

EVO CATERHAM ACADEMY

RACE REPORT

GROUPS ONE AND TWO

MALLORY PARK – 28TH SEPTEMBER

Third race of the season upon us, Mallory Park in Leicester being the venue. Mallory is quite a simple circuit, 1.35 miles long, but offers some of the most exciting racing, due to the variety of bends. It is also a great venue for spectators, almost all of the circuit can be seen from the banking area. The circuit is very fast and very challenging, Gerrards corner, the extremely long seemingly never ending right-hander, and Shaw's Hairpin being the favourites for spectators and drivers alike.

The day dawned wet and misty, not what the Academy was used to... but never the less spirits were undaunted and the paddock was full of happy smiling faces and a man in a very fetching striped jumper! Scrutineering safely over, lessons duly learned from Snetterton

Qualifying for Group One, circuit was quite damp and there were a few incidents because of this. Jethro had an off coming out of Gerrards, managed to end his qualifying there as the car was not fit to continue the session. Ben also had a bad qualifying, he could not get a clear lap, and wee Dougie also not doing well. So, qualifying results quite startling, Simon Powell on pole!!!!!! Local man Nick Potter managing to get second, followed by Mike and James. Next up, the delighted Darryl and Lawrence, excellent qualifying positions for them. Matthew Porter also extremely pleased with his performance in qualifying 11th. And where was Jethro in all this, a lowly 16th, a lot of work to do for him, especially as David Yu had qualified 7th.

Qualifying for group two, and the track had dried quite nicely, so an easier session in store for them. But the session not without incidents, Garrett had a spin at Gerrards and managed to hit Christian, this put poor Christian at the back of the grid. No real shake up in the qualifying positions, and much quicker lap times, due to the track conditions being far more favourable. Mike in pole, with a very delighted Simon Mardle in second place, Nathan 3rd followed by Ben and Bill (or should it be Bill and Ben!) with Neil Fletcher in a disappointing for him 6th place.

The paddock was very busy indeed; quite a big meeting at Mallory and the large paddock was overflowing with enthusiastic competitors. Caterham Midlands were kept fairly busy, mainly trying to get Jethro's car ready for action that afternoon.

Race One, and the weather was kind to us, it was dry. Simon on pole had a good start and all was looking good until Lawrence spun coming down Devils Elbow and poor Ben

having no where to go went straight into him. Fortunately both drivers were unhurt and walked away from the cars, so two cars not managing to finish a lap. Meanwhile, coming from 16th on the grid, Jethro moves into third place, and all this in two laps!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Must have been like the parting of the red sea for him coming through the pack. Steven must have had a moment as he was now in last place. Ian Atkinson retired on his 4th lap, so three out by this time. Chris Milner was having a great race, having qualified 9th, but he had a huge moment coming down Devils Elbow, just managing somehow to keep control of the car and managed to join the fray again, but at the back. The battle between Nick and Jethro continued, but Simon hanging on in third place, not giving up. Wee Dougie was also making progress, and by lap 6 had moved up into 8th place, having a good battle with Mike Blackadder who must have had a moment on the second lap, falling from fourth place to 16th.

So a race full of surprises and very exciting to watch. James was keeping steady progress, as was Darryl, both managing to keep out of trouble. Matthew was still making progress of his own, up to 6th place by lap 7. Chequered flag looming, and the battle between Jethro and Nick still nip and tuck, with the lead changing almost every lap. Thrilling stuff for the spectators who were really engrossed in this battle and watching a very close well fought race all the way down the grid.

Jethro managed to hold Nick off the win the race, with Simon coming in third, having fought hard to keep his place. James was 4th with Darryl 5th and a grinning from ear to ear Dougie in 6th. Also grinning was Matthew, holding on to 6th place, a huge improvement for him from the start of the season. What a race, hugely entertaining and cleanly fought. Well done lads.

Could Group Two match the thrills of the first race, of course they could.

Mike took the lead from the first lap with Simon and Nathan in hot pursuit. Mike Thornhill was keeping these three in his sights, with Neil close on his tail. Both Peter and Ben having a moment on this first lap, putting Peter at the back and Ben down in 8th place. Meanwhile Jim (Jumper) Tatchell having a good first lap, moving from 10th up to 6th. Stephen Rowden was also making his way up the grid, and by the second lap was in 7th place. Cliff had a coming together with Garret, on lap 3, which brought Cliff into the pits, his race over for the day. Gary had also come in, not exactly sure what happened to him but his race was over by the second lap! Bill Addison also having a very short race, he came off at the hairpin on his first lap...this circuit was proving to be very challenging for some.

Meanwhile, the lead was still changing almost every lap between Mike and Nathan; slipstreaming down Stebbe straight seeing who could get the tow. Mike and Neil were still chasing, having a battle of their own. Howard was making an impression; he achieved the fastest lap of the race on lap 5 but did not manage to improve his position. Andrew Beaumont was making steady progress, having started from 15th on the grid, had made his way up to 8th by the 6th lap. This was a great closely fought race all the way down the grid, Jim, Stephen, Andrew and Ben keeping as close to the leaders as they

could, Jim and Ben having a good scrap coming down Devils Elbow. Lap 10 saw many improvements at the back of the grid, Christian, who had been so unlucky in qualifying, had quietly progressed from last on the grid to 16th. Merlin, who had not had a good qualifying was also having a good race and made up 6 places. Even our quiet Italian had improved his grid position and was in 13th place, so solid racing from them.

All seemed to be going so well and it looked like being a fantastic finish, the battle still between Mike, Simon and Nathan, but Nathan had dropped a couple of places and was pushing very hard to get back his second place, there was a big coming together at Shaw's which resulted in Nathan climbing all over Simon's car. The rest of the field managed to continue and Mike won the race, with a very surprised Neil in second and Mike Thornhill third. Both Nathan and Simon were perfectly ok, but the cars did not look so good. Ben and Jim finished 4th and 5th, a great race for them.

Another very entertaining closely fought race, well done again.

Kim Denning