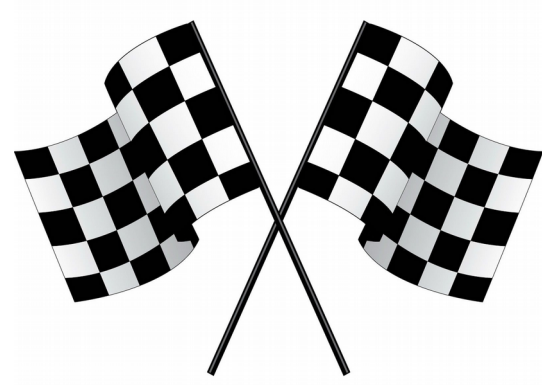


Rugby Stockcar Club National 2023



Round 2 of the 2023 national series headed to Rugby Raceway on Saturday 4th March as 44 drivers travelled to the 'contact capital' of 1/12th oval racing. Rugby Stockcar Club have plenty of hard hitting drivers and in the past, the hard hits along with the tightness of the track has seemed to help the regular Rugby locals in comparison to their fellow travelling competitors.

After winning the opening round at Hathern Raceway just a couple of weeks ago, Anthony Wyper went into the event as pre-meeting favourite alongside Brandon and his father Graham Eccles who were on the podium in round one. Ryan Cattell impressed in his return to the national series and is certainly someone who will be looking at taking the honours on his home track. Another home track specialist in the name of Matthew Bennett is definitely someone you'd expect to be in the mix.

Rugby held their opening round of the shootout series on the Friday night with 33 drivers in attendance. It was Matthew Bennett with the win ahead of Ryan Cattell by the smallest of margins and goes into the national expecting the same result this time around. They certainly have some extremely tough competition so it'll be interesting to see what happens!

The meeting kicked off with a set of practice heats for each driver. This meant that everyone would be allocated a 5 minute heat where they can set their car up and get used to the track. Not everyone is a fan of this, but understandably it does stop a 'free for all' on track with 10+ cars on at once. A brief meeting was called to explain to the drivers the format for the days event. 4 qualifying heats with your best 3 scores to count, top 7 into the final, the next 9 into the consolation where the top 2 would qualify to form a 9 car final grid.

Drivers put their cars on track for the annual concourse with Brandon O'Neil being given a trophy for the best looking car. Round 1 was fast approaching .. Are we going to see an upset or can one of the top boys stamp their authority on the rest of the field? Only time will tell!! Let's go racing!!



Heat winners round 1

Brandon Eccles

Matthew Bennett

Emily Jacklin

Kev Falconer

Owen Bates

Anthony Wyper



Top 10 lap scorers from round 1

Brandon Eccles – 101 laps

Ryan Cattell – 101 laps

Emily Jacklin – 96 laps

Graham Eccles – 96 laps

Anthony Wyper – 95 laps

Leighton Holroyd – 94 laps

Kev Falconer – 93 laps

Alfie Jones – 93 laps

Brandon O'Neil – 91 laps

Matthew Bennett – 90 laps

Round 1 seen world champion Brandon Eccles and Rugby superstar Ryan Cattell kick start their days racing with a brilliant battle in the opening race for the first heat win of the day. It was Brandon who pipped Ryan by 4 tenths of a second as they crossed the line both on 101 laps. This turned out to be the joint highest of the overall round.

Matthew Bennett won a scrappy heat 2 which dealt issues for Rugby's Stuart Clarke and Scotland's upcoming star Lennon Cuthill with both only managing 82 and 81 laps. Both drivers knew they could do much better, but with a scrappy opening heat for them they knew they couldn't afford another poor heat for the remainder of the meeting.

Emily Jacklin, Graham Eccles and Leighton Holroyd all had a close battle in heat 3 as only 2 laps separated the top 3 after the buzzer went off to signify the end of the race. Each of them would be happy with their opening race and will be looking to continue their good start going into Q2. Kev Falconer and Alfie Jones had a mini battle together as both ended up on 93 laps in heat 4. A respectable result for the pair of them. A hectic race in heat 5 gave Owen Bates victory with 85 laps alongside James Eccles on split. Owen would have been happy with a heat win, but with a score of 85, he knew he had work to do still.

