

# Armed Forces Race Challenge 2018 Championship

750  
YEARS



Silverstone 5 May 2018



It's not often that all things come together, but May 5th was one of those days. Silverstone National circuit, a bank holiday weekend and sunshine, but that is what awaited the competitors of the AFRC for rounds 3 and 4.



*Silverstone in the sunshine.*

It would be a slightly different paddock layout as unfortunately the Podium Prep Truck which usually provides transport for a number of competitors, as well as hospitality facilities for the AFRC had developed a fault and was not roadworthy. Chris Slator (RAF) managed to beg, borrow, or steal transport for his race car, as well as arranging a marquee for the weekend.

After round 2 a number of cars would require time in the workshop before they would be ready for Round 3. The VXR 220 of Mark Inman (Veteran) had issues with suspension and the recently installed supercharger, while Adam Dewis (Royal Marines) was having trouble with the supercharger on his Astra. Absent from the grid would be Matty Talyor (Army). Matty was still having problems chasing the electrical gremlins on his BMW, but he would be there to support the rest of the team.

Out for the first time in many years and with a newly prepared car was Jason Lappin (RAF). Jason had previously raced in the RAFMSA race series, the for-runner of the AFRC.

More new drivers would be racing for the first time in the AFRC. Chris Dancer (Veteran) had brought his Mk 1 Ford Escort.



*Final preparations for Chris.*

New drivers for Team Army, Tom Sykes would be racing his BMW 330CI, while Simon Skerton would be driving His Mini Cooper S.

As it was a bank holiday weekend entry numbers would be slightly down on Oulton Park but, with 28 drivers there was still a strong grid. Qualifying was not until mid-morning so there was plenty of time for the sun to dry out any overnight wet patches, so conditions would be perfect. Daren Berris (RAF) would not be racing the Westfield V8, so there would be a new name on the top step of the podium this weekend.

For Paul Vice and Andy Jones, veteran drivers from Mission Motorsports, after qualifying they would find themselves side by side in the middle of the grid.



*Paul and Andy's MX-5s ready to race.*

There was a strong battle for top honours between Mark Inman, Chris Camp (Veteran), Stephen Cunniffe (Guest), Will Ashmore (Army) and Maj Farard Darver (Army) as to who would be on pole. After the fifteen minute qualifying session, it would be Farard would have the upper hand, with Will second and Chris third, but the top five would be covered by less than one second.



*Farard on his way to Pole.*

For some qualifying would not be so happy. On lap three some form of debris was catapulted into the windscreen of Chris Dancer's Escort which curtailed his qualifying session as well as threatening to finish his racing weekend. Also forced to stop early would be Gareth Moss (Navy) with a severe vibration from the front suspension on the Astra.



*Not the best way to leave qualifying!*

Back in the paddock the cause of Gareth's vibration was traced and corrected, while Chris's problem was far worse.

The screen had been damaged beyond repair and trying to get new one at this time was all but impossible. Apparently you can't race a saloon car without a windscreen because of overpressure blowing out the other windows. Solution, remove the back window and open the others and as Chris had a full face helmet, he would be allowed to race. Easy.

As Round 3 of the AFRC would be the first race after lunch there would be time to prep the cars, have an excellent hog roast bap before it was time for the off.

As the lights went out Farard's BMW E46 M3 set off like a rocket ship but Will and the others were close behind. Billy Fletcher (Veteran) in his Hornet Mk 4 got a flyer passing Chris Camp and Mark Inman on the first Lap.

There was a tight battle for Class C, the largest number of entrants. Ed McKean (RAF) got the best start, followed by Darren Howe (RAF) and Keith Atwood (Navy). Ben Gundry (Army) had managed to make a better start than Chris Slator who had dropped places.



*Chris fights back after a slow start.*

It would be a torrid day for Adam as he had to retire with driveshaft problems. It would also be a non-finish for Blair Thomson's Peugeot 205.

With the new car now bedded in Jason started rolling in the pair of Mission Motorsport MX-5s, unfortunately in Luffield the MG TF decided to swop end and Jason did a perfect pirouette ending up the correct way around, unfortunately the engine had stalled and he was unable to restart it.



