

The Lubricant Consultancy Mk2 Golf GTI Championship 2011.

Rounds 3 & 4.

Brands Hatch Indy – 1st May.

The Mk2 Golf GTI Championship visited the ever popular Brands Hatch Indy circuit over the bank holiday weekend, with its tight, but twisty layout offering a very different challenge to the previous rounds at Donington !.

With close to a full grid, and the front runners lapping in 58 seconds, the possibility of lapping slower cars within a few laps was ever present. This can have quite an effect on the race result when there's a tightly fought battle at the front.

Qualifying.

As the cars queued up in the holding area, it was clear that some drivers were keen to make space for themselves, with some arriving very early indeed !. The track had been resurfaced over the winter period and it wasn't clear whether the previous lap record would be beaten. In the end this wasn't quite possible and the pole time was just over 58 seconds, with around seven tenths of a second separating the top 5 in Class 2 and a slightly tighter gap for Class 1 with pole at 59.7.

The results were as follows :

Class 1

Pole : Guy Stevens.

2nd Andy Holley.

3rd Alex Harris.

4th Antony Theaker.

5th Clive Belton.

Class 2

Pole : James Bark.

2nd Michael Thurston.

3rd Jamie Martin.

4th Henry Wright.

5th Josh Johnson.

Race 1

As the cars headed to Paddock Hill bend, a fast starting Bark maintained his pole position by leading the pack up Hailwood Hill towards Druids. Thurston was close behind and immediately started to apply pressure to the leader. At the end of lap 1, as the field crossed the line, Bark had a 0.39 advantage over Thurston, with Wright a further 0.6 back and the two Jamies (Martin and Packham) a similar gap back from Wright.

Meanwhile in Class 1 Stevens, the polesitter, got a very good start but with considerable jostling for position, Harris had improved and was running second, with Holley close behind at the end of the first lap. Half a second back, Boyd, Belton and Theaker made up the remainder of the top 5.

On lap 8 the order at the front remained, but Thurston seemed to be dropping back after looking like he was challenging for the lead. On the next lap, it became clear than not all 5 ratios were still present in the gearbox and after an impressive start to the race, by lap 9 he'd dropped down to 5th position. This allowed Wright to take 2nd position, which he maintained until the end; an impressive start to the season !. Martin and Packham followed him past the

flag with Thurston just keeping going for 5th !. Notable performances further down the field were Pete Milne, Lee Bertrum and Josh Johnson all of whom have taken a step forward this season.

The Class 1 battle was still headed by Stevens at the half way point, with Harris 3 seconds back and a ding dong between Holley and Boyd taking place behind. The eventual result was Stevens 1st with Harris behind (having closed the gap slightly by lap 16), and Boyd an impressive 3rd with Belton in 'hot pursuit' just behind her. Theaker was threatening to join the battle in 5th if the race continued for further laps !.

The results are provided below.

Race 1 Overall results :

- 1st James Bark (Class 2 Winner).
- 2nd Henry (nee Herry) Wright.
- 3rd Jamie Martin.
- 4th Jamie Packham.
- 5th Michael Thurston.

Class 1 results :

- 1st Guy Stevens.
- 2nd Alex Harris.
- 3rd Dawn Boyd.

Class 2 results :

- 1st James Bark.
- 2nd Henry Wright.
- 3rd Jamie Martin.

Race 2

With similar weather conditions to race 1, the grid was familiar with what to expect as they lined up for race 2. The positions were based on the second fastest qualifying time and this provided the following grid :

Class 1

- Pole : Guy Stevens.
- 2nd Alex Harris.
- 3rd Andy Holley.
- 4th Antony Theaker.
- 5th Clive Belton.

Class 2

- Pole : James Bark.
- 2nd Jamie Martin.
- 3rd Henry Wright.
- 4th Michael Thurston.
- 5th Jamie Packham.

Off the line, Thurston had a cracking start and was, no doubt, keen to make up for the disappointment of race 1. He was 2nd at the end of lap 1 with Martin, Wright and Packham rounding off the top 5.

In Class 1, Stevens got caught up in a fracas on the first lap and was down to almost last at the end of the first lap. Harris was leading, followed by Belton who'd started very well indeed, Theaker, Boyd and Holley followed with 5.5 seconds covering this top 5.

At middle distance, the order at the front was unchanged, though Thurston's car did rather look like it was driving on ice at times (later traced to oil on the left front tyre !). Martin was close behind with Wright and Packham keeping him very honest and rounding out the top 5. Just behind, Milne, Johnson, Mawdsley and Bertrum was all going well with lap times

consistently around 59 seconds. The very close dice between Packham and Wright, had the former past on lap 12 but the order changed back after a 'moment' the very next lap.

In the end, Bark took his second win of the day with Martin in second position. Wright took 3rd with Thurston 4th after he dropped back with 'ice rink' handling (see above). Milne had passed Packham for 5th.

In Class 1, Stevens had been driving like a man possessed and was in third position (in class) by the end. The close dicing between the rest of the class resulted in Boyd taking 2nd with Theaker and Belton in 4th and 5th respectively. Holley was close behind in 6th.

Qualifying and race results are posted on this site under 'Race Information' then 'Overall Results 2011'. More detailed information is available from the TSL website (www.tsl-timing.com).

Race 2 Overall results :

- 1st James Bark (Class 2 Winner).
- 2nd Jamie Martin.
- 3rd Henry Wright.
- 4th Michael Thurston.
- 5th Pete Milne.

Class 1 results :

- 1st Alex Harris.
- 2nd Dawn Boyd.
- 3rd Guy Stevens.

Class 2 results :

- 1st James Bark.
- 2nd Jamie Martin.
- 3rd Henry Wright.