Anthony Wyper pulled clear of the rest of the pack in heat 6 with a score of 95 laps. Brandon O'Neil and Gordon Mutch were in close pursuit of him, but just couldn't keep up with the superstar as he won by 4 laps.

Heat winners round 2

Brandon Eccles
Matthew Bennett
Graham Eccles
Alfie Jones
Kev Falconer
Anthony Wyper

Top 10 lap scorers from round 2

Brandon Eccles – 103 laps
Graham Eccles – 100 laps
Matt Bennett – 99 laps
Ryan Cattell – 98 laps
Kev Falconer – 96 laps
Emily Jacklin – 95 laps
Stuart Clarke – 95 laps
Ian Yarwood – 95 laps
Anthony Wyper – 94 laps
James Eccles – 94 laps



Round 2 was another dominant display by world champion Brandon Eccles who won the opening race of the round on 103 laps. In the same race, Emily Jacklin (95 laps), Stuart Clarke (95 laps) and Lennon Cuthill (93 laps) all had a promising race result which helped boost their hopes for a final spot. A breakdown for Steve Jacklin early on allowed the race to settle down quickly and the top drivers were able to get into their stride with no real hiccups.

Heat 2 was a 1-2-3 for Rugby drivers Matthew Bennett, Ryan Cattell and Leighton Holroyd. There was just the 1 lap that separated the top 2 with Matthew winning on 99 laps, ahead of his close rival Ryan on 98. Leighton managed 93 laps which added up well with his 94 laps in the opening round of heats.

Heat 3 was dominated by Graham Eccles on 100 laps, however Adam Gilbertson had a breakdown half way through the race which resulted in a DNF. Matt Astbury also had a mechanical failure which in fact ended his days racing. Heat 4 was a win for Alfie Jones on 93 laps, but with it being a scrappy race it was a challenging race for the likes of Owen Bates and Gary Riddell who struggled on 87 and 86 laps. Not bad scoring, but in national terms ... Improvement was required!

Heat 5 was a busy race with a full field of 8 cars involved. Kev Falconer winning on 96 laps ahead of Ian Yarwood on 95 laps. James Eccles was just behind on 94 laps ahead of Brandon O'Neil on 90 laps. Another good set of heats for Brandon which is what is needed if he wants to make the top 16 cut off.

Heat 6 was another dominant display by Anthony Wyper on 94 laps. The Scottish crew of Cameron Riddell (89 laps), Gordon Mutch (85 laps) and Brian Cuthill (85 laps) couldn't keep up with the Urmston superstar however I'm sure give it a few years they won't be too far behind the way the Scottish drivers have been improving in recent years.

Halfway stage

At the halfway stage, it was still tightly poised with work to do for the majority of the drivers looking at making the cut for the top 16 qualifying spots. With 44 drivers in attendance, just making the consolation is a challenge at this level yet alone the automatic qualifying spot.

Anthony Wyper and Alfie Jones both mentioned to me during the meeting that they were struggling with their set ups and with scrappy races to help the cause, it made for difficult reading as we approached round 3. Stuart Clarke, Gary Riddell, James Eccles and Adam Gilbertson are just a handful of drivers I could list who knew they had to dig deep and improve if they want to make it further than the qualifying heats.

Rugby superstars Matthew Bennett and Leighton Holroyd (pictured below) both looking to make an impact in the main event at their home national. Will we be seeing them both in the final?



Heat winners round 3

Brandon Eccles
Matthew Bennett
Brandon O'Neill
Alfie Jones
James Eccles
Anthony Wyper



Top 10 lap scorers from round 3

Matt Bennett – 102 laps

Lennon Cuthill – 99 laps

Anthony Wyper – 97 laps

Brandon Eccles – 95 laps

Adam Gilbertson – 95 laps

James Eccles – 95 laps

Kev Falconer – 93 laps

Leighton Holroyd – 91 laps

Ian Bingham – 91 laps

Stuart Clarke – 91 laps

Heat 1 of round 3 seen a technical issue for Ryan Cattell force a retirement at the mid-way point. It appeared as though his car wasn't sitting right on the ground which made the car completely impossible to drive. Luckily for Ryan, he hasn't had a bad round yet so this round would be classed as his dropped score. Plenty of work to do in his final outing if he wants to qualify automatically for the main final. Brandon Eccles won the race on 95 laps ahead of Leighton Holroyd on 91 laps. Tommy Johnson was 3rd on 87 laps, but was really struggling with car set up so far which has piled the pressure on him if he wishes to make the consolation.

