

# **CASTLE COMBE SPECIAL GT CHAMPIONSHIP**

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**Round Six - 19th July**



**Simon Tilling's Radical SR3 won a bizarre but nevertheless hard fought race, after rain played havoc with tyre choice. Mark Funnell, Darcy Smith and Andrew Shanley all led, before Tilling took charge again with three laps to go. *Peter Scherer reports, with images by Oliver Read.***

## **Qualifying**

A wet session led to a totally unpredictable grid, with Manhal Allos putting his Radical SR8 on pole by a massive 4.6 seconds. He would share the front row with Funnell's Lotus Exige, as the Class C man again showed his remarkable skills on a treacherous track.

It was an all Radical second row with Tilling's SR3 heading Shanley's Prosport. Smith's Nemesis was next up with Simon Norris making the most of his four wheel drive in the wet to complete the third row in his Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 3.

## **Race**

As the grid formed up the ever-changing weather prompted farcical scenes as some teams changed to from wets to slicks and back again, while others returned to the paddock to change. Shanley also dashed for the pits after the green flag lap and made his start from the pit lane.

"We had an electrical problem, a coil wire had broken. So we taped it up and hoped for the best," he said. Allos also started from the pit lane rather than his pole spot.

So when the lights went out it was Funnell with the early lead, but Norris flew ahead through Folly. Although Tilling was slow away he was still into third by Quarry. Smith joined a top four break on the opening lap which left Lee Joint's Westfield in a lonely fifth, until he spun on the third lap.

Tilling picked off Funnell on the second lap and hit the front a couple of laps later, after which Funnell's challenge started to fade away into eventual retirement, while Norris did his best to stay at the front but soon had to give way to the flying Radical.

Once Smith had fought his way into second place on lap six, he started to eat away at Tilling's lead. Allos had worked his way through to challenge Norris, until he pitted on the seventh lap after being blackflagged.

Shanley was also flying and as the lead duo came through Camp side by side on lap eight, he was all over Norris for third and soon poised to challenge the leaders. But up front there had been a change, as the slick-shod Smith had taken Tilling, who was on wets, and was attempting to build a lead. While they fought for supremacy Shanley (also on slicks) caught them both napping between Old Paddock and Tower and emerged at the head of a three car train as the new leader.

But then came the rain again. Smith went back in front on lap 11, but Shanley fought back until his grip became almost non-existent. Tilling went through once more on lap 13 as both Smith and Shanley switched to survival mode.

"That was the hardest race in my life," said Tilling, who went on to take victory by 5s. "The tyres were shot, but when it rained I made the right call. I could see Darcy in my mirrors but held him off until Tower on lap nine, then it rained again."

"That was fun. I got Simon at Tower then lost it to Andrew, then I went back ahead at Quarry and he got me back at the chicane I think and then yes it rained," Smith replied after holding on to second.

"I enjoyed it even more driving through the field from the pitlane, but when it rained again there was no grip at all and I knew Darcy was on slicks too," added third placed Shanley.

Norris managed to retain fourth for a class win, "as it started to dry I couldn't stay with the sports cars and my tyres were shot, so even when it rained again I had no real grip," he said.



*Kevin Bird surprised himself with a class win (Image: Oliver Read)*

Andy Tidy's Radical Prosport secured fifth from lap eight, with Laurence Kilby's Mitsubishi and Aaron Delamont's Radical SR3 holding station for sixth and seventh over the closing laps. Kevin Bird's SEAT Leon secured Class D over Keith Sprules' Ferrari 360 Challenge, to the Saloon star's surprise.

"I didn't even know I had got the class until after the race, as I am not used to doing this championship," Bird said.

The top ten was completed by David Beverley-Jones' Caterham.

## Results

Pos.	Cl.	Cl.pos.	Special GT Driver	Round six Car	Sun 17th Jul Time	15 laps Qual
1	B	1	Simon Tilling	Radical SR3	18m53.840s	3
2	B	2	Darcy Smith	Nemesis RME98	+ 5.177s	5
3	B	3	Andrew Shanley	Radical Prosport	+ 14.647s	4
4	C	1	Simon Norris	Mistubishi Lancer Evo 3	+ 29.565s	6
5	B	4	Andy Tidy	Radical Prosport	+ 1m28.981s	13
6	C	2	Laurence Kilby	Mitsubishi Evo 9 RS	+ 1 lap	12
7	B	5	Aaron Delamont	Radical SR3	+ 1 lap	10
8	D	1	Kevin Bird	SEAT Leon	+ 1 lap	8
9	D	2	Keith Sprules	Ferrari 360 Challenge	+ 1 lap	14
10	D	3	David Beverley-Jones	Caterham Seven	+ 1 lap	17
11	B	6	David Smith	Mallock MK34	+ 1 lap	21
12	C	3	James Johnson	Fisher Fury	+ 1 lap	23
13	C	4	Lee Joint	Westfield S.E.W.	+ 2 laps	11
14	D	4	Tim Woodman	Caterham Roadsport	+ 2 laps	18
15	D	5	Keith Dunn	Caterham Seven	+ 2 laps	9
16	D	6	Stuart Dixon	Caterham Seven	+ 4 laps	15
DNF	C		Mark Funnell	Lotus Exige	+ 4 laps	2
DNF	D		George Michael	Toyota MR2 Turbo	+ 4 laps	20
DNF	B		Jeremy Irwin	Jertona Prototype	+ 5 laps	22
DNF	A		Altay John Ali	Radical 1300 Supercharged	+ 6 laps	26
DNF	B		Martin Baker	Radical Clubsport	+ 9 laps	7
DNF	D		Malcolm Webster	Volkswagen Golf GTi	+ 9 laps	19
DNF	B		Norman Lackford	Radical Prosport	+ 15 laps	16
DSQ	A		Manhal Allos	Radical SR8		1
			Winner's speed:	88.10mph		
			Fastest lap:	Shanley	1m06.340s	

## The title battle

Class A			Class B		
1	Manhal Allos	12	1	Simon Tilling	32
2	Shane Marshall	10	2	Andrew Shanley	29
3	Altay John Ali	8	3	Darcy Smith	23
Class C			Class D		
1	Mark Funnell	28	1	Stuart Dixon	28
2	Simon Norris	24	2	Keith Dunn	22
3	Phil Gale	16	3	David Beverley-Jones	15

It was only a few races ago that Simon Tilling was wondering if his brush with a backmarker and consequent retirement had already cost him the title, but now he is back in front, although his three point margin over Andrew Shanley is far from comfortable.

Mark Funnell's retirement this weekend could be pivotal in the overall championship fight, while Stuart Dixon is still in the thick of things too, so all is far from settled.

**For more information about Oliver Read's images, email [oliverread@yahoo.com](mailto:oliverread@yahoo.com).**

**Grateful thanks to Peter Scherer for stepping in at very short notice to write this report after the intended writer was taken ill.**