

## Thompson Triumphs at UAC Autotest

The second round of the McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship was hosted by the Ulster Automobile Club at Ferguson's Yard in Stewartstown on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March. It was Manorhamilton's David Thompson in his Vauxhall Nova who was the man to beat at this event, taking the win by a minor 3.2 seconds from the reigning NI Champion Steven Ferguson. Chris Grimes had to settle for third place overall after touching a pylon early in the day resulted in a five second penalty being imposed. The grippy concrete surface and technical tests proved to be an extreme test of man and machine, forcing even the best drivers to make minor errors which cost them precious time. One such driver to suffer was Newmills man Mark King, who after four runs of Test 1 was lying second overall, but two pylons and a line fault on Test 2 cost the Nova driver a precious fifteen seconds pushing him back into fourth overall.

In the Clubman category, Adam McMullan in his Toyota Starlet Special, would be the early leader, but would also be caught out by the tight, tricky tests later in the day, handing the win to Ben McKee in his Nissan Micra. In the Advanced category, Jack Gillis pipped Gareth Dillon at the post for the overall category win, with only 5.1 seconds difference between the two men at the end of the day.

Stewartstown's Steven Ferguson would take the Class A win, with a 20.6 second advantage over the runner up in class. Guy Foster and Chris Grimes battled it out for the runner up spot, the advantage going to Chris by 6.4 seconds.

Paul Blair continued his dominant return to Class B in his Westfield taking the class win ahead Trevor Ferguson in his Silvia Stryker. Andrew Blair would finish a minor 1.7 seconds behind Ferguson to take third in class.

In the Small Saloon Class C, Jonni McDaid from Castlederg was the solo entrant, and with a final score of 764.7 seconds left him a commendable sixth overall.

The Large Saloon Class had five contenders, but with David Thompson taking the overall win, this elevated Mark King to first in class. Dungannon's Gary Campbell continued to show his progression with a faultless performance in his immaculately prepared Vauxhall Nova, finishing second in class. Damien Mooney finished third in class despite a troublesome day for the Ardboe man.

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, this would see him take the class win and finish third overall in the overall Clubman standings.

Overall Clubman category winner Ben McKee was the only entrant in Clubman Class C.

Clubman Class D was all Mazda MX5's and it was Derek Harrison who would take the class win. Second place in class would go to Lawrence Baird, with Ian Lowry in third.

There was a small but highly experienced and competitive turnout in the Advanced Category. Jack Gillis in his Vauxhall Nova would take the overall category win, as well as the Advanced Class A honours.

Robert Dickson would be the sole entrant in the Advanced Class C, with mechanical issues costing the Mini man dearly, forcing him to have to settle for fourth overall in the category.

Gareth Dillon took the Advanced Class D win ahead of Robert Robinson, with both drivers competing in the ever popular Mazda MX5.

With only two rounds completed it is still very much all to play for, with championship and class points all very tight as we head into the next event. Round three will be hosted by Larne Motor Club at Robinson's Quarry on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April, which will see a new venue with a tricky surface test the drivers even more.

McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship Round 2

Overall Winner – David Thompson

Championship Category:

- Class A – Steven Ferguson
- Class B – Paul Blair
- Class C – Jonni McDaid
- Class D – Mark King

Clubman Category:

- Class A – Adam McMullan
- Class B – Gordon Buckley
- Class C – Ben McKee
- Class D – Derek Harrison

Advanced Category:

- Class A – Jack Gillis
- Class B – No Competitors
- Class C – Robert Dickson
- Class D – Gareth Dillon