



Press Information

16th May 2012

Rivals race Rose to the line

SuperPro VAG Trophy Rounds 3 & 4
Silverstone – 13th May 2012

Race reports

Dan Rose carried on from where he left off from rounds one and two, by recording victory in both the SuperPro VAG Trophy races at Silverstone this weekend in his Seat Leon Cupra R. However, this time it was not as easy for the 2011 Champion as it was at Donington Park two weeks ago and, although he won round three by a margin of over seven seconds, in round four he was chased all the way to the line by Joe McMillan in his Mk2 version of the same car.

Second in the first of the two races was Chris Levett, who was debuting a new Mk6 Golf GTi, with Ken Lark crossing the line third in his VW Corrado VR6. However, neither of these two made it past the first corner in the second race, which left Len Simpson to pick up the remaining step of the podium by finishing third in round four in his VW Vento VR6.

In contrast to the first two races a fortnight ago at Donington, although there was a more than cool breeze blowing all day, the clouds above Silverstone for Sunday's two races never threatened to produce any rain. Therefore, it was flat out from the word go for the 26-car entry and a closely contested qualifying session in the morning saw Rose in Pole for both races, with Tony Absolom in his Golf R32 alongside, followed by Lark and McMillan on row two.

Race 1 (Round 3)

In what seems to have become a regular occurrence, Rose was overwhelmed off the line by the others around him and, as cars turned right into Copse for the first time, it was Paul Taylor in his Mk4 Golf R32 who nudged into the lead from the third row of the grid, ahead of Absolom and then Rose, with McMillan and Lark in hot pursuit.

But keeping his cool - and his line - out of turn-one, Rose got a slingshot out of the bend and by the time the leading group reached the braking zone for the left-then-right at Maggots, the Seat driver was through. With his ability to make the most of a clear track ahead of him, the last thing his competitors wanted to see was the back of his Leon and, as they fought amongst themselves, the championship leader began to edge away from the chasing pack.

Following the first lap scuffles, for the next six laps the order behind Rose was Absolom, McMillan, Lark, Levett and then Taylor - who was dropping back lap-by-lap. The focus now turned to the battle for second and, with nothing between Absolom and McMillan, the inevitable happened in the middle of Copse at the start of lap seven, when their two cars touched, the impact spinning them into the gravel on the outside of the corner. Although both got going again, the damage sustained meant they went no further than the pits.

This elevated Lark into second and Levett third and, for the remaining seven laps, the top three positions remained unchanged - until after the chequered flag, when Lark was penalised by five-seconds for exceeding track limits and was consequently relegated to third.

Also retiring at the end of lap seven - after a coming together with Martyn Walsh in a Mk2 Golf GTi - was Mark Jenkins, who had swapped his regular Mk5 Golf for a Mk4 TDI/GTI Challenge car in order to carry out some development work. The battle of the Beetles never materialised either. Having started from the pit lane due to a sticking throttle, Martyn Culley scythed his way through the field until lap three, when the water pump drive belt came off, whilst the aptly-named James Bradley-Silverstone started strongly in his Beetle, but then slowed with fuel-surge issues.

Tony Taylor was the first of the Class B runners and eighth overall in his Mk3 Golf VR6, whilst the first of the Mk2 Golf runners was Andrew Aldridge in 10th place.

Race 2 (Round 4)

The start of race two was almost a repeat of race one, with Paul Taylor exiting Copse in the lead, but this time he had Rose on his tail. Once again, it didn't take long before the wily Seat driver was in the lead - lap two in fact - as Taylor dropped back once more due to transmission troubles.

Lark's challenge was over as soon as he started, when his Corrado's clutch stopped working when the lights went green. Culley opted to start from the pit lane again and, just as he did in race one, began to make up places as soon as he joined the track. In the meantime, fellow Beetle pilot Bradley-Silverstone was up to fifth and was being caught by Culley, until his Beetle became stuck in sixth gear.

Absolom was now in second with McMillan third, the top three nose-to tail. But once again, Rose was making the most of the clear track ahead of him and started to ease away. McMillan got the drop on Absolom as they left Copse on lap four and went past on the run up to Maggots. He then set about closing the gap to Rose.

By the end of lap eight McMillan had battled his way to the back of Rose's car and put himself close enough to pounce if the leader made the slightest of mistakes. Now circulating on his own in third place, Absolom's podium finish was looking secure, right up until lap 13 - the penultimate lap - when a broken driveshaft stopped him in his tracks.

Whilst this put Simpson in third place, the two front-runners were now romping ahead and, although McMillan did all he could to stop the three-times winner from taking his fourth victory, Rose kept his cool, defended well and crossed the line to win by an eventual margin of 1.6-seconds.

"It's been a great weekend. I could not have asked for anything better", said Rose at the finish. "That's four-out-of-four, but it was good to be kept on my toes in the last race. I was thinking I might not do the whole season, but with such a good start and the car going so well, I'll have to keep going now. I'm really chuffed and now looking forward to Oulton Park."

Tony Taylor took Class B honours again and scored another eighth place overall, with Aldridge second in the category and ninth this time round. Jenkins had a much better run in the Mk4 Golf TDI and made it into the top ten after a spree of overtaking having started from P22 on the grid.

There's now a 10-week break before the Championship reconvenes at Oulton Park in Cheshire on 21st July for rounds five and six.

Highlights of the races will be shown on Motors TV. Check TV listings for details. Rounds one and two are scheduled to be broadcast on Friday 18th May at 6.55pm.



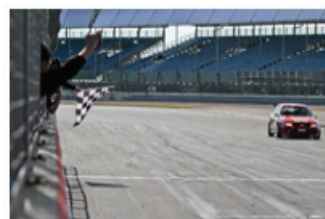
Credit: Karl Bowdrey



Credit: Karl Bowdrey



Credit: Rich Sams



Credit: Rich Sams

