

1/12th Electric Stockcar European Open Championship



Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th January 2005



Hosted by the Fryslan 1 club at the Racing Expo Show at Franeker

A web site for the show can be found at www.stockcar-expo.com

This will be our second visit to race at the expo show along with our Dutch colleagues, and what a show it is well worth a visit, there is something for everyone at the show including the kids.

The plan for us travelling from the UK was to leave early Friday morning and arrive sometime Friday evening, once again Andy Cattell had arranged the mini bus and also the tunnel booking, although some were once again making their own way over to Holland, which gave us a total of sixteen UK entrants making the trip.

As on previous trips we would be sleeping at the Het Graadwe Paard, thanks to the host Auke Kooistra, although you could stay in a local B&B if you preferred, this option guaranteed more sleep as the nights are long if you are staying at the Het Graadwe Paard, which translated means Black Horse. If you are interested in racing with the Dutch at the Fryslan 1 club take a look at the web site for the pub where a fixture list can be found for the race dates, www.wixs.nl/~hetgraauwepaard/.

The usual banter on the bus was at a lull as we were motoring through Belgium, until the cry from the back of the mini bus came from the back of the bus, how long until we stop for the toilet, Andy replied don't know why? Back came the reply I'm desperate, Andy replied cant you wait, No was the reply, and a new star in the form of Dave Murray was born, as a road side stop was in order and boy did he take some ribbing about it! The rest of the journey was uneventful until we took a wrong turn as we neared our destination, which meant we would be approaching Franeker from the south instead of the north, once we were truly lost we found the local constabulary (by chance) who duly gave us a police escort right to the door of the Racing Expo Show where we met up with the Fryslan 1 club members who were busy putting the track together ready for the show. After spending some time looking around the preparations for the show we eventually headed off to the Het Graadwe Paard for some refreshments and to show our "Dutch Virgins" (they are our new recruits to our adventures over in Holland) just how hospitable our friends over here are, and boy was it some initiation ceremony, for me it petered out around 3.10am, but it did not end there as Dave Fudgy Murray had to be escorted by his minder Dave Forrest, at precisely 3.45am as I was still awake and watching the proceedings where he was escorted to the toilets before he did something that he would have regretted but not remembered in the morning, then we had the entertainment of Ian Rolph trying to find his bed after he had took flying lessons when he tripped and found the floor with a big thud!

Saturday morning arrived all too soon at about 07.30 and we were all treated to breakfast and coffee (some black!) by our host Auke Kooistra, along with some leg pulling about what had gone on the night before, and Dave Murray was getting the brunt of it!

The big news during breakfast was that Ben Harding would not be with us as he had encountered a problem with his passport and had been refused at passport control in the UK, and after a mad dash up to Peterborough he could not secure a new one in time to make the trip.

The format for the meeting would be five rounds to count on the Saturday, along with one heat of practice, and also there would be a demo with the Bangers, then on Sunday there were to be two further rounds, the best six scores would count towards qualifying into the quarter finals followed by the semi-finals and then the final, there was also a junior final for the top six qualifying juniors, and it was also planned for another demo with the Bangers.

As I do not have the heat details I can only give you details from the quarter finals, as it would take too long to go through all of the racers scores, although there were some that are worth a mention, the likes of Lauren Cattell who was unlucky not to make the quarter final stage after finishing in 26th place with her best lap score of 70, Brandon Snell was the best of the Stony Stanton "virgins" finishing in 36th place, both Kayleigh Cooper and Dave "fudgy" Murray were racing for the first time and put in some good performances although Dave was sometimes let down by his car, we lost count of how many speed boards and resistors that he got through during the weekend. It was also good to see a lot of new faces racing amongst our Dutch counterparts, we just hope that this trend continues.

The quarter- finals.

The line up for the first quarter was Karl Spencer, Mark Cooper, Niek Middelkoop, Ian Rolph, Paul Riddell and Arjan Korf. Winning was almost a formality for top qualifier Karl Spencer with 98, in second place we had Paul Riddell with 96 and the final qualification place went to Ian Rolph with 90, both Mark Cooper and Niek Middelkoop suffered with mechanical problems, Mark finished with 86 laps on three wheels and Niek had 51, which leaves us with Arjan Korf who put in a good performance with 82 laps in fifth place.

The second quarter featured Patric Lievens, Mark Steel, Koen Middelkoop, Niels Hoekstra, Thomas Forrest and Ytzen Korf. We had surprise package Patrick Lievens take a deserved win in this quarter-final with a commanding 97 laps from Koen Middelkoop on 92 as was Mark Steel in third place, so the racers going out were Thomas Forrest with 87, along with Ytzen Korf who finished with 84 laps in fifth place and Niels Hoekstra in sixth place with 59.

