

MGCC Race Report – Round 5, Oulton Park



After a lengthy summer break from the racing scene, the MG Car Club returned to the track at Oulton Park on Saturday 7th September, for the fifth round of their racing exploits.

The first race of the day saw the Porsche Club Championship return to the MGCC bill, with another double delight of action. Pole position for Mark Sumpter quickly became the race lead as those five red lights diminished at the race start; however, Tom Bradshaw was soon hot on his heels.

A strong defence in the opening laps ensured Sumpter held onto the lead; however, before long Bradshaw's attack worked to his advantage, when he slipped past and into control. As the race unfolded it was definitely a two horse race at the head of the field, as Bradshaw and Sumpter edged ahead, whilst battle unfolded behind.

In the wake of the first chequered flag of the day, it was Bradshaw who once again added to his tally of victories, ahead of Sumpter, Adrian Slater, Marcus Carniel, Peter Morris and Mark McAleer, with the latter few finishing just inches apart.

A delayed start to race two due to oil on the circuit kept everyone anxious, as the drivers sat patiently on the grid. After 25 minutes, the result was much the same for Bradshaw, who this time raced from pole to flag, untouched by his rivals.

Behind, the scrap for second place kept everyone guessing, with five cars each vying for the same piece of tarmac. As we ran out of time, a disappearing act from Carniel paved the way forward for McAleer to clinch second place. Morris featured prominently again, this time in third place, with Richard Ellis promoted to fourth after Slater's exclusion from the race after an incident with Carniel.

It was action from start to finish in the first MG Trophy Championship race. As pole sitter Paul Luti led the field around Old Hall for the first time, chaos released itself further back, with three cars succumbing to the pressures of a first corner incident. As officials attended to the stricken cars of Sarah Budby, Jack Webster and Michael Harris, the safety car was deployed to neutralise the pace.

A quick clean up operation by the marshals saw the racing resume very quickly, as the action picked up immediately. Wasting no time at all, Chris Bray leapt into the lead, demoting Luti to second place, as Colin Robertson closed in behind.

As the top two battled ferociously, Luti was forced to defend from fellow Scot Graham Ross, until the pair became too close. As they rounded Druids, the fastest section on the circuit, a collision saw Luti fired towards the barrier, before he settled in a race retirement.

Back at the front the Bray-Robertson scrap was hotter than ever, as the pair swapped places numerous times on route to the chequered flag. As the final tour concluded it was Robertson who had the edge on his rival to secure victory, narrowly ahead of Bray and Ross, who had closed on the final lap.

Another bitter sweet race for Paul Luti followed in the second MG Trophy outing, when a race long lead quickly evaporated on the final tour. A speedy getaway once again from pole position gave Luti the immediate advantage.

As Luti extended a comfortable advantage, the battle for second ignited a fire, with Robertson eventually getting the edge over his rivals. Before long, the latter had caught up with the runaway Luti to challenge for victory, as the pair engaged in a fierce tussle for honours.

With the final few laps in sight, the battle soon simmered, as Luti headed onto his final tour three seconds clear of his nearest challenger. However, as the chequered flag was readied to collect the winner, Luti was nowhere to be seen, allowing Robertson to be crowned victor once again. Ross was promoted to second place, ahead of Doug Cole and Bray.

A steady outing for the Drayton Manor Park MG Metro Cup saw Tom Sanderson ease his way to victory from pole position. As the race got underway it was Sanderson who leapt to the fore, to control the pace until the chequered flag waved him home.

Behind, Neal Gardiner and Thomas Grainger slotted into position to complete the podium, with an initial second and third place result, respectively. However, after being hit with a disqualification, Gardiner was removed from the results, promoting Jonathan Woodcock to third, ahead of Jack Ashton in fourth place.

A fiercely fast 40 minute race for the Ecurie GTS boys saw mandatory pitstops once again come into play. As the race began, pole sitter Scott Quattlebaum held onto his position at the front, as the squad behind scrapped for position.

As Quattlebaum led the way, his chief challenger Rod Begbie unexpectedly pulled into the pits and into the garage. With Begbie out of the running, his main rival became the shared machine of Mark Halstead and Stuart McPherson, who slotted into second place.

As the mandatory pit stops forced their hand the pitlane became a hive of activity. A series of early stops for some of the drivers allowed them to move up the order. Unfazed by the enforced pause, Quattlebaum retained his advantage all the way to the chequered flag. A strong performance teamed with a clever pit stop strategy saw Andrew Bentley swap his fifth place grid slot for a second place finish, ahead of Richard McKoen in third.

David Weston and Paul Sibley shared a frantic start to the sole Lackford Engineering MG Midget and Sprite Challenge outing, until an unexpected disappearance from Sibley released the pressure.

As the race leapt into action, Weston and Sibley shared the head of the field, as they swapped places numerous times in a matter of laps. Whilst the pair tussled for supremacy, Sibley fell by the wayside in mid battle, leaving Weston to collect the spoils, some 31 seconds ahead of his nearest challenger. Edward Reeve was poised to collect second place in Sibley's absence, whilst Tom Neat claimed a somewhat solitary third place, ahead of Stephen Pegram.

David Coulthard found his way to another Cockshoot Cup victory, ahead of his chief Class C rival Ashley Woodward.

Despite a pole position start, Coulthard found himself eclipsed as the field thundered towards Old Hall, when fellow front row starter David Morrison leapt to the fore. A strong getaway from Woodward paved the way to second place for the MG ZS pilot, as Coulthard slipped to third.

With victory on his mind, Coulthard soon found his way back to the front in a matter of laps, as Woodward and Morrison followed.

As 20 minutes of racing came to an end, it was Coulthard who banked himself a victory, ahead of Woodward, Morrison, Jason Simm, Peter Burchill and Ewart Kitson in sixth place.

Peter Bramble triumphed in the Peter Best Insurance Challenge, to finish just 1.8 seconds ahead of second placed James Walpole. Despite a grid that was low on numbers, the 20 minute encounter was as thrilling as ever with the top three virtually tied to one another throughout. As the chequered flag was thrown, Walpole held onto second, ahead of James Darby and Paul Eales.

An impressive sight of 28 Morgans thundering towards Old Hall set the scene for an exciting Aero Racing Morgan Championship adventure. After starting from pole position, Keith Ahlers stamped his authority with a 10 second lead after just two laps.

With a seemingly untouchable Ahlers setting the pace in the distance, the battle for second place was the race to watch. After moving up to second place in the opening few laps, Matthew Wurr appeared to have the upper hand, however after fierce competition in the form of Philip Goddard, Wurr was soon forced to relinquish his position.

As 25 minutes of close, high speed action followed, Ahlers developed his lead to more than 40 seconds, to comfortably triumph. Behind, a last minute push saw Wurr reclaim his second place by just 0.5 seconds, just in time to sweep past the chequered flag, whilst Goddard collected third, ahead of Roger Whiteside, Andy Green and Tony Lees.

As another meeting comes to an end we are quickly finding ourselves at the end of the season. We look forward to seeing you all at the next and final round of the season at Snetterton on 5th-6th October.