing field. Late in the race a charging Marshall ate into the Radical's lead and at the chequer the gap was down to a mere 0.717s. "I could have gone one to two seconds quicker but each lap I

calculated what lap times I could run at. I didn't want another last lap failure," said Davidson, having put his round one disappointment behind him.

Marshall had carved his way through the field to his second place. By the end of lap two he was already up to ninth, challenging the slow-starting poleman, Parr. The retirement of Rob Clarke – who made a stunning getaway in his Radical Clubsport - on lap two, moved Marshall up another position and when Parr's attempted to move down the inside of Altay John Ali at Camp on lap three resulted in him spinning down the order to twelfth, the Mallock was sitting up in seventh. On lap four Marshall followed Simon Tilling (Tilling Motorsport Radical Prosport) through passed both Brown and Ali putting the round one winner into fifth. Three laps later, Tilling dived down the inside of White at Camp to take third place, costing White momentum as Marshall caught right onto the Radical SR3's rear wing. When White retired on lap eight the Westbury driver was promoted to fourth behind Tilling and the hard-charging Fearn.

Fearn couldn't gap the pair despite his power advantage with a three litre Nissan engine providing motivation. As the trio exited the Esses, Fearn made a costly mistake allowing first Tilling



Tilling survived this moment to take a podium finish. (Image: David Webster)

EVENT DATA

Classes A & B result – 15 laps: 1 Louis Davidson (Radical Prosport) 17m10.416s (96.951mph); 2 Shane Marshall (Mallock P21) +0.717s; 3 Simon Tilling (Radical Prosport); 4 Altay John Ali (Radical SR3). Class A: 1 Guy Woodward (Jade Trackstart); no other finishers. Class B: 1 Davidson; 2 Marshall; 3 Tilling. Pole position: Guy Parr (Radical SR8) 1m18.743s (84.579mph). Fastest lap: Marshall 1m05.648s (101.450mph). Starters: 21. Classes C & D – 10 laps: 1 Tony Michael (Westfield SE) 12m16.992s (90.367mph); 2 Duncan Cameron (Ferrari 360) +10.704s; 3 Jon Dhillon (Ferrari 360); 4 Nima Kahan (Ferrari 360). Class C: 1 Michael; no other finishers. Class D: 1 Cameron; 2 Dhillon; 3 Kahan. Pole position: Dhillon 1m26.418s (77.067mph). Fastest lap: Michael 1m11.932s (92.587mph). Starters: 14.

Standings after round two – Class A: 1= Marcus Pye & Woodward 6; 3 Guy Parr 5; etc. Class B: 1 Marshall 12; 2 Tilling 9; 3 Davidson 6; etc. Class C: 1 Michael 12; 2 Mark Funnell 7; 3 Nick Williamson 4; etc. Class D: 1 Cameron 12; 2 Dhillon 11; 3= Keith Sprules & David Jones 5; etc.

Next round: May 28.

and then Marshall to nip passed. Marshall then ducked out of Tilling's slipstream on the run to Tower to move into second place, where he would stay for the rest of the race, despite his best efforts to go for the win.

Fearns dropped out of a solid fourth place on lap 10 with a mechanical problem and despite a spin at Quarry

on the same lap Tilling held on to take the last podium place.

Fearns' retirement allowed Ali to take fourth place after he passed Brown for fifth on lap six.

Norman Lackford (Radical Prosport) completed the top six following a largely lonely race. He was never challenged by Guy Woodward, who

struggled a little in his spare Jade – the first car being unfit following testing problems. He was the sole finisher in the over 2-litre class, with four others – including poleman Parr, failing to reach the flag. Richardson, meanwhile, didn't even make the start.

Classes C & D

With an oversubscribed entry yet again, the saloon and sports car divisions were siphoned off into their own race, although they qualified with the visiting RGB cars. Bristolian Tony Michael was the winner on this, the first occasion when cars from classes C and D competed alone.



Michael's victory in the race for classes C & D was largely uncontested. (Image: David Webster)

QUALIFYING

Jon Dhillon (JHJ Racing Ferrari 360 Challenge) took pole position, defeating pre-event favourite Mark Funnell (Lotus Exige) by just 0.02s. Dhillon's best lap of 1m26.418s meant that he claimed his first outright pole position, putting him in

great shape to defend his Class D championship lead. Michael (Bristol Motor Company Westfield SE) set the early running before being bumped down to third.

Dhillon's team-mates Duncan Cameron and Nima Kahan finished the damp session in fourth and fifth respectively – an impressive grid slot for Kahan on his debut Castle Combe. Jon Reeves finished sixth in the Wiltshire College-prepared Atom 290 Ltd Mazda RX-7 with a best time of 1m36.126s, and was hoping for better luck than in round one.

RACE

Once again the poleman in Special GT was not the fastest off the line and as the flag dropped it was the second row starter Michael who jumped into a lead that was never challenged.

However Michael's start was deemed too good by the officials, who issued him with a 10 second jump-start penalty – although he held an 11 second advantage by the time it was awarded. He was 20 seconds clear on-the-road when the shortened 10 lap race was completed.

"It's my first win at Castle Combe so it's really good," said Michael, who revealed the simple secret to his success: "I kept it on the black stuff."

The real tussle was for second. Funnell, although not as quick as the leader, was pulling away fairly rapidly from the two pursuing Ferraris. Unfortunately for the Lotus driver suspected transmission failure curtailed his race on lap four. This left the gaggle of Ferraris to battle it out for the remaining steps on the podium.

After a poor start, Dhillon was within touching distance of Cameron's similar machine. Dhillon passed Cameron on lap five and he looked set to increase his points lead over the absent Keith Sprules.

But there would be a twist in the tale, as Dhillon went wide trying to lap battling trio Dylan Popovic, Paul Galam-Bamfield and the black-flagged Reeves at the final corner of the race, allowing Cameron to nip down the inside and take the chequer a nose ahead.

Kahan was a distant fourth, with David Jones just beating George Michael to fifth.