

Nutts about Nutts Corner

Saturday 24 September saw Round 7 of the SW Adair Tyres Northern Ireland Sprint Championship at Nutts Corner. This round was hosted by North Ulster Car Club who always put on a superb days sprinting, and indeed the club continued with this tradition at this event using the more compact shorter Course.

With a whopping entry of 82 its great to see that the local sprint scene is still so popular with all that is going on in the world around us and it was also great to see a couple of local "hillclimbers" such as Graham Thompson, William McDowell, and Jack Boal as well as a few rally men coming across to enjoy a day out at the sprints, possibly fuelled by the fact that it was the tighter, more technical short circuit in use.

After practice runs were complete it was straight into the timed runs and Rob Dwane once again showed why he is top of the pops this year as he shot off to a 93.82 sec run which he then bettered in run 2 to go top of the timesheets, which is where he remained! Graham Thompson made a welcome return to the sprint scheme and set off after Rob but was unable to catch him in run 1, and indeed all day, however Graham did try hard and it was great to see Graham mixing it with the regular sprinters and finish second overall. Hopefully we will entice Graham out again before he hangs his suit up for the year.

The battle for third and fourth was simply epic with Steven Gault and Tim Woodside swapping tenths of a second all day. Neither managed to complete a first timed run, and after the second timed run only 0.09 second separated them in Stevens favour. Steven went slower on his third run as the track was greasier after an earlier oil spill and Tim didn't do a third run, meaning that Steven Gault took third by 0.09secs from Tim Woodside. Fifth went to Ryan McGimpsey who had another giant killing performance in his little Jedi with a 97.02 sec run which he set on his first timed run.

Looking down the timesheets there were some epic battles going on especially in class 14. With Ryan McGimpsey way out front, Ethan Faulkner and George Stevenson were left to battle it out between themselves for second in class, and boy did they battle. In the end Ethan took second in class by 0.97secs from George Stevenson but this was after a final flying third run as before that there was only 0.34 secs between them. Class 7 was also very tight for second and third between Scott McMullan and Rudy Tate. Scott had the early jump but "roundabout Rudy" cleaned his game up and fought back to finish a mere 0.68 secs behind Scott with Graham Boyce a mere 0.39secs behind Rudy. Andrew Straney was 5th a mere 0.11secs behind Graham. So 4 drivers separated by 1.18 secs!! Rudy was going so well that it was rumoured that he had a "guest driver" pretending to be him!! There was a bit of talk round the paddock that it was Andy Hawthorne driving Rudy's car but then it was pointed out that had it been Andy, that it would've been going faster!! Poor Rudy gets some abuse!!

It was also great to see some new names, or indeed some less regular names on the entry for this event. Jack Boal debuted his GTR Hyabussa in class 7 in the sprints and took a class 7 win. Barry Morris brought his Darrian out to play and had a great days craic as he piloted Nutts Corner "full of the rack" in this little pocket rocket. Ian

Howard, the previous Sprint Co-Ordinator made an appearance in his Maguire Mini and proved to everyone that he hadn't lost his touch, as did Keith Scott who has returned to the sport in an OMS Pr single seater!

Jaye Nevin made his seasons debut at long last in his RWD 205. Jaye had a great day out but was unable to take home the crown of "fastest 205" after David Strain won that award, and the title of "Fastest Strain" despite only getting 1 run in before having diff issues. Dermot O'Hagan finally got his season back up and running again after having engine issues previously in his Honda Civic

In terms of the Categories, we will start with the Road going category where Crawford Ewing took category honours in his Renault Megane with his father Crawford Ewing Snr finishing second in the family Renault Megane. Paul Forsythe finished third in his pocket rocket Peugeot 106. Championship wise Conor Hamill has a 1-point lead over Crawford Ewing with Andrew Robb third. Conor has marshalled his round so dropped scores and marshalling days could have a massive effect on this category come the end of the season.

Modified Category honours on the day went to Ryan Murray again in his Subaru Imprezza, who also finished as fastest tin top and 11th overall. Second modified car home was Barry Morris in the Darian ahead of Alan Roddy who was third in his Citroen Saxo. In terms of the Championship Stephen Colbert has a slender 1 point lead ahead of Daniel Campbell and Ken Colbert who are tied on points, and Oliver Cormican is looming in the background a further 1 point back. Again, marshalling duties and dropped scores will make a massive impact in the title run in.