Heat 2 was a gift to these drivers as Steve Jacklin and Matt Astbury both were unable to take their spot in the race due to mechanical issues meaning it turned out to be a 5 car race. This allowed Matt Bennett to set the highest laps of the round with 102 laps ahead of Lennon Cuthill on 99 laps. Adam Gilbertson had a successful race with 95 laps but knew full well he still needed to improve if he wanted to reach the top 16 cut off.

Brandon O'Neil won a messy heat 3 on 87 laps with Alfie Jones winning heat 4 with 88 laps. James Eccles won heat 5 on 95 laps ahead of Gordon Mutch on 90 laps. The final heat of round 3 was another victory for Anthony Wyper on 97 laps. Kev Falconer, Stuart Clarke, Gary Riddell, Ian Yarwood and Brian Cuthill all had a decent final heat even with it being a busy 8 car race.

Heat winners round 4

Brandon Eccles

Matthew Bennett

Ryan Andrew Cattell

Alfie Jones

James Eccles

Anthony Wyper

Top 10 lap scorers from round 4

Matt Bennett – 101 laps

Brandon Eccles – 100 laps

Ryan Cattell – 98 laps

Graham Eccles – 97 laps

Anthony Wyper – 97 laps

Leighton Holroyd – 97 laps

James Eccles – 95 laps

Ian Yarwood – 95 laps

Gary Riddell – 94 laps

Alfie Jones – 93 laps



Brandon Eccles dominated his final heat of the day with 100 laps cementing his place as top scorer after 4 rounds of racing meaning he starts pole for the main final. Owen Bates was 2nd on 91 laps however this wouldn't be enough for him to make the consolation event. Lennon Cuthill was 3rd on 89 laps which meant he was on the borderline for an automatic spot in the final. It was now a waiting game to find out how everyone else would get on in their final outings.

Heat 2 was won by Matthew Bennett on 101 laps which meant he would join Brandon Eccles on the front row of the final. Leighton Holroyd joins the pair of them in the final with 97 laps in his final race in comparison to Emily Jacklin who came 3rd on 91 laps. This meant that Emily Jacklin just misses out on a final spot and will start the consolation race on pole.

Heat 3 was another tight battle between superstar drivers Ryan Cattell and Graham Eccles. Ryan, after a mechanical failure in his last outing was relieved after his final heat as he took victory on 98 laps ahead of Graham on 97 laps. Both of them would be the next set of drivers who have automatically made the top 7. Sophie Woodward, Jamie Collins and Graeme Beckett all had a brilliant final outing however they were unable to challenge the top 16 spots.

Heat 4 was another busy race with 8 cars all battling it out as the pressure grew race by race. Alfie Jones drove to victory on 93 laps ahead of Stuart Clarke on 90 laps. Both drivers had a difficult day of racing, but both managed to qualify for the consolation event. All to play for

with 2 spots available to progress into the final. Adam Gilbertson had a day to forget!! 80 laps in his final outing meant he missed out on the consolation event by a couple of laps.

Heat 5 was an extremely tight battle between 4 drivers. James Eccles managed to get the better of the rest of the field and take the victory with 95 laps. Gary Riddell was in 2nd on 94 laps, ahead of his fellow Scottish drivers Kev Falconer on 93 laps and Gordon Mutch on 91 laps.

Heat 6 was the final qualifying heat of the day and Anthony Wyper once again sneaked around the track to claim victory on 97 laps. This was enough for him to qualify automatically for the main final. Ian Yarwood was 2nd on 95 laps, with Brandon O'Neil coming home 3rd with 92 laps. This was enough for both Ian and Brandon to claim a spot in the consolation event.

