

Evo Caterham Academy

Group Two – Round 3

Dunkeswell Sprint – 13th July

It was lovely to welcome you all to Sunny Devon, albeit briefly, whilst the rest of the country was basking in sunshine Dunkeswell seemed to be under a permanent cloud that would not go away. I know some of you thought this venue was fixed because I live a mere 20 mins away, I assure you it was not as the date was fixed before I even knew I was moving to Devon!!

Dunkeswell as most of you know is primarily a karting circuit and definitely a challenge, being tight and technical. The course is 1345 yards in length and consists of right hand and left hand bends, Esses One and Two, followed by Hanger Hairpin, then a very long straight towards another hairpin, Starboard Turn. The sprint consisted of 1.8 laps of this twisty circuit. All four wheel off constituted a fail and if one of the traffic cones was hit a 10 second penalty came into play. All had to walk the course, and to sign a form to confirm this had been done. Two practice runs and two timed runs were the order of the day.

Derek was not on duty that morning, so no bacon and eggs awaited my arrival; instead he had sent young Simon Congdon to help, who was there bright and early eagerly awaiting his first job. Most of you arrived soon after, the paddock was awash with cars and trailers not quite knowing where to go, but the paddock was soon in order and you were scrutineered and ready to go by the time the drivers briefing was called. We were sorry to be without Patrick Ken and Jonathan, who were not able to be with us. I had heard rumours that Brian, Graham and Mark had been on the razzle the night before, sleepy Devon was not ready for you lot, and you even tried to entice Bob into it all..... It was nice to welcome our Northern Ireland competitor, Chris Du Boulay, who had not been able to compete so far in the championship due to other commitments, so Dunkeswell was his first event.

Again it was lovely to welcome family and friends who had travelled so far to support you, Wendy Berkley's mum and dad, who are both in their 90's managed to turn up, wonderful. Tom Lyon brought his young daughter to help him.

After a very informative drivers briefing it was time to get ready for first practice, as we were first away. It was noticed that some of you tried to go out without your arm restraints, do not try this again. Practice was dry and warm and you all managed it very well, Sean coming out on top with 66.34, Andy second with 66.89, lots of you close behind. Second practice was dry and warm again, few of you having minor problems out there, but all of you staying on the circuit, brilliant. I think maybe we you were not so happy to see Chris Du Boulay, as he came out top in second practice, followed by James Wyatt, Brian Page and Dan Veitch.

Tony Parsfield, our eligibility scrutineer was with us and was busy checking ride heights, finding that quite a few were too low. Simon Congdon did point out that it would be a good idea if more of you paid just a little more attention to the preparation of your car in between events.

Lunchtime came and so did the rain, it was very heavy at times and looked to ruin the timed runs in the afternoon. Unknown to us all, our Irish friend had spent most of his time driving in the rain, coming from Northern Ireland it is very rare to have dry weather, and this showed in his performance that afternoon. Mark Thompson was first away, and he did get the worst of the rain as did Paul GB, unfortunately Paul had a nasty spin at the Esses and had four wheels off so no time was given. Lots of you were struggling at the start as the cars had no grip, although Chris DB was very quick off the start, and very quick on the circuit!! James Wyatt had a spin going into the Esses, as did Chris Chisnall, but all ok and no one came off, and in the rain that is no mean feat! At the end of that first timed run, Chris DB was in the lead with 65.51, followed by Andy Baylie with 66.90 and James Wyatt with 67.09, so quite a target to beat.

Second run came; both Mark and Paul GB seemed to have technical problems, sorted just in time for them to take their places in the queue. Unfortunately it was still wet, and Paul GB spun again, his day effectively over. Mark managed a quicker time and as the runs went on the drier the track became, thus making life easier for those further down the order. Poor Simon Wills came off into the tyre wall, luckily not too much damage to the car and none to him. Graham Wells spun off coming out of the Esses and was red flagged, giving Dan a re-run. Sean, who had had such a good time in practice, spun, but kept good control coming out of Esses Two, Ian Berkley also having fun there. Thomas Lyon had a big spin, and his ever-watchful daughter managed to catch him on video, one for the family at Xmas! With the track drying all the time, out came Chris DB, and what a show he gave us all, tyres squealing like mad, almost coming to grief at the Esses, certainly a man on a mission. The rest of you managed to complete your runs successfully, by this time it was dry and sunny again.

So, the outcome of the day, Chris Du Boulay first in his first **evo** Caterham Academy event with a very impressive 65.51, Andy Baylie second with 66.90, James Wyatt third with 67.09 and a very delighted Thomas Lyon, coming in fourth with 68.42, a great end to the day for him and his daughter, who had come all the way from Scotland to see her dad compete. Unfortunately I could not stay for prize giving as I had to head off for Brands Hatch, I would like to thank those of you who did stay, its always nice to support your fellow competitors.

Another very successful event, well done to all of you, shame the weather ruined it for some. Look forward to seeing you all at Harewood on the 4th August.

Kim Denning
Championship Co-Ordinator