

Evo Caterham Academy

Group One – Round 3

Castle Combe Sprint – 3rd July

Castle Combe is set in some of the most beautiful countryside in Wiltshire, the village of Castle Combe is owned by the National Trust and is definitely worth a visit.

The circuit is quite a challenging one, no sooner have you started than you are over Avon Rise going into Quarry, not for the faint hearted! The Esses coming up next, and then on into Tower and Bobbies. This being a sprint, the course was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a lap and finished at Westway.

It was another early start and amazingly everyone turned up on time! We were without Adrian for this event, as you probably all know by now, there was a little addition to the Argyros family, a little boy born on Thursday, Charlie Thomas, no doubt he will be part of the paddock very soon. We were joined by Nathan Bell, ex Academy now Roadsport A contender who very kindly came along to give a helping hand where needed and his helping hands were needed very quickly indeed! Mr Granelli required immediate assistance as he had broken the zip on his overalls! Luckily Nathan managed to fix them as no one had a spare pair to offer Richard. It may be a good idea to have a spare pair just in case something similar happens to you. If your overalls are not in working order e.g. the zip is broken you will not be allowed to compete in them.

There were no convoy runs available and it was advisable to walk the course, and Nathan offered to walk it with those of you who were willing to go. It was of course a long walk but it woke you up! No problems with signing on and scrutineering, although Andy Billet was concerned about helmet clearance with some of the cars, I have sent out a bulletin to you all regarding this. The weather was not very kind to us, cold wet and windy to start, luckily we were on last so there was time for it to improve.

Driver briefing over it was time for first practice, conditions had improved but the track was very slippery. There were a number of incidents and red flags but by the time we were on it had cleared up quite a bit, although the rain was threatening all the time. For some reason you were to line up in reverse number order, which caused a little confusion to start with. Slight panic with Luke forgetting his timing strut and Jamie forgetting his arm restraints, but problems were overcome and you were off! There were a few excursions off the black stuff, Andy Blight at Tower, James Sykes at Quarry, Hugo had a huge spin coming over Avon Rise but managed to somehow hold it all together. Greg, who had walked the course earlier had a shock coming out of Quarry when he saw the chicane in front of him, it was not there when he had walked the course and it took him by surprise!! Somehow or other he managed to get through it without too much problem. Swampy had a spin at the Esses, but all in all you coped with the conditions very well,

and not one red flag! There was a short shower half way through the runs so the times did not mean very much.

Second practice was dryer and a dry line was appearing to encourage you. I was watching at Quarry, and it was very interesting to watch all the different lines coming in and out of this infamous corner.

Lunch time came, and the sun was trying very hard to come out. The wind was still strong which was very helpful in drying the track out. There were quite a few of you studying the circuit guide, and Greg very ingeniously had the idea of sticking a map of the circuit onto his steering wheel!!!!!!!!!!!! (You must of course remember that he is from New Zealand) Luckily Combe has a very good café which made a warm haven from the cold winds, and the food was excellent. (They were also showing the Women's Tennis Final from Wimbledon, I wondered why there were a number of male bodies surrounding the TV)!

1st timed run, still very windy but dry. Richard Granelli was the first to go and finished with 81.92, he was followed by Luke, Henry (Henry was taking things a bit easy following his off at the track day earlier in the week), Claudia and Paul. Paul was very quick into Quarry but slightly overdid it, Pat was also very quick. Adrian seemed to take a very good line and looked to be quite smooth, Chris Sedgewick also very quick but carried a bit too much speed coming into Quarry. Jamie was obviously trying quite hard as there was a slight squeal as he came out of the corner. Again, no incidents to worry about, although James Sykes had a fail, having all four wheels off the grass at some point. At the end of this run, Paul was in the lead with 75.55, Pat second with 75.91 and Adrian third with 76.29.

Second timed run, conditions much better, it was quite warm and sunny by this time so conditions much better, although the wind was still very strong, thus keeping times down slightly on this run. Luke and Henry were having a go, their identical pale blue cars following each other, both a bit leery coming out of Quarry. Paul trying hard to improve his first time, coming into Quarry very quickly again but not particularly very smoothly. Pat had another quick run, and looked to be in control. Patrick had a very quick run and also looked to be very much in control. No red flags to be seen, amazing, and no fails!!! You all equipped yourselves very well indeed. Simon from Caterham Midlands did not have much to do at all!!!!!!!!!!!!

At the end of this second and final run, this was the order. Paul with 74.70, Pat with 75.70, Patrick with 76.18 and Chris Rome with 76.26, congratulations to them. It was another closely fought contest all the way.

Thanks to all of you who stayed for prize giving.

Kim Denning
Championship Co Ordinator