

2021 DONINGTON PARK RACE REPORT

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Report and Pics by Dee and Nick

Hello again, the weeks seem to be flying by and here we are mid--season. Still packing the wellies, Lord knows what's happened to our summer. This weekend we are making camp at the popular Donington Park circuit. Pastures new for some of our riders and good to see so many of you keen to get out on track. 18 entries in the programme and a couple of late entries on the day gave us our biggest grid yet. The championship is still quite tight at the top, and not yet a done deal. So still all to play for. We had arrived in the rain but fingers crossed the sun would make an appearance. We were scheduled to be out at race 5 in the morning and with scrutineering etc all taken care of, a more leisurely start to Saturday was anticipated. Now why hadn't anyone mentioned the planes. Sleep what sleep! It was with tired, bleary eyes that we greeted the morning with a rather overcast but dry enough day. Morning qualifying went well and once we were mixed in with the other classes a total of 30 riders sat on the grid. Peter Boast took pole with Andy Pike sitting alongside and Andy Widdowson just behind them. Dan Ledger back with us after mechanical issues at Cadwell. The flag went down and away they roared. Peter quick off the mark into Redgate with Andy Pike, Tom Blackwell, Andy Widdowson and Dan Ledger all keeping him company. As everyone piled into the corner we had a few sharp intakes of breath as everyone jostled for position. All round safely and away into the distance. Listening to the race tannoy it was clear that it was going to be a hard fought affair. Andy Widdowson was the first to succumb to the tarmac going down at Mcleans, no serious damage and as they past us onto 2nd lap Peter had a slight advantage over Andy Pike.

Tom Blackwell and Dan Ledger were scrapping for 3rd. Alex Sinclair and Pat Welch were followed by a tight group of midfielders trading places and getting to grips with a new circuit. Once again they pass us and the front 2 have opened up a gap. Andy Pike piling on the pressure but unable to make anything stick. Dan having the same problem with Tom Blackwell who wasn't giving an inch. Lap 4 and a change up front Andy Pike had squeaked past Peter now all he had to do was hang on. It wasn't going to be easy. Tom Blackwell was making himself as wide as possible and Dan could find no way round him. Further back William Grant and Joe Webb had been trading places all around the circuit. At the end of final lap it was a victory for Andy Pike after a race packed full of hard fought close racing. Lovely! Result 1st Andy Pike 2nd Peter Boast 3rd Tom Blackwell.

A chance to catch our breath and have some well deserved lunch. Race 2 was run fairly late in the afternoon but with no noise issues here racing was able to go on till 7pm, almost my bedtime. Following a timing issue Andy Widdowson was starting from row 10. Andy Pike up front with Peter Boast and William Grant behind him. Away we go again, Peter away well passing Andy Pike and Alex Sinclair right amongst the action. Once again Dan and Tom were battling away but this time Dan had Tom's card marked. Andy Widdowson began the task of hauling his way up through the field. No problem! William Grant could not capitalise on his good grid position and pulled off during 2nd lap. By the end of lap3 Peter had pulled out a tidy gap which left Andy Pike, Alex Sinclair, Dan Ledger and Tom Blackwell to sort out the remaining places. After a bit of toing and froing some little victories were claimed. Dan had passed Tom and back in the chasing pack Joe Webb had improved to finish ahead of the other novice riders, whilst Dean Widdowson was not happy with his bikes performance (gearbox issues). A bit of over night tinkering needed in the garage. Another entertaining tight race. Result 1st Peter Boast 2nd Andy Pike 3rd Alex Sinclair. And so off for a relaxing evening and a good nights sleep, aircraft permitting.



Morning all, slightly quieter night. Patches of blue sky today possibly t shirt weather. Started a bit late due to a couple of races being carried over. so a pretty relaxed atmosphere around camp. Plenty of spectators out in paddock which was great to see, life seems to be taking on a more normal feel at last. A lot of interest in the monos . Out for race3 of the weekend and once again Peter Boast led the field away pulling out a gap from the off. Andy Widdowson had flown past Alex Sinclair who was not going to let him get away further down the field the action was fast and furious riders trading places continuously. Then it was as if someone had flipped a coin and turned everything on its head. As we watched riders stream past we were missing Dan Ledger, he had been running in close order with Andy Pike, Alex and Tom but who ever said lightening doesn't strike twice clearly never raced bikes, as for a second time Dan had suffered a broken rear shock leaving him with no option but to coast in. Out on lap2 and this time we lost Alex Sinclair to the "Craner Curve Club" and Joe Webb also took an unscheduled somersault or two down the circuit at Mcleans as he parted company with his machine. The red flag came out and race stopped whilst everyone was gathered up. There was no restart so result as follows 1st Peter Boast 2nd Andy Pike 3rd Andy Widdowson Thankfully all riders okay not so their bikes. Back to the paddock for an in depth post mortem and a good strong cuppa. Tea always seems to help.

And so for one last time a rather depleted field took to the grid. From the front row Peter Boast put in a good start as did Tom Blackwell with Andy Widdowson and Andy Pike barely a hares breath away into Redgate they came, on the inside, round the outside we didn't dare look away we might miss something. They raced off into the distance and out of view. We could hear them approaching and Peter Boast was away leaving Tom and our 2 Andys to sort things out. As we watched the battle unfold a rider from another class went into the tyre wall at Redgate and the race was stopped for a while. Our boys were held on the grid for a time whilst the track was cleared. Following the restart Peter Boast was in no mood to mess around and pulled out a comfortable lead. Andy Pike not troubled too much in 2nd leaving Andy Widdowson and Tom Blackwell to fight it out for 3rd. Midfield and some entertaining tussles going on, Steven Colville and James Inman making a race of it with Mark Fairweather hanging on in there picking up a few points towards the novice cup. Result 1st Peter Boast , 2nd Andy Pike, 3rd Andy Widdowson. Peter Boast setting a new Donington lap record of 1:20:232.

What a weekend , thrilling highs and devastating lows but that's racing for you. We will be back to do it all over again at Castle Combe 21st/22nd August.



Post mortem. Brian Stroud, Joe Webb, Andy Widdowson, Dan Ledger, Pat Welch



Andy Pike, Andy Widdowson and Tom Blackwell with some great close racing.