



Castle Combe FF1600 Championship Round 7, Sunday 31st July.



Marcus Allen secured the Castle Combe Formula Ford 1600 class B championship with his third win of the season, and with Felix Fisher and Ben Norton colliding for the second race in succession, the Kevin Mills Racing driver has all but secured the overall crown for 2010. Rob Hall also put in a star turn in the Swift SC10 to earn driver of the day. (Image: Oliver Read.)

Qualifying

Ben Norton (Checkpoint Tyres Spectrum 011B) continued his 100% success rate in qualifying as his time of 1m11.439s earned him his sixth consecutive pole of the season, with championship leader Marcus Allen (Swift SC92) trailing the Wiltshire College driver by 0.196s.

This was all the more impressive as Norton's number one engine had blown up in testing on Thursday. The unit, that had been standing dormant for over three years, was the car's original engine, though that didn't seem to slow the Bratton pilot.

Andrew Jones (Coachstyle Ray GRS07) was just behind Allen in third, whilst Felix Fisher (Rochford Garden Machinery) just crept under the 1m12s barrier in his rebuilt Van Diemen RF00.

Kyle Tilley's (Souley Motorsport Van Diemen RF87) dominance of class C ended in the barriers at Quarry after his throttle stuck open on his first run out the pits. This left his team manager, Brian Soule (Souley Motorsport Van Diemen RF89), to take class pole.

Race

With his commanding position in the championship Marcus Allen knew that all he needed to do was finish consistently in the final three races of the year to secure his maiden title, however that didn't stop him shooting off into a commanding lead when the lights went out for round seven.

Poleman, Ben Norton was shuffled back to third as Andrew Jones dived up the inside at Quarry meaning that as they flew past to start the second lap the reigning champion was in third as Allen started to open up an advantage at the front.

On lap two, Felix Fisher moved ahead of Norton at the Esses, and, with the Spectrum getting a wheel on the grass Steven Jensen also seized the initiative to move into fourth.

With Allen getting away, the real interest was in the six-car battle for second as Jones, Fisher, Jensen, Norton, Rob Hall (Swift Cooper Swift SC10) and Adam Higgins (RIADRO Racing Van Diemen RF90) – the fastest man on the circuit - all ran nose-to-tail, covered by a paltry 1.6s.

Lap five saw Norton move back ahead of Jensen as the crowd was treated to some classic Formula Ford racing.

On the next circuit, Norton was past archrival Fisher, before overtaking Jones in consecutive corners. Fisher then dived ahead of Jones into Tower before the unthinkable happened.

Exiting Tower, Fisher and Norton tangled as the Spectrum was spun across the front of the Van Diemen with the whole mess wiping out the tyre barrier on the inside of Bobbies – just 100 yards further on from their collision at the last round.

With their cars stranded across the circuit, the safety car was scrambled, eradicating Allen's 3.8-second advantage – a lead that had been strengthened by the chaos behind him.

As the field got ready to go racing again on lap eight it was Jensen who lined up second, with Higgins behind him, Hall fourth and Jones (who had been delayed by the Fisher/Norton incident) fifth.

With the green flag waving, it was Rob Hall who took the fight to Allen, surging past Jensen at Quarry before taking Higgins and cruising up to the back of the Swift SC92's gearbox.

Allen could have conceded in order to protect his championship lead, however, in the mould of a true racer, the KMR driver and Hall engaged in an enthralling battle for the spoils on Castle Combe's 60th Birthday.

Hall evidently had more pace in this phase, setting the fastest lap of the race on the first lap after the safety car period (on a lap where he overtook two cars!). However, Allen drove with all the hallmarks of a champion, soaking up the pressure.

Hall was looking every which way, but Allen had the advantage of placing his car on the inside line first. As the Swift Cooper driver used the entire track in his pursuit of victory, Allen was frequently using the grass at Camp in his efforts to stay ahead.

And his efforts paid off, as he took the chequered flag for the third time this season, with Driver of the Day Hall a mere 0.218s behind.

Behind this lead battle the battle for the final podium place was no less intense. After dropping to fifth, Jones took advantage of Hall's charge on lap eight to first pass Higgins then overtake Jensen, in a move that also allowed the son of Bob to take fourth.

Next time around though it was Jones' turn to drop from third to fifth as Higgins and Jensen both moved up one again.

