

MSSC Techniques Speed Championship

Venue: Club Sprint Curborough
Date: 4th September 2016
Weather: Overcast but dry and warm

Curborough Sprint circuit near Lichfield falls under the terminology of “bijou”! It’s the maisonette of the circuit world offering everything you need but in a confined space! The upside is spectators and competitors can see the whole circuit and the paddock is tarmac, well drained and also within sight of the action. The downside is that the layout makes it challenging to get into a rhythm with many straights being too long for second gear and too short to grab third!! The day included two events using the circuit in two different layouts, firstly the figure of eight and latterly the standard two lap format.

An entry of fifteen included Nigel Housley happily returning to action having made a full recovery after his recent accident and our sponsors Brian and Tracy Gateson from Techniques who were made suitably welcome. Also in attendance was Mike Meredith in the awesome five litre behemoth who was later to achieve FTD with a stunning 61.23 second run.

Practice started promptly and then ended promptly for me. After the first run the usually reliable Plus 8 “failed to proceed” and was pushed back to the paddock. Investigation revealed a distributor full of condensation as a result of being parked up hot on the trailer on a very wet evening. Chris Bailey and I dried and WD40’d the parts only then to drop the graphite pin and spring that sits in the centre of the dizzie cap! The sight of five middle aged men on hands and knees patting the tarmac searching for a minute rod was stressful (for me) and entertaining for all others. Eventually it was found but without the all crucial spring. There then followed a lightbulb moment. We found a biro, removed the spring, cut it to size and forced it into position. Bingo! The car ran perfectly thereafter. My thanks to Chris for his help.

Grip levels were good allowing the more flamboyant to really commit the cars to the more challenging corners. George “Braces” Proudfoot settled in quickly with a sub bogey time that was to give the chasing pack a lot to think about. Your scribe also went under bogey hotly pursued by the good Dr. Glass and the family Von Baines in the re engined 3.7 V6 freshly collected from the factory on Tuesday and rapidly run in!

Mr and Mrs “Shiny” Bailey were running their 2.0ltr Duratec plus four which they consider to have good potential for next season. Rob Stones and Clive Hall were impressive off the line with good clean take offs and a quiet competitive edge was developing between Mr and Mrs Gateson! Simon Baines and Mike Meredith were closely locked in battle while McHugh was coaxing Big Blue to faster and faster times. Three timed runs resulted in a win for “Braces” 8.12 secs under bogey second for your scribe 1.18 under bogey and third Simon Baines 0.63 under bogey. The final run off was won by an on form Chris Bailey.

A well earned lunch was then the order of the day with the catering truck doing brisk business.

The healthy crowd of spectators were kept informed and entertained by Richard Smith who was the appointed commentator for the day bringing his personal experience to the microphone plus his considerable knowledge of the ice cream vendors of Lichfield. Those who stayed awake received a badge at awards ceremony!!!

The afternoon's competition reverted to the two lap format. Practice once again provided good grip and fast times. "Braces" Proudfoot once more coaxed the Series 1 into action and once again established domination. Everyone without exception was improving with each attempt and the usual banter was much in evidence! Failure to comply with the startline marshalls (Mr Heap & Baines Minor) instructions resulted in colourful invective especially from Mr Heap who looked as if he was umpiring a cricket match.

Those under bogey after run one were Braces and your scribe and we all thought we could shave another tenth or so off our times. The good Dr. Glass pushed hard and was delighted to break bogey on runs two and three ending the day 0.28 under bogey and an honourable third overall. It is a very fine line between a smooth fast run and over driving the car to a ragged result and Mr. Hall completed a beautiful pirouette in front of the spectators and your scribe visited the scenery just to prove that point. Unfortunately Baines Senior also made a rare mistake and spun coming into molehill bending a kingpin making further involvement out of the question and forcing an "early bath" for Simon and Chris. Our series sponsors were getting into the swing of it and Brian's grin told its own story. We hope to see him competing more often next season?

There were four timed runs and Chris Bailey snuck under the target time by 0.09 secs earning him a well earned fourth place. The final reckoning saw Braces take the top spot, Toony second and Clive Glass third. Awards were made by Julie Baines and thanks go to all involved in organising this great day. Four rounds remain, sprints at MIRA and Blyton Park and probably the two most famous hill climbs in the UK. These being Shelsley Walsh in Worcestershire and the inimitable Prescott hill climb at Gotherington just north of Cheltenham.

See you all there I hope?

Rob Toon