

Race Report – Brands Hatch 16 August 2009

A warm afternoon of racing in the surroundings of the Kent countryside at Brands Hatch, home of the Formula Ford Festival. With two races in the Club Formula Ford (Midlands South) in association with Richard Egger Insurance championship and the cancellation of Pembrey, this also counted for the Webcon Club Formula Ford National championship.

Qualifying

With conditions for second qualifying of the day almost perfect, dry and not too warm, our intrepid racers headed to the track to set a qualifying time for the first race (second being set by results of the first). Initially Scott Malvern in his 2008 Ray started strongly with a 52 second lap to open proceedings. However the others were quickly on his tail with Cormac O'Neill in the sister car into the 52's in a first few laps. With a qualifying time to set though and the tyres getting temperature the times started to tumble and Rory Butcher posted intent on lap 4 by posting the first sub 51 second lap at 50.984. However Scott was not to be beaten and on lap 8 had set the time to beat at 50.813 seconds, on the same lap David Grady set his best of 51.140 seconds just shading his teammate Matt Parr by 83 thousandths of a second.

Martin Galpin couldn't match the pace of Butcher's Class B car, ending 0.5 seconds down in 6th with a problem with an engine misfire. Leading Class C car was Joshua Barnett taking time out from motorsport journalism ahead of Red and Black run Pedro Matos and perennial Stuart Kestenbaum in third.

Race 1

As the day warmed up the track got slower with oil laid by various categories before race 15 (7 of the day) for the Formula Ford's, with various stoppages due to accidents failing to dent the timetable. The start at Brands Hatch is always a difficult one to judge with a hill forcing braking for the front cars to avoid rolling back towards the middle of the grid, giving an advantage to the mid field cars. An excellent start by the front two rows led to the front four cars being the same as the grid after two laps, despite Butcher's attempts to pass Malvern on the outside at Paddock. With the front three of Malvern, Butcher and Grady separated by less than half a second after four laps, there was never to be any let up to Malvern's lead of the race. Behind these battling cars ten seconds down the road Joshua Barnett and Pedro Matos showed racing wasn't just at the front, constantly battling for 8th place, as well as one between Carl Hemming and Jim Morris.

Unfortunately an overtake attempt by Jim into Clearways with two minutes to go didn't fully work out, leading to interlocking wheels and a roll into the gravel. With a race stop given due to the potential severity of the incident, Scott Malvern ended with his third win of the year in Midlands South. Jim Morris got out of his broken car, unable to start the second race but with only damaged pride to worry about. So the final podium ended with Class A Malvern ahead of Class B Butcher and Class A Grady, with Galpin 7th overall and 2nd in Class B.

Class C ended with an excellent win by Red and Black's Pedro Matos after a race long battle with the journalist Joshua Barnett, Stuart Kestenbaum showing that despite racing here longer than some

racers have been alive, he could still show pace by beating Steve Burns from Castle Combe into 11th place.

Race 2

Last race of the day was the reward for the Formula Ford racers, but with the controlled management of the BRSCC the race started early by some 30 minutes. With the results of the first race creating the grid for the second, Butcher again tried to get the lead of the start of the race. Malvern again did just enough to ensure he led into Paddock, but was continually troubled by the Class B champion. The front four again went off at a fast pace, not dropping more than a second apart in total. With Galpin slowing with fluid dropping from his car, the track started getting slippery, particularly in the Graham Hill corner. Galpin several times slid through the corner on his own fluid, eventually retiring after 10 laps.

Meanwhile behind the front of the race battles continued down the field, Quartermaine passing Kestenbaum at Clearways on the 19th lap. However the front four continued to race for position with Butcher trying every opportunity to pass Malvern's very wide Ray. At Graham Hill on the 20th lap he finally managed to get inside Malvern, but not enough to overtake, knocking him and forcing both to spin, rejoining in third and fourth places. Grady and Parr, teammates at Unitec, now had a run to the flag to give a well deserved one two for the team; but the win wouldn't go to the team leader as Parr carried out a final overtake after the two had battled all race to take his first win.

Behind him Butcher had rejoined the track ahead of Malvern to get third and sole Class B runner; Class C won by Joshua Barnett to get a fastest lap and win ahead of Quartermaine and Kestenbaum with Matos having to retire after five laps with a mechanical problem.

So the two races provided plenty of racing and incident, and leads to the last meeting at Mallory on 27th September with everything still be decided in all classes and overall points.