

## EVO CATERHAM ACADEMY

### RACE REPORT - GROUP ONE

#### STOWE – 30<sup>TH</sup> 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2003

Silverstone, Stowe circuit, the venue for the very first Academy race of the season. All of you knew the circuit, having done your ARDS test and your Academy Test Day there, some in the dry and some in the wet! The circuit is 0.796 miles in length and runs in an anti-clockwise direction. There are two long straights, going into North and coming out of North into West. It is broken up by The Esses between West and South.

The day dawned unbelievably dry and very bright, despite warnings of rain. Signing on and scrutineering was all done in no time at all for most of you, of course there is always one who turns up late by the name of David Yu..... who managed to turn up just before his first practice session! Clerk of the Course Tony Watts held a special briefing for you all as it was your first time racing at this circuit.

The qualification process was a little unusual for this race, as Stowe can only start 18 we had to split the group into two qualifying sessions. Drivers were ordered by class championship, from that list, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> etc in the class would qualify in the first session and the remainder in the second. First group went out to qualify, and no real problems for them, a spin for Simon HP, Robert Winrow struggled to get his act together, as did Lawrence Newman, who was suffering from a severe cold. The second group were not so lucky, Uncle Phil Stevens managed to smack a cone which managed to remove his number plate, Nick Potter lost a rear wing (yet again). The grid for Race 1 was formed by sequentially putting the fastest drivers from the first session in the odd-numbered grid positions and the fastest drivers from the second session in the even-numbered grid positions, the fastest 12 raced in Race 1 and the remainder in Race 2.

Qualifying over, the first Academy race was before lunch, so not much time for you all to get ready. There seemed to be quite a few trips to the gentlemen's facilities in between frantic car preparation, and then time to go..... Jethro was on pole, Ben next to him with Mike Blackadder and Nick on the second row. You were off and running, well for a short while, the first corner, North was a fiasco, with Jethro being forced into a spin and to the back of the field, whilst the rest of you somehow managed to get round. When you had managed to sort yourselves out Ben had taken the lead, followed by Nick and David Yu, but by the second lap this had changed, Nick took the lead with David and James Weedon behind him. James had had an amazing first lap, from last on the grid up to 4<sup>th</sup> on the second lap. He had taken advantage of the mayhem at North. Doug Clark and Mike Blackadder had a coming together on lap 2 which put them further down the field. Ian Atkinson was moving up, Stuart must have had a spin as he was at the back of the pack at the end of lap 2.

So a whole lot of action going on!! Unfortunately for Mike Blackadder, his car received the black and orange flag, which of course means there is something wrong with the car and the driver must return to the pits. This was the end of Mike's race, he had sustained damage to a rear wing, something to do with the ear! By this time Jethro had worked his way up to 6<sup>th</sup> place. Meanwhile the battle up front was hotting up, Ben was out in front, having taken the lead on lap 4. Nick and David were having a tremendous battle for second place, which in the end David managed to hold on to. Ben had increased his lead and won very comfortably from David who just managed to get to the line before Nick, followed by a delighted James Weedon. Jethro managed 5<sup>th</sup> place followed by Doug Clark. A very exciting race, but a little too much contact!! There was some consolation for Mike, he got fastest lap.

The race for the second grid was soon upon us, unfortunately there was quite a delay for you all in the pit lane whilst a car from the previous race was being recovered from the circuit. There were a lot of butterflies flying around tummies whilst you were waiting! Phil Stevens was on pole for this race, with Paul Phipps next to him, Simon HP and Steven Greaves on the second row. You all managed to get round the first corner!! Phil managed to hold on to the lead for a couple of laps before Paul took over. Rob Winrow must have had a moment because he went from third to last in one lap. Simon HP was on the ball, moving up steadily into 3<sup>rd</sup>. Laurence in the meantime was having the drive of his life, moving up from last on the grid to 6<sup>th</sup> by the end of the first lap!!

Meanwhile Paul was still in the lead with Simon and Phil hot on his tail. Phil was having problems with his side screen which was flapping like mad and Laurence was leaking fluid, but not enough to warrant a black and orange flag. Rob Thomas was having a good race, starting 9<sup>th</sup> on the grid and was up to 5<sup>th</sup> and Richard Irving had moved up a couple of places in the first few laps. And so the battle for the win went on, with Paul and Simon, and Phil still tagging on in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Simon eventually managed to take Paul with a great manoeuvre at North and went on to win, followed by Paul, Phil and Richard Irving. A great race without much contact. Simon HP got fastest lap.

There was an extra race for those of you who had opted to take part, the Academy Challenge Race, again, slight consolation for Mike because he won this very comfortably indeed, from Nick and David Yu.

Thanks to those of you who stayed for prize giving to cheer on your fellow competitors after a great days racing.

Forgive me if I have not mentioned your name in the reports, but it is impossible to mention everyone. Well done to all of you, it was a great start to your racing in the Caterham Academy.

Kim Denning