

CLUB
Presents
NATIONAL SERIES
ROUND 2
SATURDAY 14TH APRIL
DOORS OPEN @ 8:45

ENTRY FORM OR ON

Report by Stuart Clarke (#150)

'The contact capital of stockcar racing' was the venue for round two of this years national points series as 32 drivers from across the country came to race at the iconic Rogers Hall.. A venue which has been the home of Rugby Stockcar Club since it's move to Hillmorton all the way back in 1985.

In the line up for the event, we had Gary Riddell #600. Gary was Scotland's sole representative and furthest traveller on the day. We also had Cornwall's Martin Nash #675 who had a much earlier wake up call than most of the competitors. The main contribution came from the boys in Manchester with 11 of them making the 2 hour trip down to the Midlands for what many of the drivers were calling 'round two of Rugby vs Urmston'. Finally, not forgetting the two representatives from Fordham which were #770 Bradley Pauley and #516 Sam Campbell.

As for the Rugby drivers, we had none other than multiple champions Matthew Bennett #413 and Ben Harding #471. We also had the current world and Dutch open champion Robert Teuke #14 who was running the event alongside Martin O'Neill in race control. Stuart Clarke #150, third in last year's national points series was also a danger to some for sure.. Especially if things weren't going in the right direction!!

Concourse

Before a timed practice, cars were put onto the track as they lined up for the concourse. A chance for drivers to show off their new bodyshells.. Many of them designed by Macs race team. A first attempted replica was on show for the world champion (Pictured left) thanks to Malts designs however it was Rugby's Matthew Bennett #413 (Pictured right) with his own personalised bodyshell that took the honours.



Practice and briefing

Before the main event started, a new style of practice was introduced in the driver's briefing with the driver's being allowed ten minutes timed practice in their original starting heats. Compared to recent nationals, the format normally includes an open practice which can lead to too many cars being on the track at one time. I recently spoke with the chairman of the BRCA 1/12th section Mark Craig and he had this to say.. "A big plus for me was ten minutes practice for each driver is a great idea and I will be looking to take this idea to the bigger meetings such as the British, European and World championships".

Each driver had four heats during the course of the day with their best personal top three race results to count towards their final qualification position with the top seven drivers earning the automatic qualification into the main event. As for the remaining drivers, the next nine to qualify would battle it out in the consolation event with only the top two from that race earning their spot at the back of the grid.

Round one

Time for the main event to kick start into gear! The opening race had none other than Urmston's leading driver Anthony Wyper #30, who was the previous event winner in round one at Hathern raceway. It was the perfect start for Anthony as he won heat one comfortably with 99 laps ahead of Mark Craig #141 with a respectable 94 laps followed closely by Stuart Harding in the #164 green machine! #516 Sam Campbell had issues in his first race and disappointingly only scored 32 laps.

Heat two was the battle of Rugby's world champion Robert Teuke #14 and Urmston's WRD man Rob Whalley #919 however it was Urmston taking two wins from two as Rob Whalley pipped the Rugby champ to the post by one lap winning the race with 101 laps. A very creditable third place was earned by future star Leah Wyper #107 finishing the race with 91 laps. A disastrous start for Gary Osborne #218 with what looked like a steering malfunction very early into his opening race.

Heat three was a much more close encounter with only four laps separating first and fifth place. Brandon Eccles #531 made it Urmston's third win in succession after beating Stuart Clarke #150 by two laps after taking victory with 101 laps. Third place went to Owen Bates #515 with 98 laps and Ryan Malt #120 and Max Harding #192 both scored 97 laps. The only real casualty in this race was Fordham's Bradley Pauley #770 after his car had technical issues during his first outing.

Heat four was more of a Rugby race shall we call it with Rugby's Brandon O'Neill #555 most definitely upsetting one or two of the visiting drivers. It was however Matt Bennett #413 who won the race with 98 laps with Josh Malt finishing second on 97 laps ahead of Scotland's Gary Riddell #600 with 94. Not too many surprises as such in this race however a difficult race to say the least with plenty of bumper work included!

