



## Armed Forces Race Challenge CHAMPIONSHIP 2017



After only a month respite the competitors return to the AFRC Championship for round two, held on the National Circuit at Silverstone. With the high attrition rate at Donington the month before, it was feared that the grid size might have suffered.

Team Army had been busy; Ro Barrett had cured the overheating Golf by fitting a racing radiator, while the Honda Civics of Daniel Tedstone and Mark White had undergone major brake upgrades. Simon Barlow (RAF) had sorted the head gasket on the MG, while the mysterious power loss, which forced Darren Howe (RAF) to retire at Donington, had cured itself. Steve Hutchings (RN) had had the Dimma Peugeot 106 Turbo, back in the garage and Sean Graham (RN) had no problems with the tow vehicle. Unfortunately, for Simon Frowen (RAF) and Richard Evans (Vet) their damage was a bit more than could be cured with T-Cut Scratch Remover, but Simon was sure he would be back for Cadwell Park later in the season.

Ultimately, there was no need to worry, there were 36 cars ready to take to the track for practice, had everyone been available the grid would have been oversubscribed.



*Not much room on the National Circuit.*

The Silverstone National circuit at 1.6 miles can, in a quick car be lapped in just over a minute and with 36 cars practice was going to be hectic and it would be difficult for anyone to get enough space to get in a clear lap. After fifteen minutes, Darren Berris in the Westfield had done twelve laps and taken pole, while at the back Simon Barlow had done nine.

That is not what the AFRC is about; it would not be until after the racing was completed and the Performance Index scores calculated that the Championship standings would be known.

Since last time the painters had been busy and Darren Howe's Golf and Ed McKean's BMW were now sporting the 'RAF Engineering' livery. Darren Berris (RAF) had added weight to the Westfield so that it was now eligible to run in Class A. As Andy Holborn's Westfield (RAF) was not race ready, he rolled out last year's MX-5.



*New members of 'RAF Engineering'.*

Making a guest appearance was Ian Smythe. As well as taking part in the previous events, Ian has competed at the Classic Le Mans. In addition, making a guest appearance was Major James Cameron, founder and CEO of Mission Motorsport; the aim of Mission Motorsport is to aid in the recovery and rehabilitation of those affected by military operations, by providing opportunities through Motorsport.

A number of people had problems post practice with both Steve Hutchings and Mark Penny (Guest) having CV joint gaiter failures, unfortunately for Steve the



*CV boot problems!*

CV joint also failed and despite frantic efforts to replace it he was unable to make the necessary repairs and missed the race. Dom Benfell (RAF) was having power issues with the Lotus. At high revs power seemed to drop off, with no time to full diagnose the problem the only solution would be to 'short shift' around the problem.

The weather for the race was overcast but the track was dry, so no problems with tyre choice. Darren Berris made a clean start, leading the field, and within a couple of laps was amongst the back markers. Chasing Darren was Paul Cook another guest driver in one of the Tegiwa BMW's. At the beginning of lap 3 while overtaking at Copse Adam Dewis (RM) spun, ending up in the gravel causing the deployment of the safety car for a number of laps while the marshals' recovered the car.



On resumption of the race, championship leader, Paul Waterhouse (Vet) was in a mid-pack battle with Darren Howe and Dan Tedstone. Further down the field Dom was managing to keep the Lotus in front of Keith Attwood (RN), who in turn was ahead of Scott Lawson (RAF) and Andy Holborn (RAF).



*Dom's Lotus just in front.*

Another close contest would be between Mark White (Army) and Mark Inman (RM). These two could not be separated with Mark just keeping his Honda ahead of Mark's VX 220.

Once the pit widow was open, drivers were required to complete a 60 seconds 'Wheels stopped' pit stop. So until all had done the compulsory stop the overall standing were unclear. Team Navy were again double driving the Peugeot 206 with Richard Scott handing over to James Cantwell.



*Ian, Mike and Ed.*

After his stop, Ian Smythe dropped into a battle with Mark Penny's VX 220. Mark could catch in the corners, but Ian just had the edge on the straights. As these two were scrapping it meant that Ed Fuller (Guest) in the Tiger and Chris Camp (Vet) in the Skyline R32 GTR were able to close the gap. In the end Ian won out, coming home in third behind the Tegiwa BMW's, but the outright winner on track would be Darren in the Westfield, another lights to flag finish.

Although there are awards for Class finishes, Performance Indexes decide the Championship positions. Round 2 (Silverstone National) results were:

- 1st Dom Benfell (RAF).
- 2nd Chris Slator (RAF).
- 3rd Keith Attwood (RN).

The full results are available at:

<http://www.armedforcesracechallenge.net/results/>



*Silverstone award winners*

After Round 2 of the championship, Paul Waterhouse is still leading from Keith Attwood and Daz Smee.

Round 3 of the AFRC Championship will be at Cadwell Park 29 July 2017.

*Pictures by Nick and Mark Rogers*