2020 CGRC Race Report - Round 1, Croft
Heaton on Fire, McCall on Point

Round one for the Caterham Graduates Racing Club (CGRC) was held at Croft in North Yorkshire, during the weekend of 11th – 12th July, and as ever it presented us with an abundance of action.

Amongst the entry list for this opening round were four novice drivers, each making their race debut with the CGRC; local man Ray Ryder, David Read, 16-year-old Adam Cottrell, and Callan Jones, who completed his ARDS test just two days before racing!

With 35 cars from the four classes heading into Clervaux in race one, it was always going to be crowded. Amazingly, after sitting four abreast, the lead quartet managed to negotiate the corner perfectly, but behind it was not quite as successful. A coming together on the exit of turn one put Andy Sagar, Dave Bullock and Ian Fortescue into the gravel and out of contention. To add to the situation, John Benfield spun and came to rest broadside in front of the approaching pack, who somehow succeeded in avoiding any further contact.

While the safety car was quickly scrambled so those stranded could be rescued, the field was led by pole man, Henry Heaton, followed by Kevin Barrett, Andrew Whitton, Gareth Cordey, Stephen Arnell, and Matthew Willoughby, with novice drivers Cottrell, Read, and Jones, holding 15th, 20th and 23rd places, respectively. As racing resumed at the end of lap three, the Sigma 150 of Heaton soon pulled out a commanding lead, which, unusually for a Caterham race, he extended to almost 25 seconds at the fall of the chequered flag.

The battle for second place was closely fought throughout by the Sigma 150 of Whitton, and the Sigmax machines of Barrett, Cordey and Willoughby. The group maintained their running order across the finish line, minus Willoughby, who unfortunately retired into the pits just before the end after contact at the hairpin. The top six overall was completed by the Sigmax of Adam Croft and Neil Sturgess. Roger Ford finished in 10th place overall to pick up third in the Sigma 150 class, with Cottrell an impressive 14th overall and fourth in class on his race debut.

The Sigma 135 class was controlled by James McCall, who finished just ahead of Dan Clayphan, with Gideon Wilkinson third place. The finishing order in the Classic class saw Mark Carter triumph ahead of Paul Hawker and Trevor Harber, after some typically close racing. After qualifying his Sigmax second on the grid, Harry Senior missed Saturday's race due to gearbox issues. As the problem continued into Sunday, this called for a swap to a Sigma 150. As Senior had not qualified in his replacement machine, this meant he would start from 30th place on the grid, giving himself some work to do.

Race two saw a clean start, with Heaton, Whitton, and Willoughby leading the field at the end of the first lap. Despite starting some way further back, Senior was already up to 21st place and was on a charge through the field, which would see him eventually claim second place overall, some 27 seconds adrift of Heaton. Willoughby made amends this time around to finish third overall, also claiming his maiden Sigmax victory, ahead of fellow Sigmax competitors Cordey and Adam Bettinson. McCall again triumphed in the Sigma 135 class. Behind McCall, the chasing Clayphan set a new lap record on his way to claiming another second-place result, with Wilkinson again third.

The Classic class saw a resumption of the Carter, Harber, Hawker battle from race one. This time around it was Hawker who led until the final lap when he had no more engine oil to throw on those following. In his absence, it was Harber who seized the class win from Carter. Novice driver Ray Ryder was denied third in class by Hawker, who shrugged off the inconvenience of a now partially seized engine to take the final podium place.

The third and final race saw Heaton complete a clean sweep of three wins from three pole positions in his Sigma 150, with Senior again coming through from 30th on the grid to finish second overall and in class. Whitton completed the Sigma 150 class podium in third place.

McCall completed his domination of the Sigma 135 class with his third victory of the weekend, however, this time around it was Ian Fortescue who crossed the finish line second in class, ahead of Clayphan. Novice driver David Read claimed an excellent fourth place in class.

In the Sigmax class, Willoughby took his second win ahead of Cordey and Barrett, while Carter doubled his weekend's success in the Classic ranks, ahead of Harber, Robert Appleton finished in third place, claiming his first podium finish.

RACE 1 (11 LAPS) 1 Henry Heaton 20:31.985 (68.30mph); 2 Andrew Whitton +24.949s; 3 Kevin Barrett; 4 Gareth Cordey; 5 Adam Croft; 6 Neil Sturgess. **Class Winners** Heaton (Sigma 150); Barrett (Sigmax); James McCall (Sigma 135); Mark Carter (Classic). **Fastest Lap** Heaton (Sigma 150) 1m 31.174 (83.90mph); Mark Inman (Sigmax) 1m 33.234 (82.05mph); Dan Clayphan (Sigma 135) 1m 34.754 (80.73mph); Paul Hawker (Classic) 1m 43.610 (73.83mph).

RACE 2 (14 LAPS) 1 Heaton 21:25.330 (83.32mph); 2 Harry Senior +27.752s; 3 Matthew Willoughby; 4 Cordey; 5 Whitton; 6 Adam Bettinson. **Class Winners** Heaton (Sigma 150); Willoughby (Sigmax); McCall (Sigma 135); Trevor Harber (Classic). **Fastest Lap** Heaton (Sigma 150) 1m 31.074 (83.99mph); Willoughby (Sigmax) 1m 32.320 (82.86mph); Clayphan (Sigma 135) 1m 33.969 **Lap Record** (81.41mph); Carter (Classic) 1m 42.577 (74.57mph).

RACE 3 (17 LAPS) 1 Heaton 26:13.581 (82.64mph); 2 Senior +28.849s; 3 Willoughby; 4 Cordey; 5 Whitton; 6 Dave Bullock. **Class Winners** Heaton (Sigma 150); Willoughby (Sigmax); McCall (Sigma 135); Carter (Classic). **Fastest Lap** Heaton (Sigma 150) 1m 31.290 (83.79mph); Willoughby (Sigmax) 1m 32.444 (82.75mph); McCall (Sigma 135) 1m 34.436 (81.00mph); Harber (Classic) 1m 43.618 (73.82mph).

Full TSL results - https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=BARC/2020/202821gra.pdf

Race Report by Mark Carter

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