Final heat of round one and it was Junior sensation Dylan Ashurst #55 who won the race with a lower score of 92 laps ahead of Rugby's Ben Harding #471 with 88. Clive Buckler finished third place on 86 laps with the remaining three drivers scoring in the low 60 lap barrier. So after round number one had finished it was Brandon Eccles #531 and Rob Whalley #919 leading the top of the standings on 101 laps ahead of Robert Teuke with 100.

Round two

Round two started off very much the same as round one with Urmston's Anthony Wyper #30 improving on his original first heat score by winning the race with 102 laps ahead of Rob Whalley #919 on 101. Third place went to Fordham's Sam Campbell #516 on 93 along with youngster Max Harding who started the day off in sensational style for his standards!

Heat two was next on track and it was world champion Robert Teuke #14 who finished the race in first place with 100 laps beating Brandon Eccles #531 by three laps. Gary Osborne finished third also three laps behind the race winner however after a disappointing start to the meeting, I think he'd be pretty happy with that result. Clive Buckler finished fourth with a respectable 95 with the rest of the field being far behind.

Heat three was a closer encounter with Rugby finishing in a one-two-three position as Matt Bennett #413 won the race with 96 laps ahead of Stuart Clarke #150 and Ryan Malt #120 both scoring 94 laps. Fourth place went to the scrutineer for the day Peter Ashurst #46 with 88 laps. No real surprises in this race once the race settled down after an opening chaotic laps.

Heat four.. An all Rugby race.. And with the drivers named for this race, you'd expect some contact for sure! It certainly sounded like a bumpy race with the likes of Brandon O'Neill #555, Owen Bates #515, Josh Malt #121 and Craig Baker #183 all included. However it was a surprise victory for Craig Baker #183 winning the race with a confident 96 laps ahead of Stuart Harding #164 and Owen Bates #515 slightly behind with 95 a piece. Ben Harding, a well known face around the racing circuit broken his front beam after a bash with the fence early into the race leaving him adrift in fourth place.

Heat five and a well earned victory went too #600 Gary Riddell with 100 laps ahead of Dylan Ashurst #55 on 98. Third place went to James Eccles #532 on 94 ahead of Mark Craig #141 in fourth with 93 laps. Fifth place went to Martin Nash #675 on 91 laps with young Chloe Harding earning a very creditable 61 laps considering how young she is!!



A slightly lower turnout of drivers for this year's event.. Nonetheless still a very enjoyable day of racing with all involved.

Round three

Starting to become boring now!! Again, Mr Anthony Wyper was on a mission! Once again, he leaves the opposition in his rear mirrors as he strives to victory for the third consecutive time on the day with a very talented drive to win his third round race with 103 laps... The highest on the day. Second place went to Gary Osborne in #218 with Clive Buckler finishing in third both with 95. Robert Teuke #14 finished fourth a lap behind the pair with 94.

Heat two was won by ex junior world champion Brandon Eccles #531 with 97 laps cruising ahead of the rest of the drivers with Craig Baker #183 being the next closest on 91. Ben Harding #471 and younger brother James Eccles #532 also got 91 laps with Max Harding #192 with 88. Bradley Pauley #770 brought up the field with 84 laps.

Heat three was a very quick race to watch with Rob Whalley showing them all how it's done with 101 laps. Dylan Ashurst #55 finished second with 95 laps with Ryan Malt finishing third on 93. Owen Bates #515 finished fourth with 92 beating Dylan's father Peter Ashurst #55 by three. Young Alfie Jones #629 managed an 86 in his third outing with a good drive.

Heat number four and only really one real shock was Josh Malt only managing 65 laps after issues with his car. Matt Bennett #413 was in top form once again walking to victory with a comfortable 96 laps ahead of Gary Riddell #600 in second place with 91. Another good drive from Leah Wyper seen her earn a well earned third place with 84.

Final race of round three and it was certainly a scrappy one to say the least! Victory went to Fordham's Sam Campbell.. His first of the day with 92 laps ahead of Rugby's Stuart Clarke on 91. Third went to Urmston's Mark Craig #141 with 88 ahead of Stu Harding #164 on 87. Stuart's daughter Chloe Harding #709 had an unlucky race with mechanical issues forcing her out the race early on.