Pos	Name	Result	
1	Brandon Eccles	304/ 905.584	World champion Brandon Eccles qualifies on pole for the main final with 304 laps, closely followed by home track specialist Matthew Bennett a further 2 laps behind on 302 laps.
2	Matt Bennett	302/ 904.737	Ryan Cattell was a further 5 laps adrift from Matt on 297 laps, while Graham Eccles, Anthony Wyper, Leighton Holroyd and James Eccles join the top 3 to form the top 7 drivers that have automatically qualified.
3	Ryan Cattell	297/ 902.664	
4	Graham Eccles	293/ 902.979	
5	Anthony Wyper	289/ 906.654	Girl racer Emily Jacklin starts the consolation on pole after just missing out to James Eccles by 2 laps. The same goes for Kev Falconer who once again has the dreaded consolation race to try and progress through. A task which has been extremely difficult for Kev to overcome in recent times, but the form he's been on .. You can never rule him out.
6	Leighton Holroyd	284/ 905.510	The same goes for his fellow Scottish companion Lennon Cuthill. Lennon has really improved this season and even after only a couple of rounds he's certainly someone who's moving up the ranks at an extremely quick pace.
7	James Eccles	284/ 906.786	
8	Emily Jacklin	282/ 901.652	Another home track specialist Alfie Jones is joined in the consolation by fellow Rugby racers Stuart Clarke and Brandon O'Neil. There's sure to be fireworks when you see Stuart and Brandon's name in the same heat ..
9	Kev Falconer	282/ 904.837	
10	Lennon Cuthill	281/ 907.259	
11	Alfie Jones	279/ 906.517	Ian Yarwood joins the party in between the Rugby racers while the back of the grid is completed by more Scottish drivers Gordon Mutch and Gary Riddell.
12	Ian Yarwood	278/ 907.663	Adam Gilbertson misses out by 5 laps after a disappointing day's racing for his own high standards!
13	Stuart Clarke	276/ 905.159	
14	Brandon O'Neill	273/ 907.981	Up next, the consolation event!
15	Gordon Mutch	271/ 908.454	
16	Gary Riddell	270/ 906.572	
17	Adam Gilbertson	265/ 902.395	

Consolation



The consolation event was full of drama from the opening corner as the drivers piled into the first bend hoping to bounce out and get a lucky jump off the boards. For some it worked, for others they lost a couple of laps on the getaway pack. The bumpers, as expected were flying in left, right and centre with the majority of the hard hits coming from Stuart Clarke. Ian Yarwood got himself involved in a couple of hard hits in return of a few he received in the earlier parts of the race. Brandon O'Neil was another who wasn't holding back with the front bumper. Unfortunately the hard hits were working to an extent for these drivers, but not for their lap times as they began to peel off from the front runners.

Gordon Mutch had a tyre come off at the early parts of the race forcing an early retirement for the Scotsman. Kev Falconer gained a 4-5 lap gap on the rest of the field during the mid-way point of the race however he was slowly being pegged back by another Scotsman in the name of youngster Lennon Cuthill. Emily Jacklin and Gary Riddell were in contention however found it difficult to escape the hits coming from the Rugby boys. Alfie Jones found the scrappier race difficult and just couldn't quite pick it up the pieces in order to qualify.

Instead, it was the Scottish duo of Kev Falconer and Lennon Cuthill who both progressed into the main final. The full results can be viewed below.

Pos	Car	Name	Result	Best Lap	Name
1	2	Kev Falconer	93/ 301.626	2.509 (25)	619
2	3	Lennon Cuthill	93/ 302.635	2.471 (39)	71
3	1	Emily Jacklin	88/ 301.042	2.542 (22)	21
4	9	Gary Riddell	88/ 301.747	2.587 (62)	600
5	5	Ian Yarwood	87/ 300.872	2.640 (56)	199
6	4	Alfie Jones	87/ 301.233	2.195 (54)	629
7	6	Stuart Clarke	86/ 301.986	2.627 (59)	150
8	7	Brandon O'Neill	85/ 300.400	2.642 (48)	555
9	8	Gordon Mutch	12/ 80.888	2.885 (5)	226

Whites and yellows race 1

Next up was the whites and yellows race and with their being 12 cars in total, the decision was made to split them up and run 2 whites and yellows races with the highest lap scorer winning a trophy.

The first race was won by Sophie Woodward. She managed to beat her closest rival Lucie Jones by 7 laps ahead of Alan Harding who was also a further 7 laps adrift. Sophie has had a really good national and certainly had a fast car underneath her!! It just needs a little bit of pre-meeting preparation and a calm race head and I'm sure she can make red grade by the end of the year. She certainly knows where the front bumper is .. But she also certainly knows where the fence is!! Just need to balance them out and I'm sure in time she can become an extremely deadly racer at future events.

