

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship

Debden – Sunday, 4 October 2009

The day dawned dry and bright but a cloud was looming on the horizon. The course had been changed since the previous season and all participants were asked to agree beforehand the basis of scoring. After a long debate it was unanimously agreed that the bogey times from last year would stand. However, Greg Parnell gave his agreement under protest and as the season draws towards its end this should give food for thought when we meet in November to discuss any changes to the regulations for the following year.

Those new to this venue were well advised that the roundabout part way through the course would sort the men out from the boys. The roundabout is defined by a circle of cones on an expanse of tarmac so is non-damaging to cars but exceedingly embarrassing and frustrating to those drivers who miscalculate the approach.

It was explained to us that the roundabout is approached at very quick speeds so it is vitally important to brake hard at the 100 metre board as leaving braking until the 50 metre board is a recipe for disaster, especially because the entry to the roundabout arrives very quickly after the 50 metre board and is both blind and very narrow.

So, did we all listen and take note? Did we heck! On first practice local boy Paul Bryan (who should have known better) took out a cone, admittedly not at the roundabout, after misjudging a sharp left hander and proceeded to drag this half way round the circuit to the finishing line! Mike Hughes went the wrong way round the roundabout (a failed run for him) and Andrew Miller claimed he stopped at the roundabout, looked left, then right before continuing on his way; a likely story! Truth be known that he went straight through the cones (another one with a failed run).

By second practice we all felt much braver so stepped up a gear and approached the roundabout carrying much more speed and, not heeding earlier advice, left braking much later into the roundabout. This time it was John Stephens in trouble having decided he could take the roundabout flat out. Big mistake as he came to a stop, had to reverse, then did a three point turn before finishing his run with a time that was almost the slowest of the runners in that session. Brian Lee almost came to grief at the roundabout as well but managed to stop just short of hitting a cone.

At the end of practice it was clear that Andrew Miller and Anne Benischek sharing a class 1 car had laid down the gauntlet as both were under bogey. John Stephens however was pressing hard in his class 2 car.

So, down to the action on a warmed track for the first of the competitive runs that saw Andrew and Anne consolidate their hold on the day's proceedings. Mike missed the roundabout again, John went too fast into the roundabout but was still on the pace and Brian said he had a messy entry into the roundabout, missed a gear elsewhere on the circuit, but still managed his best run of the day. When asked, Paul Bryan claimed modestly that he had done a perfect run, this also turning out to be his best run of the day.

Elsewhere in the field Ian Hargrave was chipping away at his times and would end the day, nearly 6 seconds faster than his first run. He must also have been pleased to win the scrutineers' award for best presented car, continuing the Morgan tradition that Jim Mountain started last year.

Final runs saw most competitors improving on their times unless caught out again at the roundabout (need I say more) and top honours went to Andrew in 1st place, Anne in 2nd place and John Stephens in 3rd, each of them getting under bogey.

Fastest time of the day went to Greg Parnell, closely followed by Trevor Firmin and although they arguably have the fastest cars they are up against very challenging and perhaps impossible bogey times.

Brian Lee