

## Ferguson's Fight Back

The fourth round of the McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship was hosted by the Larne Motor Club at the Junction Retail and Leisure Complex on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The new venue proved popular with all competitors and the autotest proved to be a crowd pleaser for all those who stopped by to check out the action throughout the day. The great venue, great tests and great weather, played into the hands of reigning NI champion Steven Ferguson who returned to his winning ways at the Larne event. Manorhamilton's David Thompson in his Vauxhall Nova would give chase to Stewartstown's Ferguson, but a 5 second penalty on the final run of Test 1 would hamper his chances of making it three wins in a row. Guy Foster put on a spirited performance and with a clean sheet of zero penalties, would allow Foster in his Mini Special to take third place overall. A power steering issue early in the day would leave Newmill's Mark King in his Vauxhall Nova with a bit of catching up to do and forcing him to settle for fourth overall.

In the Clubman category, Adam McMullan in his Toyota Starlet Special, was the man to beat showing his ever growing skills, with Ben McKee in his Nissan Micra coming home in second. In the Advanced category, Robert Dickson in his Mini Saloon would be the clear winner, with 18.9 seconds of a gap to second placed Jack Gillis in his Vauxhall Nova.

With Ferguson taking the overall win this would elevate Foster to first in Class A. James Wilson made a welcome return to the championship and took the runner up spot in the class with Chris Grimes having to settle for third having suffered a mechanical failure on the final run of Test 2, which would add a 20 second penalty to his time.

Andrew Blair would be the Class B winner in his Westfield ahead Trevor Ferguson in his Silvia Stryker. Third place in the class would go to Paul Blair with 15 seconds of time penalties gathered up on Test 2 costing the Ballyclare man dearly.

In the Small Saloon Class C, Jonni McDaid from Castlederg was the only finisher, taking the class win after a mechanical failure forced the Earney brothers to retire their Mini Saloon early in the event.

The Large Saloon Class was a six horse race, with all the Nova men battling it out for the class honours. It would be David Thompson who would come out on top, with a charging Mark King hot on his heels. Gary Campbell would take the final podium position in the class and finish as the top Semi-Expert, after a faultless performance and some strong competitive manoeuvres throughout the day. It might not be long to the Dungannon man is nipping at the heels of his brother-in-law King and Thompson for the class honours.

In the Clubman classes, Adam McMullan in his Toyota Starlet Special would take the Class A win, ahead of Ian McCann in his Vauxhall Nova.

Gordon Buckley would be the solo entry in Clubman Class B in his Cox GTM but was forced to retire before the event had even got underway due to a brake problem.

Ben McKee would take the win in Clubman Class C in his Nissan Micra, with the Mini Saloon of Redmond McNamee taking the runner-up spot.

Clubman Class D was again an all Mazda MX5 affair, with Lawrence Baird putting in his great times, to take the class win. Second place in would go to Derek Harrison, with Paul Magill in third.

The Advanced Challenge category may only have seen six compete, but the competition was stiff, and any minor error would cost each competitor dearly. Jack Gillis in his Vauxhall Nova would take the Advanced Class A honours, ahead of autotest veteran Paul Phelan.

Robert Dickson in his Mini Saloon would take the Class C honours as well as the overall Advanced category win. Robert Robinson would finish second in the class, as he continues to iron out issues with his newly built Toyota Yaris.

Ashley Lamont took the Advanced Class D win in his beautiful MG Midget ahead of Gareth Dillon, who had an unusually troublesome day in his Mazda MX5.

In the Production car category, Coagh's Adam Ferguson at only 14 years old showed some great potential for the future by taking the class win, with the father and son duo Andrew Molyneux Senior and Junior rounding out the top three respectively.

With four rounds now completed championship and class points all very tight as we head into the next event. Round five will be hosted by Enniskillen Motor Club at Severfield Yard on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May, which will see the battles continue throughout the different categories and classes.

McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship Round 4

Overall Winner – Steven Ferguson

Championship Category:

- Class A – Guy Foster
- Class B – Andrew Blair
- Class C – Jonni McDaid
- Class D – David Thompson

Clubman Category:

- Class A – Adam McMullan
- Class B – No Finishers
- Class C – Ben McKee
- Class D – Lawrence Baird

Advanced Category:

- Class A – Jack Gillis
- Class B – No Competitors
- Class C – Robert Dickson
- Class D – Ashley Lamont