In the specialist Category Jack Boal took the category Honours as Jim Hutchinson was marshalling at the event. Scott McMullan was second in the Specialist Category ahead of Rudy Tate who has never finished so far up a time sheet in his life, giving himself altitude sickness in the process!! Even after today's results Jim Hutchinson still is top of the category, however his lead is reduced to 3 points ahead of second placed Scott McMullan. Steven Hawthorne is well back in third so really the big battle is between Jim and Scott!!

In the Heaslip Ladies Challenge Sheryl McBride picked up from where she left off at Kirkistown and took another Category win ahead of second placed Kathy McDade. Third went to Emma Campbell who finished ahead of Amy Hawthorne and Amy Coulter. With these results added in Emma goes into the next round with a 6 point lead over Sheryl McBride, however Sheryl has already dropped a score whereas Emma hasn't so when you factor that in it adds a whole new perspective to things. Third is Kathy McDade who is tied on points with Sheryl and also has no dropped scores and hard charging Amy Hawthorne is only 8 points back with a dropped score already in fourth. All in, dropped scores could see these results having a major shuffle over the course of the next 2 events.

In the most hotly contested Category Karl Johnston once again took the title of fastest mini in the west, however the category win pails into insignificance for Gary Milligan who saw all his Christmas's come at once when he managed to beat Gerry McGarrity who finished third. Gary was so delighted to beat Gerry that even winning the big

Euromillions jackpot would not have meant as much to him. Its hard to believe these 3 fellas are friends away from the tarmac!!

Our next event will be the eighth round of the SW Adair Tyres Northern Ireland Sprint Championship at Kirkistown on 08 October. This round is hosted by the Ulster Automobile Club and with it being the eighth round, and the best seven scores to count this round, and the last round will play major parts into who wins what at season end as dropped scores will now come into play

Now for the class battles:

Class 1 – Road Cars up to 1700cc

Paul Forsythe took his 5th Class win of the year beating Stephen Donnelly by 3.75secs in his Fiesta. Stephen Wishart finished third in his wee 106 which he drives like he stole it. Sadly, this is the last time we will see the 106 out as Stephen has a new toy for next season. In terms of the championship Paul Forsythe has a 5-point lead ahead of second placed Alan Wallace, with Kathy McDade third a further 5 points back on Alan.

Class 2a – Road cars over 1700cc

Crawford Ewing was first and second in class 2a today. Confused???? Well, that's not strictly true, as Crawford Ewing Jnr was faster than Crawford Ewing Snr in class 2a today in the family Meganne which they were sharing. Third went to Ian Thompson in the big Porsche with Mervyn Johnston finishing fourth ahead. This is important points haul for Crawford as is only 1 point behind Class leader Conor Hamill, third placed Andrew Robb is 6 points back in third.

Class 2b – Road cars Mazda MX5

Adam Brogan returned in his Mazda MX5 and took class honours ahead of Conor O'Boyle and Aaron Moody in their similar Mazda MX5's. Championship wise Paul Magill is still 9 points clear of Adam Brogan in the class title challenge and Conor Boyle is a further 7 back in third. Marshalling credit will be an important factor in this class as the season grinds on.

Class 3 – Road cars specialist Production cars 4wd

Sadly this class was very under represented today and only Statler and Waldorf came out to play. On this occasion, Tony Grady, was the fastest of the Grady brothers, with Paul finishing second. Alfred Robb, who is currently leading the championship was doing his marshalling duty today, but the next 2 rounds are going to be key in this championship battle, Alfred already has 1 hand on the title but Paul is 1 point ahead of Tony so its all to play for there.

Class 6a Modified Cars – Series Production cars 8v

Class 6a finally had a few more entries today after a lean year to date. Chris Nicholl took the class win today a mee 0.57 secs ahead of Nutts Corner Legend Gary

Milligan. Third went to newcomer Ian Getty in his Mark 2 Escort with Amy Coulter fourth ahead of Jonathan Smith. Championship leader Karl Johnstone was running in class 9a today. Championship wise Karl is still clear at the top of class 6a with Chris Nicholl second and Gary Milligan third.

