

ACADEMY RACE REPORT

GROUP TWO – GOODWOOD SPRINT 4TH JUNE 2004

I don't know what happened to 'Glorious' Goodwood, the weather was not in the least bit glorious! Situated near Chichester in West Sussex, this classic circuit, famous for the Revival Meeting and the Festival of Speed held every year. It is a very fast circuit, with the infamous St. Mary's, where Stirling Moss had his career ending accident. Madgewick, not for the faint hearted, and the Levant Straight, getting Lavant correct is crucial to getting a decent lap time!

Signing on was quite respectable, 08.30, and it was good to see that most of you turned up nice and early. There was a lot of frenzied activity going on in the paddock parking the cars and sorting out trailers etc. It was great to be joined by John Brewer, making his first appearance, having had to miss the sprint at Aintree.

A briefing was given by the Clerk of the Course, and then you were taken out for convoy runs, an excellent way of showing you the lines and give you an idea of where you were supposed to be going. Hopefully you would at least have some idea of where the corners were! Some of you had done a track day at Goodwood, but there were a handful that had not seen the course at all. Scrutineering finished, drivers briefing over, it was time to think about what lay ahead and discuss tactics!

Practice consisted of a lap from a standing start, followed by a flying lap, unfortunately the weather decided to change mid lap and the heavens opened. This proved to be very unlucky for Graham Coyle, who having travelled all the way from Belgium to compete, came a cropper on his flying lap at Fordwater and ended up in the tyre wall. The car looked to be unrepairable but our inspired team from Caterham Midlands took a look and decided that the car could be fixed if the driver felt up to the task of having another go.. Silly question, of course he did, he is a Caterham competitor! Graham was checked over by the medical team, but he decided to pay a visit to the local hospital to ensure that all was ok as he had felt a slight twinge in his back. Having been given a clean bill of health from the hospital he was soon back and raring to go.

The weather conditions were obviously going to play a big part in the day's competition, as conditions seemed to change every few minutes.

Most of you managed to complete practice without too much problem, although there were a few spins and lots of tyre squealing...Hugh, who was behind Graham when he came off, had a huge spin at the chicane and also missed the red flag! This prompted the Clerk of the Course to give you all another briefing just to make sure you knew your flags... this is of course all part of the immense learning curve involved in becoming an experienced competitor, and why the Academy is the place to start...

After practice, Mike Rowland was in the lead with 108.34, followed by Matt and Ben. The times deteriorated as the rain came down.

It seemed no time at all before you were lining up for your first timed run. Due to the fact that there were BARC championships elsewhere the same day the entry list was depleted somewhat. Conditions had changed again and it was sunny and almost dry and the times reflected this, most of you taking at least 10 seconds off your practice run. At this end of this run, Luke had taken the lead, with Martin Boakes and Ben hot on his tail

Time for lunch... unfortunately the heavens opened just as everyone was unpacking their picnic baskets..... Luckily shelter was available in the 'pit garages' and of course the café was also open. It was great to see Wee Dougie and his camera. Dougie Clark, who as you all know is now a seasoned Caterham competitor, having done the Academy a couple of years ago and is now a competitor in the Roadsport Challenge. He is also responsible for the forum you all seem to spend so much time on, he was there to catch the action on film. It was also nice to see Paul and Alisa Sweeney, Paul did the Academy last year and is now competing in Roadsport B, he came to see how everyone was getting on.

On to the second timed run, cloudy and wet but track drying slightly, very difficult conditions for you. Joe had an excursion at Fordwater, but luckily ended up in the poppies and not the tyre wall. A number of spinners this time, Emma, Tom, Richard, Martin Emerson. Norman, Clive and Katy having big moments which resulted in failed runs. The times reflected the poor conditions, Luke coming out on top.

Then it was crunch time, third and final timed run... Guess what, track conditions had changed again, the sun was trying to come out and the track seemed to be dry. Again times reflected this change. Tom had a big spin at the chicane, Ben was a little wobbly there also, Martin Boakes looked very quick on his lap, as did Toby and Peter. Martin was indeed quick, he came out with the best time of the day of 103.39, Luke 104.92, Ben 106.42, and Clive 104.30. Some of you had bettered your first run times slightly, some had been slower.

Final results then, Martin Boakes, who had had the best of the weather was first with 103.39, Luke second with 103.89, Ben third with 103.93, Clive fourth with 104.30 and Peter fifth with 104.53. Well done to them and to all of you, Goodwood is not an easy circuit to master, and you handled the constant changing conditions very well.

I would like to congratulate all of you on the presentation of your cars, they looked immaculate! No scrutineering issues of any kind either, all in all a very good day. Thanks to all who stayed for prize giving, sorry I did not stay, but I did have to drive up to Harewood for the Group Two hillclimb on Sunday.

Big thanks to those boys from Caterham Midlands, they worked really hard to enable Graham to compete...Also thanks again to your faithful supporters who stood in the rain to cheer you on...

Kim Denning