Round four

Current leader of the national points series Anthony Wyper #30 made it four wins out of four with a very confident driver in his final outing to secure his place in the main final. He won the race with 102 laps ahead of current junior world champion Dylan Ashurst #55 with 97 laps. Third place went to Martin Nash #675 who beat Sam Campbell #516 on split.. Both with 93 laps.

Heat two was very much a two horse race between Matthew Bennett #413 and Brandon Eccles #531 with only one lap separating the two of them at the top of the results. Matt with 99, Brandon with 98. No one else could catch the two hotrodders with thid place being almost 20 laps behind!

Heat three was certainly a big talking point for both of the Malt brothers as Ryan #120 won his final outing with a very impressive 101 laps.. A possible opportunity to qualify for his first ever national final maybe? Ben Harding #471 finished a lap behind Ryan with brother Josh Malt #121 finishing third with both being on 100 laps. Rob Whalley finished fourth with 98 laps all but securing his spot in the main final with Gary Osborne finishing fifth on 97. sixth place went to Peter Ashurst on 95 laps.. Probably one of the quickest races seen at Rugby this year!

Heat four was won by James Eccles #532 with 94 laps.. His first win of the day and a very proud moment for the junior driver after beating the current world champion by 1 lap. Owen

Bates #515 finished second alongside Robert Teuke #14 in third. Alfie Jones #629 had issues with his car in his final outing all but ending any possibilities of qualification.

Final heat of the day was a disappointing one from my view.. Leading the race half way through the race until a big collision with the fence resulted in my front bearing and my rear drive hub to both split ending my possibility of the chance to qualify straight into the final. It was however Clive Buckler #100 who finished first in the final heat of the day with 99 laps ahead of Gary Riddell #600 on 98. Third place went to Craig Baker #183 with Max Harding #192 in fourth ahead of Leah Wyper #107 in fifth place.

Qualification review

After a quick count up of each driver's best three from four scores, the consolation and final grid was completed and ready to take place. Some familiar faces in both! The main surprise must have been Ryan Malt #120 qualifying for his first ever final.. Congratulations Ryan!

There was however also some familiar faces that as it stands had missed out to qualify straight into the final which included the young sensation #55 Dylan Ashurst, Multiple winner of the event #471 Ben Harding, #150 Stuart Clarke had a day to forget with numerous car issues during the day. And not forgetting #218 Gary Osborne.. A driver who certainly can compete against the best.

the qualification results were as follows;

Straight through to the final:

Anthony Wyper #30 – Top of the standings after round one and also top of the standings after the qualification results during the meeting. Surely the main man to beat?

Rob Whalley #919 – Qualified in second place for the main final after a very consistent day's racing. An underdog for the final win maybe?

Brandon Eccles #531 – Undisputed talented driver who certainly knows his way around a stockcar track even at what is still a pretty young age! Can he manage a successful top three?

Robert Teuke #14 – The current world and Dutch open champion.. I need to say no more surely? A very consistent day's racing for Rob.. Can he mix it up a little maybe?

Matthew Bennett #413 – Matt had a few tricky races on the day with plenty of bumper work involved.. Can he be the person to stop the Manchester front two?

Ryan Malt #120 – A fantastic day's racing sees Ryan qualify for his first ever national final.. Very much the surprise package in the line up.. What can he do to beat the opposition?

Gary Riddell #600 – Gary qualifies as the final automatic spot straight through without having to worry about the consolation.. He's been in national finals before.. Can he be a true underdog in the field?

The next nine drivers with the highest qualification scores progressed into a last chance race with only two of them having the chance to make it onto the back grid of the main final. These drivers were as follows;

Consolation line up

Dylan Ashurst #55 – The youngster certainly likes mixing it with the big guns.. Would normally of put your money on him to qualify for the main final but this is stockcar racing.. Anything can happen!

Clive Buckler #100 – He's been around longer than pretty much anyone else in the stockcar world.. He may be getting older.. But he's still got the 'special glove' keeping him on the right tracks!