Class 6b Modified Cars – Series Production cars 16v

After a fair length of a siesta Seamus Murray reappeared today in his flying civic. Seamus hit the ground running and gave Ken Colbert a fair run for his money in the end there was only 0.09 secs between Ken and Seamus who once again showed that when the going gets tough he can still draw on his massive bank of experience to find time when its needed. Third on the day went to another Honda Civic, this one driven by Dessie Martin as he pushed hard to beat James Lightbody by exactly 1 second. Fifth in class went to Amy Hawthorne in her Renault clio. In terms of the championship Ken Colbert extended his lead as Dessie Martin went second ahead of Stephen Colbert and JAMES Lightbody is now fourth.

Class 7 Modified Specialist Production Cars 2WD.

Jack Boal made his season debut this year with his GTR Hayabusa and took a commanding class win as well as topping the Specialist Category on the day too. Jack got down to a 100.83 sec run which is phenomenal going. Second went to Scott McMullan in his Reis Aero. Scott has been brilliant all season and has been the man to beat in Class 7, even in a new car, fair play Scott!! Great to see Rudy and Andrew back out in the Locost Megablade they drive. Rudy took an impressive third and for, I believe the third time in a row, he managed to beat Andrew Straney who finished fifth behind fourth placed Graham Boyce. In terms of the championship Scott has a 7 point lead over Steven Hawthorne with David Hawthorne third ahead of father Andy Hawthorne.

Class 8 Sports Libre cars Special Saloons

Poor Richard O`Mahoney, he takes some flack from me and boy does he like to keep me ging too!! Always the bridesmaid, and never the bride, Richard approached this event as the only RSR entered and therefore fancied his chances for taking the class win as Jim Hutchinson was marshalling, however Ian Howard entered in his Maguire mini and pipped poor Richard again. Whilst Richard may not have secured a first place trophy, he did however gain first place points which will hopefully soften the blow for him. With Jim Hutchinson only 3 points ahead of Richard in the points Richard may well put on a last-minute push to try to take the class from Jim, and with Rory Stephens guaranteed third its going to be an interesting run to the title in class 8, especially if Richards new parts, that he talked about arrive in time!!

Class 9a Sports Libre cars Saloons and GT`s

Karl Johnstone made his debut event in class 9a today and took a lights to flag class win in his little Mini. Interestingly Karl`s first run was his quickest which is usually the opposite as he usually banks a fast one then gets quicker. Karl took the class with a 118.26 sec run which was 11.11 secs ahead of Second placed Jason Frazer in his

metro. Third in class went to Emma Campbell in her little 106 with a 131.09sec run. Championship wise its nip and tuck at the top of class 9a with Jason having a 1 point lead over Emma who is 7 points ahead of Third placed Dan Campbell. With dropped scores still to be counted Dan could in theory still influence the top 3 at the season end but only time will tell.

Class 9b Sports Libre cars closed wheel Racing cars

At long last Sheryl got someone to play with in class 9b when Richard McGimpsey finally got a days fun in his RMG. Richard however was on form and managed the class win with a whopping 100.24 sec run which was enough to put him 6th overall. Sheryl continued her run with newfound vigour and dropped her time down to a 117.5 in her little GT light. Sheryl's win now secures her the class championship for 2022 but her big aim is to retain the hard fought Ladies Category which is still very much on for her!

Class 10 Sports libre Cars – small capacity Rally cars

Class 10 finally got an entry to reflect how good a class it is with 8 cars entered. Alan Roddy proved to be the man to beat once again in his Citroen Saxo as he pulled a class win with a 112.62 sec run, a mere 0.71secs ahead of David Strain in his Peugeot 205. David, once again left all his good luck at home and was only able to complete 1 run however this 1 run was sufficient for him to take the title of the “Fastest Strain of the day” as he managed to beat both his nephews Jonathan and Andrew in their little 205. David Christie finished third in his beautiful Escort Mk2 a mere 0.67 secs ahead of Jonathan Strain, who wins the award for the cheekiest Strain on the day. Why did he win that, I hear you ask?? Well, because he borrowed his brother Andrews car and beat him in it lol, although admittedly by only 0.68 secs. Its was all good fun in class 10 and great to see such a close class, I've always said that class 10 should be a good class and now that we have some rally cars, running in the rally car class, it can only continue to improve. Championship wise Alan Roddy has a 7-point lead ahead of Dermot O`Hagan and Andrew Strain is third, however with dropped scores and 2 of the 3 still to marshal, this could make the season run in, very very interesting. Rest assured, whoever wins this class title deserves it!!

