

# **The Lubricant Consultancy Mk2 Golf GTI Championship 2011.**

## **Rounds 1 & 2.**

### **Donington Park – 3<sup>rd</sup> April.**

The Mk2 Golf GTI Championship returned to the sweeping Leicestershire track for the first time since 2008. Following the track's closure during 2009 and subsequent renovation the layout was slightly revised, the main change being the chicane which had been moved further up the Dunlop Straight.

There were 34 entries (following a couple of late withdrawals due to a head gasket failure and a skiing injury (!)) for the 'double header', providing an excellent mix of well prepared Class 1 (8V) and Class 2 (16V) vehicles. It was good to see several new faces as well as some old friends in the paddock !.

#### **Qualifying.**

As the field left the paddock and headed for Redgate, many were speculating whether the previous lap record would be broken and if the new layout was indeed faster. With space at a premium on some parts of the circuit strategy, as ever, formed a part of the proceedings and following the frenetic 15 minute session the top five in each class were as follows :

##### **Class 1**

Pole : Alex Harris.

2<sup>nd</sup> Guy Stevens.

3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Holley.

4<sup>th</sup> Antony Theaker.

5<sup>th</sup> Dawn Boyd.

##### **Class 2**

Pole : James Bark.

2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Thurston.

3<sup>rd</sup> Lewis Hopkins.

4<sup>th</sup> Jamie Martin.

5<sup>th</sup> Jamie Packham.

#### **Race 1**

As the engine revs rose and the red lights went out 17 rows of Golfs charged down the pit straight towards Redgate and, thankfully, out the other side heading for Craner curve. James Bark was charging ahead leading Simon Hill, who had a fantastic start, and had opened up a full second gap as the cars crossed the line for the first time, with just over 2 seconds separating the next 5 cars. Mike Thurston had worked his way up to 3<sup>rd</sup> position by lap 5 as the gap at the front widened further still.

New comers Lewis Hopkins and Jamie Martin were running a very creditable 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> by lap 7 – not easy in such a closely fought Championship !. Mike Thurston kept the pressure on in 3<sup>rd</sup> and had passed Lewis for 2<sup>nd</sup> by the next lap – a position he maintained until the end.

Meanwhile in Class 1, Alex 'Bomber' Harris got a good start from pole in class and had a near 2 second gap by the end of lap 1 over Guy Stevens, with Andy Holley, Tony Theaker and Dawn Boyd close behind. As he crossed the line on lap 8 Guy was just 7 thousandths of a second behind and made his move up the inside into Redgate, to take the class lead. This order remained to the end with Guy winning by 1.4 seconds and Andy Holley and Dawn a further 18 and 19 seconds back respectively.

James Bark was the lights to flag overall winner with an impressive 8 second lead at the end, the remainder of the results are provided below.

**Race 1 Overall results :**

- 1<sup>st</sup> James Bark ( Class 2 Winner).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Thurston.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Lewis Hopkins.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Jamie Packham.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Simon Hill.

**Class 1 results :**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Guy Stevens.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Alex Harris.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Holley.

**Class 2 results :**

- 1<sup>st</sup> James Bark.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Michael Thurston.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Lewis Hopkins.

**Race 2**

The clouds had unfortunately opened up following race 1 and though it appeared that the track might dry off a little during the previous race, by the time the cars lined up for race 2 it had already started to rain again. James Bark, the winner of race 1, decided to fit some brand new tyres and found the grip levels something akin to an ice skating rink on the formation lap !. The grid was based on the second fastest qualifying time during the single session.

Off the line, the top 10 were all fighting for position to their credit, especially in the wet conditions, the racing was very clean and contact free. At the end of lap 1 Jamie Packham, something of a wet weather specialist, was leading with Jamie Martin, Lewis Hopkins and Simon Hill in 'hot pursuit'. Another change of leader had Jamie Martin in front on lap 2, a position he held (working up to a 3.5 second advantage) until the safety car was deployed, bunching up the whole grid on lap 5. On the re-start Jamie Martin continued to lead, but was very closely followed by the remainder of the top 5. Jamie Packham passed him for the lead on the next lap – remarkably at more than half race distance, the top 10 were separated by just over 5 seconds; as with Formula 1 the safety car can make quite a difference !.

The leader changed again the very next lap, with Lewis Hopkins taking charge after Jamie Packham had a 'moment' during the lap; this also let Jamie Martin through proving just how close things were !.

In Class 1 Guy Stevens started well with Bomber close behind keeping him very honest – the gap was less than a second after lap 1. Dawn Boyd followed next pursued by Tony Theaker a mere 0.4 seconds from her rear. A little further down Andy Holley and Clive Belton were having a great battle for 4<sup>th</sup> place in class. At lap 6 the top three were separated by under 2 seconds and Guy went on to take the class win by a similar margin from Bomber.

Overall, the results was similarly tight Lewis taking the win, closely followed by Jamie Martin then Jamie Packham.

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](http://www.tsl-timing.com) ).

**Race 2 Overall results :**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Lewis Hopkins ( Class 2 Winner).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jamie Martin.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Jamie Packham.

4<sup>th</sup> Simon Hill.  
5<sup>th</sup> Nick Porter.

**Class 1 results :**

1<sup>st</sup> Guy Stevens.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Alex Harris.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Dawn Boyd.

**Class 2 results :**

1<sup>st</sup> Lewis Hopkins.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Jamie Martin.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Jamie Packham.