

MSCC Techniques Speed Championship 2012

Event Report

Venue: Goodwood

Date: 4 August 2012

Weather: Dry but cloudy

On the day that Team GB struck more Olympic gold than ever before, the Team Miller entourage pulled into the Goodwood paddock on a quest for gold as well. Would they succeed?

It was to be a day full of incidents and it had not started well. On route from his overnight lodgings Brian Lee had set off in torrential rain and unexpectedly ploughed through two sections of flooded water in the middle of the road and a misfire was troubling him. Fortunately, after about 15 minutes this sorted itself out and on arrival at the circuit all seemed well.

Down at the circuit worry beads were evident on Paul Bryan's forehead. A battery warning light had caught his attention and on lifting the bonnet he could not see his fan belt. Fortunately it had slipped its mountings and was lodged elsewhere in the engine bay, still in one piece. Soon to the rescue were ace mechanic Brian Miller and his crew wielding an amazing collection of very professional looking tools. It took time but with persistence and untold skills Paul breathed a sigh of relief; he would be able to compete after all.

Brian and his team had done a fantastic job but before long another competitor would be calling upon their services.

Where was Ian Hargreaves? Sadly he had cancelled through illness, laid low with a bug and confined to bed. By now we are sure he is on the road to recovery. All the best, Ian.

As a result of the course being shortened (a consequence of a tragic accident at the circuit earlier in the year) new target times needed to be set in practice, so no bonus points on offer this year. Considering that 70% of the competitors eventually exceeded the new bogey times this rule can be seen to have been justified.

After what seemed an eternity, it was time for first practice (a double lapper from a standing start with times being recorded for both laps). However, disaster was just around the corner for 2 of our competitors. First up was Steve Dickinson, henceforth to be known as "Two Hats Dickinson" (sorry Steve, it was not funny). Steve received what we all agreed was harsh treatment for an innocent error when he arrived for practice wearing a helmet that had not been scrutinised. In his haste he had grabbed a helmet from the two he had brought along and unfortunately for him a marshal spotted that it was "illegal" and confiscated the helmet, also not allowing Steve to dash back to the paddock to collect the other helmet as the infringement was, the marshal said, now a matter for referral to the Clerk of the Course. Unfortunately, his decision was that Steve be barred from the event with a points addition to his MSA licence.

What else was happening? Well, as Mike Hughes attempted to charge off the start line for his practice run the throttle cable broke on his car and he limped back into the paddock. Once again the services of Brian Miller and his team were called upon to assist Mike in a repair in time for him to have a late practice, which he was allowed to do immediately after the lunch break.

As an aside to Mike's mishap, the time recorded for the next following competitor, Paul Bryan, was off the scale as the recording picked up some of Mike's time since he had broken the beam on the start line. That made the calculations of the new bogey times even more complex and full marks to Paul for his expertise and diligence in working these out.

And so to the first times run. Andrew Miller was on fire and posted potentially an unbeatable time well under bogey, but what was this, Brian Lee in second place also under bogey! Anne Miller and Paul Bryan followed close on his heels, being separated by only 4/100ths of a second and Clive Hall was chasing hard. However, Alan Foster was miles adrift of his practice times. What had happened; had he fallen off, gone for a spin, experienced mechanical problems? We were relieved, although Alan was a little embarrassed to say, that on the final bend he noticed that one side of the bonnet was lifting and wishing to avoid twisting and distorting the aluminium bonnet had slowed down. Now how many times has that happened before although usually on the first run after being scrutineered.

On the second and final timed run everyone managed to improve their times, some significantly, except Brian Lee who bottled it on the approach to Woodcote Corner and compounded his mistake by another when he went wide coming out of the chicane and got two wheels over the rumble strip! He was left to ponder what might have been!

In the end no one could touch Andrew Miller and his closest rival was wife Anne, more than 4 seconds off his pace but still finishing in a worthy second place, stretching her lead slightly over Paul Bryan in a commendable third place.

All in all a good day out despite the trials and tribulations. On behalf of all of us, we offer very many thanks to Brian Miller and his team for keeping us going on the track. In celebration we ended the day with slices of birthday cake brought by one of the "rent a crowd" Miller entourage and very nice it was too!

Brian Lee