



Andrew Shanley hangs on as Simon Tilling closes in (Image: Oliver Read)

## Shanley fends off Tilling for spectacular win

Andrew Shanley resisted huge pressure from Simon Tilling to start 2009 account in the best possible fashion – with a Special GT winner’s garland. Former FF1600 champion Ed Moore finished third while Ian Hall beat Mark Funnell to Class C honours, marking himself as another challenger to the Trowbridge driver’s omnipotent Lotus Exige. *Josh Barnett reports.*

### Qualifying

Andrew Shanley (Radical Prosport) and Simon Tilling (Tilling Motorsport Radical SR3) battled all session long for Special GT pole, with Shanley’s lap of 1m06.020s looking set to gain the number one spot. However, as the chequered flag fell it was Tilling who stole the imitative, lapping in 1m05.522s to take pole position.

Manhal Allos (Sollatek) made an impressive Combe Special GT debut in his Radical SR8, beating double FF1600 champion Ed Moore, who is trying to emulate Josh Fisher’s achievements and win in another Combe discipline, to third.

Ian Hall (Wildcat Engineering Darrian T98-GTR) took fifth, appearing as a new challenger to the dominant Mark Funnell’s Lotus Exige. Hall finished the session 0.947s ahead of the Trowbridge driver with Nick Williamson a further four tenths in arrears.

Altay John Ali (West Coast RR Motorsport Radical 1300) split the Class C runners in seventh, while Nick Starkey put in an astonishing performance to place his Class D Caterham Superlight inside the top 10 with a best time of 1m13.239s.

### Race

With the lights still firmly on red, both Moore and Manhal Allos were creeping a little on row two, with Allos grappling with a sequential gearbox problem that meant that he could shift up, but not down.

When the lights went out polesitter Shanley got away cleanly, but Tilling was swamped by Moore and the lightning quick Lotus of Funnell, as Allos stalled and dropped to the back of the field.

Shanley promptly started pulling away, opening up a 2.6s lead over Moore after the first lap. Moore himself was edging clear of Tilling, who was sandwiched between Class C runners, Funnell and Hall.



*Moore settles in to sports prototype racing  
(Image: Oliver Read)*

Lap two saw Funnell demoted from third to fifth as first Tilling got past, before Hall outbraked the Lotus into Camp corner. Tilling quickly pulled away, setting consecutive fastest laps on his third and fourth circuits, as he smoothly clawed back the gap to Moore, who was by now right with Shanley as the leaders started to encounter traffic.

By the halfway point, the top three were covered by a mere 0.934s. Tilling certainly looked the more likely to challenge Shanley's leadership, and a mistake by Moore on lap nine gave Tilling the chance he needed to move into second.

As the leaders upped their pace and more traffic came into play, Moore was dropped, eventually falling back to a lonely third at the flag.

But though it was down to a two-man fight, the battle for the lead was intensifying. On lap 12 Tilling had a look up the inside at Bobbies before backmarkers once again intervened on the run down to Camp.

But Tilling was supreme through Camp, allowing him to close onto the rear wing of his fellow Radical competitor, but Shanley's car had the better top end power as they disappeared over Avon Rise, enabling him to defend the line into Quarry.

As they entered the final lap, just 0.165s separated the pair, but Shanley prevailed to draw first blood, taking the spoils by a slightly

increased 0.288s, with Moore a respectable third on his debut.

Behind Moore, other battles were also raging. Funnell managed to re-pass Hall just one lap after losing the place, but with Funnell now ahead it was the Darrian driver's turn to attack, moving back into fourth (and the lead of Class C) at Camp on the fourth lap.

As Hall carved his way through the slower drivers, Funnell fell into the clutches of the flying Allos who had recovered supremely after his dire start. He had regained seven positions on the first lap before promptly moving back into the top 10 by halfway through lap four.



*Allos charges through the field (Image: Oliver Read)*

Hall was next in line for Allos who swiftly overtook on lap eight to move into fourth where he would stay for the rest of the race, finishing 17.232s behind third-placed Moore.

With traffic out of the way, Funnell was able to reduce Hall's advantage, but despite his best efforts the Class C champion couldn't find a way past, eventually settling for sixth, only 0.767s behind as the duo crossed the finish line.

Nick Starkey couldn't quite replicate the form that put him inside the top 10 in qualifying. Despite setting the fastest lap in Class D, Starkey had to settle for second best against series regular Keith Dunn (Caterham Seven).

However, Starkey still had cause for celebration as he kept 2008 champion, Stuart Dixon (Dixon Constructing Ltd. Caterham Seven) at bay for the entire duration of the 15-lap encounter.