Gary Osborne #218 – Not known for making as many national finals as he probably could be.. But this might be his opportunity to mix it with the best. Can he be one of the two to qualify?

Josh Malt #121 – Probably has one of the quickest cars on track.. A good driver when he puts his mind to it. His brother has made the final.. Can he follow in his younger brother's footsteps and make it a Malt one-two in the final?

Ben Harding #471 – Certainly more focused nowadays on the bigger version of stockcar racing however still forever is up in the top of the results. Probably one of the most likelier drivers to qualify into the main final.

Owen Bates #515 – Fifth place in the world finals over in Holland last year, can he bring that talented Owen to the track or will it be another 'rock and roll' shall we say?

Stuart Clarke #150 – Referred mainly as 'Nobby' but certainly have probably got a couple of different nicknames by certain drivers. An off day for the Rugby Driver.. Starting near the back of the grid in an important race.. What's going to happen?

Max Harding #192 – A brilliant day for the young future Harding star has earned him the place in the consolation event.. Can he follow in Ben's shoes and cause a huge surprise? I wouldn't put it past him!

Craig Baker #183 – Bringing up the rear! Probably spends more time counting how many buses go past him on a day to day basis.. A change for him for now, probably will be spending more time counting how many times he ends up in the wall?

The race

Now to the serious stuff, the race was full of plenty of bumper work and plenty of damage. Rugby's regulars spend more time doing what they do best and upsetting one or two new customers.. It was however Ben Harding #471 who managed to sneak through the field and claim the first spot in the final after completing the consolation race with 89 laps. All was to play for!

A number of broken parts on cars meant the race slowly drawn to a close with myself personally having broken a steering arm, chunked three new tyres, broken rear hub, broken side rail.. Fortunately enough, not another broken bodyshell... Yet!! Owen Bates #515 was another casualty with an early puncture resulting in a finish low down the order. Craig Baker #183 must have felt like his bus crashed into a wall the amount of times he kept being fished out from the bends.

It was eventually Urmston's Dylan Ashurst #55 who managed to scrape through with the final spot for the main final after finishing second place with 87 laps. A close finish was certainly called for with Gary Osborne #218 finishing only one lap behind on 86. Clive Buckler #100 finished fourth on 85 ahead of Josh Malt #121 and Max Harding #192. Stuart Clarke #150 finished in front of bus driver Craig Baker #183 with Owen Bates #515 bringing up the rear.

All comers race

During the consolation and final events, a ten car all comers race was being fought out with Billy Clague #163 being the main talking point for best hit of the day! Stuart Harding #164 ended up with a broken baseplate.. Again! However it was Josh Malt #121 who cleared through the carnage and won the all comers race with ease beating Billy by over 8 laps.

Final time

Fanfare for the common man was aired out around the hall (Thanks Josh) as the drivers waited patiently for the start of the main final..

From left to right in the photo: Rob Teuke #14, Ryan Malt #120, Brandon Eccles #531, Anthony Wyper #30, Rob Whalley #919, Gary Riddell #600, Dylan Ashurst #55, Matthew Bennett #413 and finally Ben Harding #471.



The race kicked off with an instant start as Rob Teuke #14 spent no time messing about and got stuck in straight away with the use of the front bumper! Anthony Wyper managed the jump early on from the rest of the field as the remaining drivers were battling it out hard early into the race.

The race slowly began to settle down as the driver's began to find their rhythm however bad luck struck for Ryan Malt #120 half way through the race after his steering arm come loose. Unfortunately for him, he left it in the capable hands of me (Bad idea!). Ryan continued to finish the race however he lost valuable time early on due to the loose steering.

Eventually, as the race progressed no one could get close enough to Anthony Wyper #30 to cause an upset. It was the main man from Urmston who took the chequered flag and won the

grand final with 99 laps. Second place went to Brandon Eccles with 94 laps who had a very impressive day with no real issues holding him back. A proud moment for father Graham. Third place went to Scotland's Gary Riddell #600 who had a fantastic meeting with a third place finish which was truly deserved.

