

With round 3 of the AFRC at Cadwell Park on the Saturday, competitors took the opportunity to have a couple of training days on the preceding Thursday and Friday, which consisted of a trackday to familiarize the drivers with the circuit followed by a classroom session delivered by Darren Berris (RAF). Unfortunately race driver Max Coates was unable to deliver a 'Maxter Class' as he was racing in the Clio Cup event at Snetterton.

Cadwell Park has the longest lap on the 2017 calendar on the narrowest track and with the popularity of AFRC Championship the grid was oversubscribed. Fortunately those extra competitors were able to enter the Roadsports race (a similar format to the AFRC Championship) while still operating from the AFRC paddock.



Not much room at Charlies.

The weather conditions were changing on Friday evening and it looked like there might be a wet qualifying session on Saturday morning, however the rain stopped before the meeting got underway and with other formulae practicing before the AFRC qualifying, the track was drying nicely. With a full grid, the narrow track and damp patches under the trees at Hall Bends qualifying was always going to be difficult.

With no 'live snatch' capabilities the safety car had to be deployed half way through the session so that the marshals could safely recover a number of stranded cars.

Dan Tedstone (Army) was having wheel problems, while Si Frowen (RAF) was having fuel management issues at the bottom of the Mountain section, while Ray Honeybone's Fiesta stopped out at Charlies. The Astra of Graham Moss (RN) was having cooling problems and deposited coolant in the second set of corners at Hall Bends, this caused a few heart stopping moments for the



Well held Darren!

following drivers. Darren Howe (RAF) started to slide but caught the ensuing spin perfectly. Unfortunately Simon Barlow (RAF) wasn't so lucky and did spin, stopping just off the racing line where following drivers could avoid him.

The Royal Navy had a strong turnout, 6 cars and 7 drivers. Richard Scott had his Ford Escort Cosworth out for its maiden voyage; while Lewis Pemble made a return to the grid for his first race of 2017 sharing the Sultan Locost with seasoned driver, Sean Graham. Stuart Balls had been elevated from pit crew to driving the 'RN Endurance' Peugeot 206. Also making a rare appearance was Brian Watson (RAF), taking time off rallying his classic mini to drive the sister car to the 'RN Endurance' Peugeot 206. This car had previously been driven by Trevor Hancock at the Holly Birkett



Rich Scott's Escort

6 hrs relay and the RAF at the inaugural Race of Remembrance in 2014. For this event Trevor would be sharing the driving with Brian.

Dan Smith (RAF) had recently returned from deployment overseas and Farard Darver (Army) made his first appearance since 2015 in his newly built BMW E46 M3, sharing his drive with Richard Scott as a relay team. Farard would also compete solo in the Roadsports race. Busiest driver of the day was Matty Taylor (Army), not only was he doing the fully 45 minutes in the AFRC race, but also two rounds of the Royal Purple Hot Hatch Championship.



Both 'Hancock Endurance' Peugeot 206's



The AFRC Paddock

Between qualifying and racing there is time to try and sort any problems encountered during practice. For Chris Wood (Army) the normally reliable BMW was having



Team Army

brake problem during qualifying and this would need addressing, unfortunately a jammed bleed valve would mean that there was little he could do and he would have to race with the brakes as they were.

Also having problems was Will Ashmore (Army), after have spent many hours in the garage he thought that the high end miss-fire had been cured and for the training days it had, only to return once into qualifying. He would take the grid for

the race but with a much down on power Honda. The problems encountered by Dan and Ray were un-repairable in the time available meaning they were unable to start the race.

Numerous delays throughout the day meant a changing timetable, and the grid was formed slightly behind the planned schedule and the race was delayed by 10 minutes for barrier repairs as a result of accidents in the Clio Championship race which preceded AFRC. The tight grid at Cadwell Park always makes an interesting first lap. The first lap was mostly without incidents, more than can be said for the other formulae running that day.

There were some great clean battles throughout the field. Despite the low experience levels displayed by some of the AFRC drivers compared to other championships they certainly showed their maturity and ability levels on the circuit. Cadwell Park is arguably the most dangerous circuit on the AFRC 2017 calendar, not a lot of run-off and no gravel traps, but it was the first race this year without a safety car period - a feat the drivers should be proud of.

Class A (up to 260 whp/ton)

Darren Berris (RAF) managed a commanding lights to flag victory, in fact he did manage to completely lap the whole field, a remarkable piece of driving. 2nd was Ed Fuller (Associate), Tiger Six and Billy Fletcher (Veteran) in his Fletcher Hornet Mk 2. Ed and Billy's cars are completely road legal and completed a European road trip the month before.



Darren Berris leading the way.

Class B (Up to 200 whp/ton)

Daz Smee (Army) in a Honda Integra had cured the overheating problems experienced in testing last week to bring it home in 2nd overall and 1st in Class. Although Mark White (Army) finished 2nd in Class on the road, following judicial adjustments after he missed some signals from the marshals he was awarded a time penalty which dropped him to 3rd and promoted Darren Howe (RAF) in his VW Golf to 2nd in Class.



Daz on his way to 1st in class.

Class C (Up to 140 whp/ton)

Class C was also fiercely fought out. Initially in the lead Ed Mckean (RAF)



Mark Inman followed by Mark White.

dropped down the order after a small excursion on to the grass while passing a slower car though Charlies. Mark Inman (RM), Vauxhall VX220 was well up the order and mixing it with Class A and B cars. A few laps from the end of the race there was a signalling confusion when Mark Inman mistakenly took the black/orange flag intended for Mark White as being for him. After a trip through the pit lane he rejoined the race behind the

hard charging Ed Mckean who had finally managed to get past the Fletcher Hornet to finish 1st in class with Mark Inman 2nd.

The battle for top Peugeot was in full swing again at Cadwell Park. Paul Waterhouse (Veteran) in a Peugeot 306 GTi got the best in Qualifying by a couple of grid positions from Chris Slator (RAF) in his Peugeot 306 Rallye. For the entire race Chris was close to Paul but never managed to get pass, eventually finishing 4rd in Class with Paul 3rd.



Paul and Chris continue their season battle.

Performance Index Results

The Performance Index (PI) awarded by the consistency of the drivers is what matters to the championship and the points awarded for Cadwell Park were; Paul Waterhouse taking the overall win on PI, Dan Smith took 2nd in his first race of 2017, Chris Slator beat Ian Fletcher by just 0.056 PI to the final podium position. The highest placed novice on PI was Stuart Balls who was the first novice driver to take a win this year other than Keith Attwood (RN) in his Mini R50.



Keith leads the way in his Mini (79)

In the championship Paul Waterhouse has now extended his lead over Keith Atwood in 2nd, and with his result at Cadwell Park Chris Slator overtakes Ian Fletcher for 3rd.

There was a one-off award this weekend, presented by Colin Jebson, Javelin Trackdays for the 'Spirit of the Event' award. This would be awarded by the drivers to the driver(s) they thought deserved it for having the best spirit throughout the event. It was great to see so many different nominations, especially across the different Services, but it was the team of Andy Holborn and Chris Vosper (both RAF) won the overall vote. After accident damage picked up on the trackday on Thursday they had worked tirelessly to rectify the damage, shipping in parts from Birmingham and local engineers were used along with some ingenuity. The car was 'finished' and scrutineering late on Friday night when it passed without an issue. Andy and Chris's prize, a UK Javelin Trackday.



Winners of the 'Spirit of the Event' award

There's now a short break before the end of season finale at Rockingham Motor Speedway on 9 Sep 17.

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