

## Nottingham Sports Car Club RTR Speed Championship – 2014 Final Rounds 16 to 20

29/10/14

Heading into the final quarter of the NSCC RTR Speed Championship, Steve Brown, in his Westfield Megabusa, was in a commanding position and looking good to retain the title. The NSCC Championship is the best of 8 rounds and hitting your target time gives you 20 points, so with 160 points already on the board we all felt Steve couldn't be caught. However, the top 10 all receive cash prizes, including £250 for 2nd and £150 for 3rd and those positions were very much up for grabs.

The August Bank Holiday Harewood meeting was one of a number of hillclimbs on the NSCC calendar and there's usually a good turn out of members. This year was no different, except for the scores! Ivan Russell in his infamous orange Anglia managed 16 points and despite a dry event, there was just one driver scoring more. Ian Butcher missed out on his target by just 0.21s to earn an impressive 19.79 points and move him up to 5<sup>th</sup>, with Dave Purdy doing enough to move up to 6<sup>th</sup>, putting them both ahead of me!

Round 17 at Loton Park was quieter and again it was Ian in his Renault 5 GT Turbo in 1B that gained the highest marks followed by Rich Abraham in his Westfield SEi 1700 in 2A. Meanwhile Steve Brown was having engine troubles and only managed a mere 16.63 points.

Following the two hillclimbs the NSCC calendar took us to Three Sisters, the Wigan karting circuit for a 0.7 mile sprint on Circuit 1. I still get confused by the myriad of options there but those who went were very pleased that they did! Personally I've never heard of this before, but a combination of entry numbers, layout and slick running, meant that many competitors received 2 practice and 7 (yes SEVEN) timed runs. Naturally the times improved and the scores were high – so those of us that didn't go really missed out. Emma Bennison in her Sylva Striker and Ian Butcher both missed their target times by less than 2 tenths, with Rich not far behind. John Clarke in his aptly named Caterham 'Seven', notably achieved his highest score of the season.

To finish the season we always head to the NSCC's own double header at Thoresby Park. A beautiful setting for the finale with a tight, tricky circuit to negotiate through the parkland and trees. It's a bit like a hillclimb without a hill! At this point we should note that Steve Brown had calculated that he couldn't be beaten and due to further mechanical troubles, did not compete at Thoresby. His 160.19 points put him 4.6 ahead of nearest rival Ian Butcher and with scores capped at 21 points per round, we had to agree and congratulate him – a very impressive total.

The final 2 rounds were both dry but not without incident. In fact the conditions must have been excellent, because combined with full commitment from eager drivers, no less than 8 course records fell on day 1, myself included! Rich Abraham, lying 4<sup>th</sup>, suffered mechanical failure breaking into the second chicane, taking out most of the straw bales and barrels and narrowly avoiding the trees. Fortunately he was ok and even managed to fix his car overnight to compete on day 2. Meanwhile Emma (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Ian (2<sup>nd</sup>) both had good runs, with Emma closing the points gap to just 0.21. Thanks to my record breaking run, I moved from 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, changing the outlook for the top 5 and put me back in with a chance.

Round 20 was set to be another lovely day but as we all know, anything can happen. Unfortunately for Dave Purdy, he managed to bend the front of his modified Opel Manta after crossing the finish line during 2<sup>nd</sup> practice and therefore didn't set a time on the day.

Rich was being cautious after so much overnight work to the car and the previous day's problems, but couldn't realistically overtake Emma even with everything at 100%, so finished 5<sup>th</sup>. During morning practice Emma was having running problems, overcoming them for the timed runs but finishing a shade slower than day 1. Ian was also having some issues, with an incident in T1, recovering to set a good time in T2, just in the nick of time as the car gave up after the finish line and was returned to the trailer. I also had a turbulent day with a good morning practice but then a slower first timed run. My final run was faster but I later found out I'd hit 2 penalty barrels, adding 2 seconds to my total.

We thought it would be close and sure enough, the end result was 3 people on 156 points! Emma 4<sup>th</sup> (and highest female driver) with 156.31, Ian 3<sup>rd</sup> with 156.57 and me springing into 2<sup>nd</sup> on the final day with 156.86, but of course still several points behind our Championship victor – and winner of the £500 1<sup>st</sup> prize, Steve Brown.

It has been a successful and competitive year for the Nottingham Sports Car Club and we look forward to an even larger calendar in 2015 with 24 rounds to contend at all the great venues.

Stephen Morrison, NSCC Championship Scorer