A shoutout to Lucie Jones, Oscar Harding, Hayden Cattell and Amber Sutton. Unfortunately for Amber Sutton, she was struggling with technical faults all day long. Nevertheless, I'm sure she will bounce back! These are the future of Rugby Stockcar Club and it's brilliant to see this group of kids week in week out work their way up through the grades and slowly but surely battle it out with the big boys! Keep an eye out for these names in the future.

Full results of race 1 are below.

Pos	Car	Name	Result	Best Lap	Name
1	4	Sophie Woodward	83/ 301.141	2.507 (77)	154
2	6	Lucie Jones	76/ 302.455	2.785 (24)	630
3	5	Alan Harding	76/ 303.136	2.747 (65)	169
4	7	Oscar Harding	73/ 300.697	2.342 (57)	909
5	1	Hayden Cattell	59/ 300.923	2.353 (4)	11
6	2	Amber Sutton	18/ 260.440	3.606 (15)	191



Whites and yellows race 2

The 2nd whites and yellows race was a much closer affair for the top spot with Pete Watson and Sam Jacklin neck and neck throughout the race with Pete managing to pip Sam to the chequered flag on split. Andy Jacklin had his best result of the day with a 3rd place ahead of Michael Clague in 4th. Steve Jacklin was 5th ahead of yet another girl racer Molly Harding in 6th.

Unfortunately, I missed this race so not too much to report!! Full results are below.

Pos	Car	Name	Result	Best Lap	Name
1	5	Pete Watson	81/ 300.372	2.647 (38)	221
2	6	Sam Jacklin	81/ 302.194	2.851 (79)	737
3	1	Andy Jacklin	75/ 301.151	2.715 (34)	37
4	4	Michael Clague	73/ 300.126	2.778 (51)	165
5	2	Steve Jacklin	61/ 303.136	2.642 (40)	236
6	3	Molly Harding	54/ 307.791	2.274 (39)	809

After 2 rounds, it's all tied at the top with Sam Jacklin and Pete Watson sharing the top spot with 58 points. Lucie Jones follows ever so slightly behind on 54 points with Andrew Jacklin holding 4th on 46 points. Sophie Woodward finds herself in 7th place after her 30 points in this round, can we see her challenge the front runners for the title?

Remember, grading period is now in motion at national level so we may be seeing some of the front runners move up to blue in the future. The same goes for drivers coming down from blue top into the championship. It's all to play for with 4 rounds to go!

The current table is available to view below.

Position	Name	Rd1 Total	Rd2 Total	Rd3 Total	Rd4 Total	Rd5 Total	Rd6 Total	Total
1	Sam Jacklin	30	28					58
1	Peter Watson	28	30					58
2	Lucie Jones	26	28					54
3	Andrew Jacklin	22	26					48
4	Alan Harding	20	26					46
5	Michael Clague	19	24					43
6	Hayden Cattell	17	22					39
7	Sophie Woodward	0	30					30
8	Chloe Mitchell	24	0					24
8	Oscar Harding	0	24					24
10	Steve Jacklin	0	22					22
11	Molly Harding	0	20					20
11	Amber Sutton	0	20					20
13	Zella Harding	18	0					18

Rugby National 2023

Final time! The big one! Who was going to take the honours? It was all to play for!



With 2 Scottish drivers on the back row of the grid, I'm not surprised the front two rows purposely went wide on the opening bend as in many stockcar finals you normally see a big first bend lunge fire in! Funny enough, this time around there wasn't one! All 9 drivers kept it clean in the first bend as the race quickly began to find a rhythm.

The racing was fast and furious from the word go and no real mistakes were being made. It was very much a roundy roundy opening few minutes in the final which quickly turned into a scrappy race mid-way through with a couple of drivers making a few silly mistakes which actually ended up causing a small pile up behind them. It was one of those races where the smallest of mistakes could prove pivotal as the laps began to tick away.

