

Four in a Row for Ferguson

Saturday 11th June seen the competitors from the McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship head to the Showgrounds in Omagh for the seventh round of their championship which was hosted by Omagh Motor Cub. Again, it would be Stewartstown's Steven Ferguson who took the Overall win by 10.6 seconds from David Thompson. Mark King had to settle for third place overall after picking up two five second penalties during the day. The Newmills Large Saloon Champion managed to set the fastest time on four of the twelve tests but try as he might King couldn't push his Vauxhall Nova any harder in order to claw back the ten seconds of penalties, without which would have left him finishing in second place, a minimal 10.1 seconds behind Ferguson.

In the Clubman category, it was Ben McKee in his Nissan Micra, who took the category win by 5.3 seconds from the current Clubman category leader Adam McMullan in his Toyota Starlet Special. In the Advanced category, Noel Cochrane made a fine return to the challenge, as he pipped Robert Robinson at the post for the overall category win, with only 5.3 seconds difference between the two men at the end of the day.

With Ferguson taking the Overall win, this left the class honours up for grabs. Paul Swift had made the trip over from the mainland to test his precision driving skills against the NI championship competitors and returned home with the Class A win and fourth overall in a borrowed Mini Special. James Wilson gave chase to Swift but couldn't quite catch him finishing 3.5 seconds behind him to take second in class and fifth overall. Chris Grimes Senior finished third in Class A and rounded out the top six in the championship event.

Andrew Blair in his Westfield took the honours in Class B, finishing ahead of Paul Lowther in second with Coagh's Trevor Ferguson taking the final class award in third.

In the Small Saloon class, Jonni McDaid from Castlederg took his Mini to a comfortable win with the Earney brothers, Andrew and Richard taking second and third in class respectively. Robin Lyons made a welcome return to the championship in a Mini Saloon, but a number of mechanical issues during the day put the Drumbo man out of the Class C podium positions.

David Thompson was again the Class D winner, with Mark King following hot on his heels in second. Dungannon's Gary Campbell took the third place spot in class despite having a troublesome day in his Vauxhall Nova, with a throttle issue giving him problems throughout the day and costing him valuable time.

In the Clubman category classes, Adam McMullan in his Toyota Starlet would take the Class A win, with Sean McAleer in second. Gordon Buckley took the Class B win in his Westfield. The overall Clubman category winner, Ben McKee in his Nissan Micra would also take the Class C win. Clubman Class D was again made up of all Mazda MX5's and it was Derek Harrison who took the class win from Martin McKernan who put on a fine display of driving to finish second in class, with Ryan Catterson settling for third.

There was a small but highly experienced and competitive turnout in the Advanced Category. Stewartstown's Norman Ferguson took the Advanced Class A honours in his Mini Saloon. Noel Cochrane in his home-built sport car would take the Advanced Class B honours, alongside his Overall category win. Robert Robinson in his Mazda MX5 would take the Advanced Class D win and second place Overall in the Advanced Challenge.

In the Production Car Class Adam Ferguson would take the class win, with Ryan McAleer in second.

Alongside this event Omagh Motor Club ran a tribute event to their long standing autotest sponsor and veteran autotester Ken Irwin. Ken has won many championship and class titles throughout the years and the club invited past competitors from throughout the fifty years in which Ken has been involved with the club to come along to participate in an easy fun event, with a barbeque after for everyone. The Overall winner of the Ken Irwin Invitational Autotest was Ashley Lamont in his immaculate MG Midget. Second overall went to Scotland's Gordon Clendinning in his Beach Buggy and third place went to Harold Hassard in his Nissan Sunny.

With only three rounds to go Stewartstown's Steven Ferguson continues to maintain his three point lead over Manorhamilton's David Thompson, with Mark King third in his Vauxhall Nova.

The next round will take place on Saturday 6th August, after the summer break, with the event hosted by the Dungannon Motor Club taking place at Loughry College, Cookstown. Will Steven Ferguson take his sixth win of the season, or could we see another Large Saloon driver on the top step of the podium, we shall have to wait and see?

McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship Round 7

Overall Winner – Steven Ferguson

Championship Category:

Class A – Paul Swift

Class B – Andrew Blair

Class C – Jonni McDaid

Class D – David Thompson

Clubman Category:

Class A – Adam McMullan

Class B – Gordon Buckley

Class C – Ben McKee

Class D – Derek Harrison

Advanced Category:

Class A – Norman Ferguson

Class B – Noel Cochrane

Class C – No Competitors

Class D – Robert Robinson