

## Evo Caterham Academy

### Group One – Round 3

#### Castle Combe Sprint – 5<sup>th</sup> July

Hurrah, almost on my doorstep, set in the beautiful Wiltshire countryside Combe is one of my favourite venues. The Academy has been coming to Combe for a few years now and we are always warmly welcomed by Tony Streeting, Clerk of the Course, and his merry band of men and women.

As well as being a great circuit for the drivers, it is also very good for spectators, viewing at Quarry and Camp a must, although in this sprint Camp Corner is not used. It is quite a sight watching each car down through Folly on to Avon Rise where the car disappears and one does wonder if the car is going to appear again after Quarry, as this is the corner that catches most out.

Convoy runs were not being held so a walk of the course was essential, and what a long walk it was too!!! A couple of crafty chappies borrowed a bike from somewhere and biked round, very sensible.... The weather was a bit dull at 7.30am, a fine day had been forecast, but it did not look too hopeful. I caught sight of Simon from Caterham Midlands, who had arrived early for a change, unloading the van, there seemed to be quite a number of new wings, I think he expected a few problems! Everyone seemed to turn up early and managed to walk the course and still be in time for the Driver Briefing, well done... Simon HP and David BJ turned up together, David had played host to Simon the night before and had even cooked him a huge breakfast (must be something to do with their hyphenated surnames)... we will say no more. Chris Milner turned up even though he had been quite poorly for a week, he did not look brilliant at all. Rob Thomas did not turn up, and I have since found out that he had been unwell also. It was great to see Paul Hague and family once again, and Nathan from Group Two, who came to pinch a few tips.

Enough waffle, on to first of the two practice runs. Off you went to line up, and oh dear, a few of you were soon on your way back to the paddock, having forgotten your practice ticket, which you needed to show before you are allowed out on the circuit! Lots of wheel spin at the start for most of you, Andrew had problems selecting the correct gear, and Chris spun at the first chicane, Mike B almost getting badly out of shape at Quarry. No major dramas, and at the end of that no great surprises apart from Simon HP lying in second place, it must have been the breakfast Simon... Jethro did not have a brilliant run, but this was the first time he had seen Combe his fellow **evo** counterpart, David Yu had driven the circuit a couple of times so had the upper hand this time. Second practice

everyone seemed to improve a fair bit, Darryl almost did not get out, he forgot his practice ticket which was locked in Laurence's car!!!

Lunch time and the paddock was a flurry of activity. Tyre pressures, anti-roll bars, and slip angles were the main topics of conversation. Some found time for a little snooze, Uncle Phil being one of them. There was plenty of time for a leisurely lunch which was nice for a change..

So first timed run, John Ratledge had a spin at Quarry, he could only manage 86.06, Andrew's run was not up to his expectation, and wee Dougie could have done better, 77.01 was his time Result of this run being Nick (the belly) Potter in the lead, with Mike B and a very pleased Stephen Greaves third. David Yu had got the better of Jethro so Jethro set off to do some homework on the circuit. Simon HP had slipped down the order too.

So, the final run, Uncle Phil managed a big spin at the chicane, as did Jethro and David Yu!! Wee Dougie also spun at the chicane but somehow managed to take almost 2 seconds off his first run time. Sadly the red flags came out as Ian Atkinson got it badly out of shape going over Avon Rise into Quarry and landed in the tyre wall. Ian was absolutely fine, the car not quite so lucky!!

And so, at the top, Nick had taken first place with 74.41, with Mike B having to make do with second this time with 74.57. Steven managed to remain in 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 75.17 which he was really thrilled about and David Yu, much to Jethro's horror, came fourth with 75.54... So a slight shake up at the top. It was good to see Ross having a good run, and Mat Porter was very pleased with the improvement he made on his second run (it makes a difference having a clean car Mat)! Amazingly enough, Mike B managed to do exactly the same time on both his runs, 75.47 each time.

Thanks to all who stayed for prize giving, and thanks to all supporters who came to watch. My thanks to Gail and Henrietta for keeping me watered.

See you all at Harewood

Kim Denning