Class 11 Sports libre Cars – large capacity Rally cars

Class 11 also had a big following at this event with 5 cars out. Barry Morris proved to be the man to beat in his Darrian but the returning Jaye Nevin pushed him hard in his 205. Third went to the hard charging Scott Singleton who made his sprint debut in his new Escort mk2 With Hillclimb regular William McDowell finishing fourth on an equal time with Scott. Fifth went to Championship leader Derek Robinson who sadly had a slight off in his beautiful Sunbeam and took it home resembling a Samba. Thankfully it was only light, cosmetic damage and Derek, who as always saw the funny side to it, has the car almost ready to do the next round! Championship wise Derek has a commanding lead over Stuart Strain with Jaye Nevin third

Class 12 4WD sports Libre Cars

How many times do you have to do something before it becomes a habit?? The Reason I'm asking is because I'm trying to work out if Ryan Murray is now in the habit of winning class 12, or if 2 wins is merely a co-incidence?? Personally, after watching him of late I suspect he has now got the taste of class wins, and if he has, it is going to be great to see him and Oliver Cormican going head to head in the remaining rounds and onwards. Speaking of Oliver its great to see him back out again competing after his earlier bad luck. As I'm sure you've worked out Ryan Murray took a very dedicated class win lowering Ian Lancashire's existing class record by almost half a day!! Oliver Cormican was second having gearbox issues and re-acquainting himself with the car again. Championship wise Oliver looks set to have class 12 secured for another year despite Ryan's gasp challenge which is still good enough to net himself second ahead of third placed Ian Lancashire and Adrian Kelt

Class 14 small Capacity Racing Cars

In what is probably our tightest fought class Ryan McGimpsey took another class win in his nimble Jedi MK1 with an outstanding 97.02 sec run which put him 5th overall. Ethan Faulkner battled hard all day with George Stevenson to take second in class on the last run from George Stevenson. Roy Coulter was a superb fourth as he is finally getting used to his OMS. Fifth went to Keith Scott in his OMS pr ahead of John McNamarra in his megapin. As always class 14 is a close competitive class and in the championship standings George Stevenson has a 6 point lead over Ryan McGimpsey with Ethan Falkner third and Thomas Corey fourth. Dropped scores will definitely come into play in class 14 and George will need to make sure he stays ahead of Ethan and Ryan in the remaining 2 events if he is to take the crown home with him.

Class 15 large Capacity Racing Cars

As per the main report Robert Dwane took the class win along with FTD in his OMS ahead of Graham Thompson. There was a fabulous battle all day between Steven Gault who pipped Tim Woodside to third and Robert McGimpsey rounded out the class in fifth. The class championship sees Rob Dwane have a 7 point lead over Tim Woodside with Steven Gault third 9 points down on Tim. Dropped scores will make a difference here, especially to Steven but not enough for Steven to take the overall win which could still go either way for Tim and Rob.

Class 16a Historic Road Cars

Gerry McGarrity once again took the class win in his little Mini despite an adventurous first practice run which saw him on 2 wheels round the hairpin in a cross between a Russ Swift advert and a scene from the Italian job. Thankfully Gerry was only keeping himself amused, but afterwards he found a slight issue with his throttle pedal which he mended after a trip out to a local garage with a welder lol. Second on the day went to Mervyn Getty in the big MGB Sebring, who had a great tussle with Trevor McIlroy in his Austin Healey Sprite. Vincent Rodgers was fourth in his MGBGT ahead of James Acheson in his mini. In terms of the championship Gerry McGarrity has the class title secured with a 10 point lead, and 1 score in hand to Mervyn Getty. Bill Blair is only 3 points adrift of Mervyn but with only Kirkistown rounds left Mervyn can use the pure grunt of the big Sebring to his advantage against the mini in the fast stuff.

Class 16b Historic Saloons and Sport scars

Last but by no means least Stephen Nevin was the class 16b winner in his fabulous Mk 1 Escort on what was his first sprint of the season. Stephen had a great dice with Stephen Harvey in the family Mark 2 who was another cheeky individual who dual drove a car with its owner and promptly beat them. However, Stephen does this regularly as Norman Harvey was third in the family Escort. Fourth went to Terence Dillon in his beautiful Hilman Avenger ahead of David Aiken in a mini and Arthur Ovens in his MG Midget. Championship wise Robert Coulter leads the class championship ahead of Stephen Harvey Norman Harvey in that order.