Fourth place went to Rob Whalley #919 and fifth place went to Rugby's Matthew Bennett #413. Second place to fifth place in the final all finished the race on 94 laps.. A very close finish indeed! Sixth place; a lap behind the group of drivers was Ben Harding #471 with 93 laps with Dylan Ashurst #55 in seventh on 90.

Rob Teuke had a very tricky final race and only managed eighth with 88 laps. That finally leaves last place man Ryan Malt #120 after some technical issues during his race. He did however still manage to complete 88 laps which was very impressive considering he was off the track for a small period!



Third place in the final – Gary Riddell #600



Second place in the final – Brandon Eccles #531



First place in the final – Anthony Wyper
#30

The trophy presentation was presented by none other than Robert Teuke. Each of the finalists received a trophy on the day and trophies were also given out to the top three juniors, top grade awards and also best looking car. The winners were as follows;

Top white grade – Craig Charles #197

Top yellow grade – Gary Osborne #218

Top blue grade – Josh Malt #121

Top junior driver – Dylan Ashurst #55

Second junior driver – Max Harding #192

Third junior driver – James Eccles #532

Concourse winner – Matthew Bennett #413

Flowers were also presented to the two ladies in the kitchen for providing us with food and drink throughout the day. I'd also like to thank Martin O'Neill and Jamie Collins in race control, Matthew Bennett for organising the heats and trophies. And of course, not forgetting Rob Teuke for all his hard work. Anyone I have forgot I do apologise!

Racing reviews

After the meeting, I caught up with some of the drivers from the event and asked them how the day went.

Robert Teuke #14 - "For me, I think the day went pretty faultless haven't seen or heard any complaints".

Matthew Bennett #413 - "My car was handling well and I won all my heats but I felt like I was down on straight line speed all day. I was running second in the final until my shock collar fell off, but I was a few laps down on Toe (Anthony Wyper) by then and I didn't have anything for him".

Mark Craig #141 - "Think the day ran very smoothly, few plus points for me were arriving and the doors being open to walk straight in (In the past we've had to wait outside). All in all a very enjoyable meeting and with me not making the consolation just proves Rugby is still one of the greatest stockcar clubs in the country".

Martin O'Neill (Race control) - "I thought the day went very well, race control is quite numbing on a big meeting, you are trying to make everything as quickly and efficiently as possible. I will do some extra preparation myself next time instead of relying on others".

Peter Ashurst #146 - "The day went very well Dylan's car was a bit to twitchy so I mainly concentrated on his front beam and tracking to try and get it how he likes I think it had taken a few good Rugby style hits the night before. he did great in the consolation kept his cool and breezed it. The final was tough though I think he did well to finish where he did and to get top junior was fab. As for me I just had a couple of bad runs I don't like pink tyres; they just don't suit my style of driving. My favourite race was the all comers I absolutely love that race just wish there had been more cars in it I don't think ten is enough. Rob and the gang put on a great show. Roll on the next one".

Craig Jones (Alfie's dad #629) - "I think it ran smoothly without any hiccups. The one thing I am going to try is to drop the power on Alfie's car some how.

Ryan Malt #120 - "First race was good and it looked like I was going for top blue fighting against some tough people like my brother Josh malt and Mark Craig and some other people. me and Owen Bates had some good hard racing in the second round showing the Manchester drivers how it's done. Third round was a hard one very rough but still score high laps. Last round and I knew I had to get high 90s so when the race started I stayed out of trouble when the race finished I check to see how many I got and it was 101 laps my very best around the contact capital of rugby raceway. My very first national final I was very pleased with myself, all I had to do was stay calm and stay out of people's way but make them work for it. During the final my steering arm came off so my chances of a higher finish in the final wasn't to be".

Stuart Clarke #150 - "Me personally, it wasn't the best of days in terms of results, I knew I could make the final I just didn't have the luck on my side on the day but hey ho that's stockcar racing. The meeting ran smoothly, we all had time to get to Birmingham after the meeting for the full size stockcar racing and I feel that Rob and the rest of the team did a fantastic job in running the meeting".

Race report by Stuart Clarke