

NEWS BULLETIN 2016 – No. 6

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Spires and PP Motorsport Back After Summer Break

Practice

Following a 6 week break since the previous round of the Renault UK Clio Cup at Croft, it was finally time to get back to racing at Snetterton, Norfolk on 30 & 31 July. In contrast to previous weekends, qualifying took place on the Saturday and both races on the Sunday.

Friday's practice sessions were largely dry and warm and going out on old tyres Anton had good pace. With most drivers opting to take new slick tyres, which give a one second advantage around the 3 mile track, Anton was only 1.3 seconds off the fastest lap on old tyres. In the second session, which saw a few rain drops fall, and with set up changes made and a new set of tyres the lap times improved further.

Qualifying

Just as the session got underway rain started to fall and with all cars on slick tyres the lack of grip caught out several drivers. Former Champion Matt Rivett had an off, as did others and with Anton running wide at Riches Corner on his first flying lap a poor lap time was the result. As the rain got heavier lap times got slower leaving some cars pitting to change to wets. Very quickly the rain eased and in the high ambient temperatures the track soon dried. Anton, staying out on slicks got quicker and quicker and on one lap, in improving conditions, went from outside the top 20 to 6th.

With 8 minutes to go the team called the car into the pits for new tyres. Once back on track Anton found yet more time and by the end of the session had posted lap times that would see him line up in 9th position for race 1 and 7th for race 2. A great effort by the team and a fantastic result for Anton in the ever changing conditions.

Race 1

As ever Anton made a fabulous start and had managed to get up into 5th position, but a move by Chris Smiley later in the lap saw Anton complete the first lap in 6th under pressure from Josh Price behind. Senna Proctor, who was running in 3rd, launched his car over the kerbs onto 2 wheels and lost time, dropping him into the chasing pack which included the PP Motorsport Clio.

By the end of lap 5 Ant Whorton-Eales, who was lying 3rd was shown the black & orange flag for trailing his bumper on the ground, this meant that he had to call into the pits for repairs. As the battles on track continued, Price managed to sneak through to 5th at the Bombhole and on the following lap Anton, pushing hard, bounced on the apex kerb at Oggies pushing him wide on the exit onto the grass and down to 12th.

A lap later Anton retook 11th, but with Whorton-Eales in the pits, with his dragging bumper, the Terraclean car moved up to 10th with Paul Streater right behind. However a 5 second penalty to Streater for exceeding track limits relieved the pressure on Anton, with the car running at the back of a group of 3 fighting over 8th place. A lap later Charlie Laddell in 9th received a 5 second penalty so Anton moved up to 9th.

With the race nearly over George Jackson snook through, but at the final corner a great move by Anton allowed him to retake 9th.

Throughout the race the ITV4 cameras were continually focused on the Terraclean car as it was always in the thick of the action, involved in some fantastic squabbles and continually having to attack or defend for position.

Race 2

Following contact at the final corner of race 1, Anton was given a two place grid penalty for race 2, so ultimately would line up 9th.

As the race got underway and with the pack of car as tight as ever Anton lost out to Lee Pattison and Laddell on lap 1. Muscled out by other cars on lap 2, Anton would lose a further 4 places and also suffered some damage to the front of the car. By the end of lap 3 the PP Motorsport car was battling with reigning Stock Hatch Champion, Shayne Deegan for 14th. By half distance a very small mistake allowed Dan Zelos and Ollie Pidgley to scuffle through but Anton didn't let them get away, however with the race distance reduced from 10 to 8 laps, due to incidents in the Touring Car races, there was less time to make any places up. As the race wore on another place was gained as Deegan dropped behind, with Anton still pushing, he crossed the finish line in 16th right behind Pidgley & Zelos.

Summary

A great qualifying session and good race pace all weekend, particularly in race 1. Race 2 was a little disappointing but lessons as always have been learnt in what is the most competitive and high profile one make racing championship in the UK. The next round takes place at Rockingham, Northamptonshire 27th & 28th August.



Anton Spires pushing hard in Race One of the Renault UK Clio Cup at Snetterton.

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