With the trio squabbling, Jones also had the attentions of the ever-quicker Nathan Ward for the final two laps, however the Swift didn't quite have the pace to get past the Welshman.

The four of them crossed the line for the final time with only six tenths of a second separating them as Higgins took his second podium in a row – reward for a difficult start to the season that hadn't gone unnoticed by the Chippenham driver.

“Brilliant [to be the fastest driver on the circuit in the early stages]! I've been looking for that all year,” exclaimed the elated Higgins on the podium.

After Ward had escaped their tussle, David Vivian (Whidcombe Dental Surgery), Thomas Barrow (Saxon Motorsport Mygale SJ00) and Roger Orgee (Van Diemen RF00) crossed the line within a couple of seconds of one another after another monumental battle. Oliver Bull completed the top 10 a further two seconds back.

Kyle Tilley produced a sterling drive to finish just 0.300s behind his team boss Brian Soule in the Pre 90 class. Tilley made up 16 places on the first lap before taking second in class away from Iain Houston (Van Diemen RF89) on lap three.

Thanks to the safety car Tilley was right with Soule, however a battle with Luke Cooper (Drivotech Swift SC92) – who eventually passed Soule as well – slowed his progress. Despite losing his 100 per cent record, second place has secured Tilley the championship with two rounds spare – something he is thankful of after running out of budget.

Pos.	Cl.	Cl. Pos.	Driver	Car	Time	Qual.
1	B	1	Marcus Allen	Swift SC92	15m38.733s	2
2	A	1	Rob Hall	Swift SC10	+ 0.218s	6
3	B	2	Adam Higgins	Van Diemen RF90	+ 3.202s	8
4	A	2	Steven Jensen	Spectrum 011C	+ 3.491s	5
5	A	3	Andy Jones	Rav GRS07	+ 3.618s	3
6	B	3	Nathan Ward	Swift SC95	+ 3.861s	7
7	B	4	David Vivian	Swift SC92	+ 4.540s	10
8	A	4	Thomas Barrow	Mvgale SJ00	+ 4.875s	9
9	A	5	Roger Orgee	Van Diemen RF00	+ 6.159s	11
10	B	5	Oliver Bull	Swift SC92	+ 8.861s	12
11	B	6	Luke Cooper	Swift SC92	+ 14.876s	13
12	C	1	Brian Soule	Van Diemen RF89	+ 15.901s	15
13	C	2	Kyle Tilley	Van Diemen RF87	+ 16.201s	34
14	A	6	Geoff Janes	Van Diemen RF01	+ 23.624s	16
15	B	7	Richard Higgins	Van Diemen RF94	+ 25.980s	31
16	A	7	Michael Bradley	Van Diemen RF00	+ 26.492s	14
17	B	8	Shaun Macklin	Swift SC92	+ 28.981s	20
18	A	8	Steve Chapman	Van Diemen RF02	+ 29.505s	21
19	A	9	David Tansley	Rav GRS10	+ 29.735s	23
20	B	9	Kelvin Fov	Swift SC93	+ 43.304s	24
21	C	3	Pete O'Shea	Swift FB89	+ 43.680s	19
22	C	4	Pete Diccox	Van Diemen RF89	+ 46.909s	29
23	B	10	Paul James	Swift SC92	+ 47.138s	27
24	C	5	Robbie Stevens	PRS RH01-C	+ 47.609s	33
25	C	6	Iain Houston	Van Diemen RF89	+ 48.214s	18
26	C	7	Michael Phillips	Swift FB87	+ 55.410s	30
27	C	8	Stephen Bracegirdle	Van Diemen RF88	+ 1m00.075s	28
28	B	11	Mike Madge	Vector MG93	+ 1m00.313s	26
29	C	9	John Hallam	Van Diemen RF89	+1m03.510s	25
NC	C	N/A	Darren Houldcroft	Van Diemen RF88	+ 3 Laps	32
NC	A	N/A	Felix Fisher	Van Diemen RF00	+ 7 Laps	4
NC	A	N/A	Ben Norton	Spectrum 011B	+ 7 Laps	1
NC	A	N/A	Ashley Clifford	Mvgale SJ01	+ 8 Laps	22
NC	A	N/A	Claudio Viveiros	Van Diemen RF99	+ 15 Laps	17

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