



New year, same story for MS

By Jim White

The new season has now officially started and the new questions are about to be answered.

Will the teams of Howard Lucas triumph again? Will Alpha return to winning ways? Will the new 7Karts turn the tables? Will the new Wrights leapfrog both of these? Will the competition between the engine builders finally reach an end?

Teams were on the grid for the last unofficial practice on Saturday night. The tension in the air was palpable and nervous laughter permeated the atmosphere. The flag waved and we were off, all of the hopes and dreams for the new season were to be put to the test.

At the end of the test session, predictably, some teams were full of smiles and some were not. Final preparations for Sunday's racing were under way and some teams felt able to start the throat lubrication process quite early while for some a long night was in prospect.

Qualifying

Dull weather conditions but sparks in the pit lane as different qualifying strategies were used. A number of teams briefly hit the top of the time sheets before qualifying was settled with MS SoCo 1 and Steven Welsh on pole with 52.63s. In March 2010

the pole time was 53.3s and since the weather conditions were about the same, does this mean that this year's karts are quicker?

Race Start

The 33 starters (up from 26 last year) formed an orderly grid and set off for the parade lap. The bunched grid were away first time and MS SoCo 1 were straight into the lead followed by SAS and McDonalds. Disaster struck for McDonalds at 12 minutes when the chainguard detached itself. Also, Baron came from 7th on the grid to challenge for the lead. At 9s down Autotec were 3rd together with LG in 4th then AJB 5th just 10s adrift.

1 Hour

MS SoCo 1 were still leading, still followed by Baron but MS SoCo 2 had caught and passed LG. Another kart on the move was Alpha, although 34s down on the leaders they were in the leading group.

First Stop

After the first fuel stop the order had been maintained and MS So Co 1 had increased their lead to 32s over Baron with a lap over the rest of the field. In 10th place was Offline Racing (who in a former existence were called Snatch Motorsport) holding off the challenge of the Portuguese team NKT.

Second Stop

There was a new leader after the second

fuel stop because MS SoCo 1 had ran out of fuel on the circuit. It was most amusing to see the vastly experienced Jamie Stubbs pushing the kart into the fuel bay to hand over to Stephen White. AJB had started well, 5th, but then tumbled down the leader board to 28th at the half hour point. They had begun the slow road back and had climbed to 16th after 3.5 hours.

275 laps out of 400

MS SoCo 1 were back in the lead with a 32s advantage over a new 2nd, Alpha. Stretton had risen to 6th and McDonald's Ceilings were up to 9th after falling to 28th in the first stint.

Endurance racing can be very cruel when the kart has a problem which can't be satisfactorily cured. Grass Roots at 53 laps were now using the event as a protracted test session. ACS at 25 laps however showed during the race that they had the pace to make big, big improvements and be much further up the leaderboard in the future.

Final Stint

As the race headed into the final session and the different fuel strategies unfolded we could see that MS SoCo 1 had a comfortable 33s lead over Baron.

There was an interesting battle which had been race long but was now coming to a head. NKT, first time on the circuit, new kart (to them) and very little practice, were contesting the Clubman Championship from GC Racing and Rogue Racing. To further complicate the situation the transponder from NKT was beginning to die and fail to register their laps. Tracy Pope was propelled into the action to manually add laps as NKT passed the line each time. Then in the last five minutes both other teams began to splutter as they ran out of fuel and a splash and dash was called for, leaving NKT as 2nd Clubman. ●

MS SoCo 1
Jim White



Baron
Jim White



Results

- 1 MS SoCo 1
- 2 Baron
- 3 MS SoCo 2
- 4 Alpha
- 5 Autotec
- 6 LG