

EVO CATERHAM ACADEMY

ROUND ONE 23rd APRIL

AINTREE SPRINT GROUPS ONE AND TWO

Well, it came and has now gone, your very first event of the Championship. The weather could have been kinder to us, but then again it could have rained!! At least we saw some sunshine.

This was our third visit to Aintree with the Academy and we were made very welcome again by Liverpool Motor Club, who I am sure you will all agree, went out of their way to help make your first ever event as enjoyable as possible. My thanks go to Phil Gough, Secretary, who managed to find time to walk the course with you; John Harden and Ron Hunt, Clerks, who were only too happy to give their help and advice to you all throughout the day. You did try your very best to be in the right place at the right time, (well most of you did) and considering there was not an awful lot of room for manoeuvre in the paddock area I think you did very well! All of you went home with your cars looking almost exactly the same as they did when you arrived, some were slightly dirtier.

Aintree of course is home to the Grand National for those horsey ones amongst you and is a fairly tight and technical course. It starts with a 250 metre straight leading into the first corner, tight left hander, Country Corner, followed by Village Corner, a banked right hander which takes you into Valentines Way, then comes Bechers Bend, a fairly intimidating bend as it starts quite tight but quickly opens out and lasts for around 450 metres. To get this right takes a lot of confidence and if you do get it right you gain that important extra bit of speed to take you on to Railway Straight, the longest straight of the circuit being 600 metres in length.. Phew, what a prospect.

John Harden gave a full briefing for all drivers and then had a further chat to all Academy drivers just to ensure you all knew what you were doing, and I think that most of you did actually listen.

Luckily we were last on the programme, this gave us time to sort out some minor problems that inevitably happen on a first event... There were a few timing struts missing, lots of numbers to be stuck on but nothing too serious.. (I won't mention that there was one car completely bereft of decals, but I will say thanks to some of his fellow competitors the car was soon looking presentable) Nick and Simon from Midlands were on hand (somewhat late in the day) to help with minor problems.

1<sup>st</sup> practice seemed to come round all too quickly but you were all organised and ready to go and line up in good time. It is very difficult to say much about a sprint as it is all over in seconds but I will try and write something interesting!

Just a few more checks as you were lining up, making sure you all had your arm restraints on, and in the correct position and that your seat belts were secure and helmets on and in some cases fastened! I expect those butterflies were buzzing around by then.

The competition consisted of two practice runs and three timed runs with the possibility of a further run if time allowed.

Practice runs seemed to go very well, only three of you without times for one of the runs. We managed to get one timed run in before lunch which was a great achievement and meant that everyone had behaved themselves.

So, this was it, what you had all been waiting for, the first timed run of the first event. Julius was the first to go, I am sure his nerves were a little on the edgy side, and it seemed no time at all when you were all back in the paddock wondering what all the fuss was about. At the end of that run, Richard McCann was in the lead in Group One with an amazing 53.98 and Clive Coote (flying the flag for the older competitor) was in the lead in Group Two with 55.17 Second in Group One was Gary Halcrow(it's a shame he didn't get in line as quick as the time he went round in) and third Trevor Newman. Second in Group Two was Oliver Benjamin and third Ben Rockey.

But, this was the first of three runs, and much could happen! Lunch time came, and the sun did start to come through. It was wonderful to see so many supporters with you, wives, girlfriends, mothers, fathers, children, grannies, etc. A big thanks to all of you for turning up, I hope that you will continue to do so throughout the season and that you enjoy the fun and camaraderie that is already part of this Championship.

It was nice to see a couple of old faces, ex Academy competitors, James Kerr, who was competing, and Matt Gillbanks who lives close by. This is one of the lovely aspects of Caterham Racing, you get to see lots of old faces time after time as a huge percentage of previous Academy competitors are competing in speed and race events all over the country.

Enough of all that and down to the serious bit.. second timed runs. No great dramas, lots of you managed to knock some time off your first run, Julius had a much better run, as did Andrew Langdell and Rick Scannell, and some did go slower though, taking it steady. I was watching this run at Country Corner, and it was interesting to see the different lines and the selection of gears some of you were making! The only tyre screeching came from Richard McCann and Simon Parfitt, which shows they were trying! (I am an expert in all this of course)!

Now the crunch time and you were all lining up for the very last time... competition was tight. Some were obviously pushing too hard and lost time, but all in all another good

run. and by the looks on most of your faces as you came back in the paddock you had enjoyed it!

So, the final results, in Group One it was Richard McCann with a new Academy record of 53.68, Trevor Newman in second place with 54.06, and third, Simon Parfitt with 54.36. In Group Two, Clive Coote came out on top with 54.43, followed by Paul Glenister with 54.96 and in third place a delighted Phil Kain with 54.82.

I must mention Emma, who was so thrilled to see her times coming down with each run, she started with 65.54 and finished with 58.02!

Thanks to all of you who stayed to give support for Prize Giving, not only to our winners but to the winners in the other championships competing that day. I realise you all have a long way to go home but please stay for prize giving if you can, one day it may be you!

You can all give yourselves a pat on the back, your first event was a great success. I really enjoyed the day and am looking forward to the next events. It was great to be together for the first event, we will not be together again until the races start in September.

Please don't be offended if I have not mentioned your name in this report, there are far too many of you for me to do that but it does not mean you are any less important! Congratulations to our 'podium' guys, it could be you next time!

Kim Denning  
Championship Co-Ordinator