

Ferguson Makes it Five in a Row

The eight round of the 2022 Northern Ireland Autotest Championship, sponsored by McMillan Specialist Cars of Antrim, took place on Saturday 6th August at Transport Training Services, Nutts Corner. Organised by Dungannon Motor Club and sponsored by Jewellery Repairs Services, Cookstown, the competition was as hot as the temperatures, but as at the previous four rounds it was Stewartstown's Steven Ferguson who took the win comfortably from James Wilson.

Steven set the benchmark for the other Championship competitors, setting fastest time on eleven of the twelve tests on Saturday, conceding the only one due to an uncharacteristic penalty for the reigning champion. Mark King and David Thompson battled it out for third and fourth, the advantage going to King by just 0.4 seconds.

With Ferguson taking the Overall win, and this let Wilson take the Class A win and second place overall. It was a father son battle for the second and third places in class between Chris Grimes Senior and Junior. Junior would take the runner up spot in class finishing 6.5 seconds ahead of his father.

Andrew Blair took the Class B win finishing 4 seconds ahead of Trevor Ferguson in his Stryker Salvia, with Paul Blair in third after a troublesome day for the Ballyclare man.

Robin Lyons continued his return to the championship with a Class C win despite a mechanical failure on the third run of the first test costing him twenty seconds. Brothers Andrew and Richard Earney would finish second and third respectively in class despite their mini saloon running a little hot all day and needing topped up with water after each test.

Mark King took his first Class D win of the season with a flawless drive, finishing a minimal 0.4 seconds ahead of David Thompson who suffered a mechanical failure on the final run of test two. Ardboe's Damien Mooney took the third spot in class, with Dungannon's Gary Campbell finishing fourth in class and as the top Semi-Expert.

In the Clubman category classes, Adam McMullan in his Toyota Starlet Special continued his dominance by taking the Class A win alongside the overall Clubman Challenges category win, with Ian McCann in his Vauxhall Nova taking the runner up spot in both class and category. Gordon Buckley took the Class B win in his Westfield. Ben McKee in his Nissan Micra would take the Class C win, ahead of Taylor Gribbon. Clubman Class D was again made up of all Mazda MX5's and it was Ian Lowry who took the class win from Lawrence Baird second in class, with Ryan Catterson settling for third.

There was again a small but highly experienced and competitive turnout in the Advanced Challenge category. Jack Gillis took the Advanced Class A honours in his Vauxhall Nova and finish second overall in the Advanced Challenge category. Noel Cochrane in his home-built sport car would take the Advanced Class B honours. Robert Dickson in his Mini Saloon would take the overall Advanced Challenge win alongside the Class C honours, with Robert Robinson in his Toyota Yaris finishing second in class. Gareth Dillon in his Mazda MX5 would take the Advanced Class D win.

In the Production Car Class Adam Ferguson would take the class win, with Andrew Molyneaux Senior and Junior taking second and third respectively.

With only two rounds to go Stewartstown's Steven Ferguson continues to maintain his four point lead over Manorhamilton's David Thompson, with Mark King third in his Vauxhall Nova.

The penultimate round of the season will take place on Saturday 27th August, with the event hosted by the Coleraine & District Motor Club taking place at Northwest 200 Pits. Will Steven Ferguson seal another championship win or will it go down to the final round of the season?

McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship Round 8

Overall Winner – Steven Ferguson

Championship Category:

- Class A – James Wilson
- Class B – Andrew Blair
- Class C – Robin Lyons
- Class D – Mark King

Clubman Category:

- Class A – Adam McMullan
- Class B – Gordon Buckley
- Class C – Ben McKee
- Class D – Ian Lowry

Advanced Category:

- Class A – Jack Gillis
- Class B – Noel Cochrane
- Class C – Robert Dickson
- Class D – Gareth Dillon