*OOPS Jason*

By Lap 10 the heat of the day was taking its toll. Although the analogue temperature gauge in Farard's BMW was fine, the one connected to the ECU was warning of overheating, so was cutting power to save a catastrophic engine failure. This allowed Chris in the Nissan GTR to take the lead. It wasn't long before he started to suffer with fuel surges thus allowing Will Ashmore to take the lead and despite a strong surge from Billy in the Hornet, it would be Will who would cross the line first with Billy less than 1/4 of a second behind and Chris would finish third. This would be Chris's first ever podium.



*Who to win?*

In Class C it would be a clean sweep for the RAF with 1st Ed McKean, 2nd Darren Howe, and 3rd Simon Frowen.

Just before the end of the race the Seat Leon Supercopa of Mark Jones had suffered a puncture and once the car was recovered this would need sorting.

Once the race was over Jason was able to return to the stranded MG TF and wouldn't you know it, first turn of the key the thing started straight off. Well the battery was used on his old racing Metro, so probably has seen better days.

Simon Skerton had been complaining that the Mini Cooper S kept cutting out. The car is fitted with an electronic power isolator and these are known to cause problems if not correctly earthed. This is what was suspected, so a separate earth wire was fitted in the hope this would provide a solution.

One thing is for sure, building your own race car is never easy and there are going to be teething problems for the first few races.

With the next race a couple of hours away there would hopefully be time for competitors to get their cars ready. Adam had would have plenty to do as the near side driveshaft need replacing.



*Nearly done and just in time?*

The grid for race 2 had been decided by drivers 2nd quickest times in qualifying. Again Farard had the BMW on pole with Will alongside him. Farard got the holeshot and set about trying to break the tow to the others. As in race one it would be nip and tuck with Farard leading until the overheating issue reappeared dropping him down the order.

In class C the normally reliable BMW of ED McKean had an overheating issue from the start, so wouldn't be running for top honours that again would be taken by Daren Howe.

Despite all of his hard work between races Adam was to have trouble on lap 6 exiting Becketts the replacement driveshaft let go and he was forced to retire. At the same time Simon Skerton also had to retire the Mini.



*Simon's Mini forced to retire.*

Back at the head of the field, Will had again gone in front with Billy and Chris fighting for second position. Will was having problems as the car seemed to be venting fuel.



*A close battle for second.*

Jason was getting to grip with the MG and had managed to get past the first of the MX-5s driven by Andy Jones and head off after Paul Vice. All was well until entering Luffield 2 Jason tried to steer around the corner, the MG went straight on. The universal joint in the steering had disconnected.

With the race entering its final stages it looked like a three horse race, Will, Chris and Billy. Unfortunately four laps from the end Chris's Nissan GTR began to overheat and he was forced to retire, leaving just two. Will went wide at Copse and Billy being the ever opportunist nipped through to take the lead and one lap later the race win.



*Race 2 winner.*

Again in Class C it would be an RAF lockout with Daren, Simon and Chris take the honours.

Another good racing weekend with the AFRC. Although the warm weather of the event was nice for the spectators, I suspect that some of the drivers would have liked it a little cooler. Rockingham Speedway next month, let's see what the weather will bring. See you there.

After Race 4 the Championship positions are:

	Name	Car	Points
1	Mark White	Honda Civic Type R	52
2	William Ashmore	Honda Civic	42
3	Chris Slator	Peugeot 306 Rallye	41

After Race 4 the Team Championship positions are:

	Team
1	Veterans
2	Army
3	RAF
4	RN/RM

After Race 4 the Novice Championship positions are:

	Name	Car	Points
77	James Cantwell	Peugeot 206	21
2	John Mitchell	Renault Clio 182	18
3	Andy Jones	MX-5	11

For Silverstone it would be Tom Sykes who would be awarded 'Nankang Army Driver'.



Full results can be found at:

Race Results:

[750mc.co.uk AFRC Silverstone](http://750mc.co.uk/AFRC/Silverstone)

Performance Index Results:

[AFRC Silverstone PI Results](#)