The line up for the third quarter-final looked like this – Andy Cattell, Hidde de Jong, Adri Middelkoop, Allan Inness, Dave Forrest and Marten Bijlsma. We were treated to an excellent race between Andy and Hidda, at the finish it was Andy who crossed the line first with 93 laps along with Hidda who was just behind him also finishing with 93, and in third place and taking the final qualification place we had Marten Bijlsma with 88, the unlucky Allan Inness was just behind with 87 laps in fourth place followed by the ever improving Dave Forrest in fifth spot on 85, which leaves us with Adri Middelkoop who had a nightmare of a race and finished with 68 laps.

The last of the quarters featured Evert Jacob Klok, Jelle Bijlsma, Tjepke de Vries, Michel Berendsen, Johan Biemers and Arnauld Laverman. We had a surprise winner in Jelle Bijlsma with 96 laps to his credit at the finish from pre race favourite Evert Jacob Klok in second place with 94, and the all important third place went to Tjepke de Vries with 90, so missing the cut we had Arnauld Laverman in fourth on 88 laps then it was Michel Berendsen with 87 in fifth followed by Johan Beimers with 77 laps to his credit.

So we had some of the top racers go out at an early stage, and also some real surprises making the break through into the later stages of a major championship, where they had finished and with what laps determined which of the semi-finals they would go through to, the line up for them looked like this,

Semi 1	Semi 2
Karl Spencer	Patrick Lievens
Paul Riddell	Jelle Bijlsma
Evert Jacob Klok	Hidde De Jong
Mark Steel	Andy Cattell
Koen Middelkoop	Tjepke De Vries
Marten Bijlsma	Ian Rolph

In the first of the semi-finals Karl Spencer was in a class all of his own, not only did he finish well ahead of the rest, he also set a new track record of an outstanding 101 laps in the five minutes of the race, finishing in second place behind him we had Evert Jacob Klok on 93 laps at the finish, and right on the finish line we had Paul Riddell overtake Mark Steel for the all important third place finish and qualification into the final, both racers recorded 92 laps, fifth place went to Koen Middelkoop with 91 followed by Marten Bijlsma on 80 laps at the finish.

The second semi-final was a lot closer affair, and was also a race of what might have been, at the finish we had both Jelle Bijlsma and Patrick Lievens finish the race with 95 laps and in that order, then the drama unfolded as Hidda De Jong took the all important third place from Andy Cattell, Hidda finished with 93 laps and Andy had 92, but the real story was the laps Andy lost during the race, he was holding a comfortable lead when he got stuck on his roof and lost two laps before a marshal got to his car to turn him back over, now he was in a battle for second place, and after making a mistake Hidda was through and into third and into the final at Andy's expense, coming home in fifth place was Tjepke De Vries with 90 laps followed by Ian Rolph with 87.

The Dutch Open Final

We had an interesting line up for the final, a real mixture of experience and in-experience; here is the line up of racers,

1. Karl Spencer
2. Jelle Bijlsma
3. Patrick Lievens
4. Evert Jacob Klok
5. Paul Riddell
6. Hidda De Jong

We were treated to an excellent race, at the finish a relieved Karl Spencer retained his title with 99 laps but he was pushed all the way by Yellow grade racer Patrick Lievens in his first major final who was on the same lap at the finish of the race as Karl, then we had a return to form for Frysland racer Jelle Bijlsma coming home in third place with 97, then we had another racer enjoying success in his first major final finishing in fourth place we had Paul Riddell with 93 from Evert Jacob Klok who finished the final with 92 laps, and in sixth place we had Hidda De Jong with 89.

The Junior Open Final

Earlier during the day a junior final was contested between Jelle Bijlsma, Evert Jacob Klok, Arnauld Laverman, Thomas Forrest, Koen Middelkoop and Niels Hoekstra.

This was an extremely closely contested race and the result could have gone to any of the top three, but at the finish a relieved Evert Jacob Klok retained the title that he won before with 95 laps from both Jelle Bijlsma and Koen Middelkoop in that order with 94 laps each, finishing in fourth place we had Niels Hoekstra with 89 followed by Arnauld Laverman in fifth place with 88, and then it was Thomas Forrest with 87 in sixth place, and he suffered with tracking problems due to a replaced servo saver which was not centred quite right!

On the Saturday the watching crowd was treated to a Banger D/D, there were plenty of hard hits throughout the race, and amazingly the result was declared a dead heat between Mark Cooper and Brandon Snell, both going for the big hit and with one big last head on by both racers an identical finish happened with both racers stranded on the infield by a front wheel, and boy was it appreciated by the watching crowd.

Another D/D race was demonstrated on Sunday, as before there were plenty of head-ons and take outs, and this time we had a clear winner in the shape of Mark Steel.

Just got to mention the great night that we had on the Saturday back at the Het Graadwe Paard, plenty of beer and some Rocket Fuel as supplied by the Lobith lads, I thought it was more like moonshine at around 60% proof! there was also some entertainment in the big room by a local karaoke singer if you needed any extra entertainment, it was great to chat and make our bonds with the Dutch contingent even stronger, and rumour has it that the last one into bed was about 06.30.

Report by Mark Cooper.