Lennon Cuthill was flying around but unfortunately a loose connection of some description forced him out of the race for around 20-30 seconds. This was enough to leave him in last place which definitely wasn't deserved after his performance at this national. James Eccles was having a good race, but a few occasions he got himself tangled up with a few parked cars which caused him to fall down the order slightly. Kev Falconer was another who was finding the pace tough to stick with but nevertheless he was still in contention for top spot.

As the race began to settle with a minute or so remaining it became clear it was a 6 way battle for the win. Eventually, as the buzzer went off for the final time it was unclear as to who took the honours this time around. My gut feeling was world champion Brandon Eccles snuck the victory after a promising start. It was in fact last round's winner Anthony Wyper who someone managed to get 1 lap ahead of Brandon Eccles, Matt Bennett and Ryan Cattell to claim victory. Anthony won the race on 98 laps, with Brandon, Matt and Ryan all being separated by seconds. It's quite crazy when you think about it how a 5 minute race can come down to such small margins. 1 lap is equivalent to less than 3 seconds... That's how tight this sport is at the highest level.

Brandon's father Graham Eccles finished in a creditable 5th place ahead of Leighton Holroyd both on 95 laps. Kev Falconer fell short at the last hurdle with a 7th place finish on 92 laps while James Eccles and Lennon Cuthill were 8th and 9th respectively.

Any position in a national final is something that anyone should be proud of, but sometimes when you've made it that far to then miss out by such a tight margin, it must be a tough one to take. This is what stockcar racing is all about though! Hard hitting, fair racing and close battles!!

The full results are available to view below.

Pos	Car	Name	Result	Best Lap	Name	Nat #
1	5	Anthony Wyper	98/ 302.324	2.484 (20)	30	30
2	1	Brandon Eccles	97/ 300.121	2.596 (4)	531	531
3	2	Matt Bennett	97/ 301.866	2.641 (32)	413	413
4	3	Ryan Cattell	97/ 302.770	2.491 (9)	904	904
5	4	Graham Eccles	95/ 300.716	2.381 (41)	530	530
6	6	Leighton Holroyd	95/ 301.811	2.642 (62)	40	40
7	8	Kev Falconer	92/ 301.468	2.518 (75)	619	619
8	7	James Eccles	88/ 300.437	2.533 (74)	532	532
9	9	Lennon Cuthill	87/ 302.511	2.470 (74)	71	71



Anthony Wyper being presented the 1st place trophy by Rugby racer Clive Buckler.

Many congratulations to Anthony on his back to back national wins. Can he make it 3 on the bounce at his local track Urmston Raceway in May?

A big thankyou to everyone involved in running the event.

Martin O'Neil and Jamie Collins in race control.

Graeme Beckett and Sam Jacklin for organising the event.

James Eccles for the posters.

Owen Bates, Adam Gilbertson and Matt Astbury for the scrutineering.

The ladies involved in the canteen and raffle prizes.

Here's some more photo's from the event!

Report by Stuart Clarke.

Matthew Bennett 3rd place

Brandon Eccles 2nd place





Top left – Lucie Jones 3rd place juniors

Top right – Lennon Cuthill 2nd place juniors

Bottom left – Emily Jacklin 1st place juniors



Position	Name	Rd1 Total	Rd2 Total	Rd3 Total	Rd4 Total	Rd5 Total	Rd6 Total	Rd7 Total	Rd8 Total	Total	Total With Lowest 2 Dropped
1	Anthony Wyper	60	60							120	120
2	Brandon Eccles	58	58							116	116
3	Graham Eccles	56	52							108	108
3	Ryan Cattell	55	53							108	108
5	Leighton Holroyd	51	49							100	100
6	James Eccles	39	50							89	89
7	Gary Riddell	48	35							83	83
8	Kev Falconer	29	51							80	80
9	Alfie Jones	37	37							74	74
10	Adam Gilbertson	48	23							71	71
11	Lennon Cuthill	21	44							65	65
12	Stuart Clarke	31	31							62	62
12	Emily Jacklin	25	37							62	62
14	Matt Bennett	0	56							56	56
15	Tommy Johnson	34	20							54	54

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St Clements Branch Church, Humphrey Lane, Urmston, Manchester, M41 9PE

DOORS OPEN 8.30AM

START TIME 9.15AM

NATIONAL SERIES ROUND 3
Whites and Yellows Championship Round 3

MONDAY 29TH MAY

Signs Done By **JIMBO SIGNS**