

CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports & Special Saloons Croft 23rd & 24th August 2025

## CASTALDINI FLIES TO BATTLE OF BRITAIN VICTORY



The CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports & Special Saloons collaborated with the Scottish Motor Racing Club once more to contest a pair of races at Croft's Darlington & District Motor Club 'Battle of Britain' promotion on the 23rd and 24th of August, running with the Scottish Classic Sports and Saloons as at Cadwell Park in June. The Modsport and Special Saloon competitors had the extra incentive of their own category awards to vie for, with the Jon Fletcher Trophy going to the top Modsport and the Peter Baldwin Trophy to the leading Special Saloon.

Preview: A quartet of competitors took up the invitation to race at the weekend. David Morrison took an outright win in the opener at Cadwell Park and the rapid MG Midget should go well at the former WWII airfield venue. Steve Barnard's lowline Mk1 Escort topped the Specials second time out in Lincolnshire and the BDG-powered silhouette returned to the scene of its maiden appearance since being restored during 2024. The Crossflow-engined Davrian Mk8 of Myles Castaldini couldn't be written off for a strong performance either, the Ford-propelled sports car looked set to claim the spoils second time out at Cadwell Park before a broken wheel scuppered his chances. David Brewis debuted his Davrian Mk7a at Cadwell Park but the Imp-engined coupe was a work in progress and the Northumberland resident hoped to move forward this weekend.

Qualifying: The fifteen minutes of qualifying was held close to the end of Saturday's programme. The session was stopped around halfway through after the tidy Ford Anglia of Joe Benn burst a water hose and wouldn't be restarted because of a late-running schedule. Three of the top four grid positions went to the invitation CHASE Equipment Historic Modsport and Special Saloon cars as Myles Castaldini's Davrian claimed pole position by 0.312 seconds from leading Scot Alastair Baptie's raucous MGB GT V8, who currently heads the Scottish Classic Sports and Saloons title race. The second row comprised Steve Barnard's Mk1 Escort lookalike and David Morrison's MG Midget, with Barnard within 0.615 seconds of top spot and Morrison was 1.263 seconds away despite being forced to stop early after the distributor moved and the timing had retarded to the point that the exhaust was glowing red! Alasdair Coates and Charlie Cope completed the top six qualifiers with their MGB GT V8 and Mk1 Volkswagen Golf GTi respectively. Adam Kinmond's Austin Rover Fleet-liveried Rover Vitesse and Ewan Anderson's MGB GT V8 shared the fourth row, whilst the well-travelled Donald Dewar Volkswagen Golf GTi Mk1 and four-time British Sprint Championship title holder Colin Calder rounded out the top ten with his Ford-engined Ginetta G4R. The fourth of the Historic Modsport and Special Saloon entries qualified down in 26th overall as David Brewis' Davrian had a couple of moments on the fluid spilled by Joe Benn's troubled Anglia at Sunny In, with the Rover of seventh-fastest qualifier Adam Kinmond also taking to the grass.



Race One: The first bout was fought on mid-Sunday morning over fifteen minutes and 24 cars lined up on the grid. Pre-race, Steve Barnard had rigged up a section of piping to provide some relief from the hot temperatures that built up in the Escort's cockpit during qualifying and David Morrison had fixed his qualifying issue but the modsport MG was seen up on jacks as the field assembled. The car had fired up ok but the clutch pedal went straight to the floor when he attempted to move off. Polesitter Myles Castaldini was wary of his driveshafts off the line after breaking them at standing starts in the past and the power of fellow front row starter Alastair Baptie's Rover V8 carried the MGB GT into the lead by Clervaux for the first time from the Davrian, a fast-starting Alasdair Coates and Barnard's Mk1 Escort. The Coates MG had briefly blasted up to second off the line, using the space left by the absent Morrison Midget, before Castaldini slipped back up the inside on the brakes for the first corner and then Barnard's Escort unfortunately tagged Coates at Hawthorn. The MGB GT V8 spun before being clouted by Charles Cope's Golf, with the VW in turn hitting the side of Ewan Anderson's MGB GT V8. The incident opened a large gap between Barnard and the lead pair, who swapped places when Castaldini grabbed the lead under braking for Sunny In on lap one and proceeded to pull away to a comfortable win by 14.027 seconds from the Scottish MG. Castaldini was the only finisher of the Historic Modsports and Special Saloons after Barnard caught Baptie's BGT V8 over the opening laps but the Mk1 Escort pitted at the end lap five with throttle linkage woes, having got getting within half a second of the MG. David Brewis was the only other contender to start and he went out at the hairpin for the second time when the Davrian's gearbox went bang. Donald Dewar and Colin Calder made solid progress up the order from their starts at the lower end of the top ten. Dewar's Golf lost ground at the start in the Hawthorn melee but picked off both Adam Kinmond and Simon Smail on lap three before passing Calder on lap four and gaining another spot when the Barnard Escort exited a lap later. The VW then reeled in Anderson's MG to take third place on lap seven, whilst the 2-litre twin-cam Ginetta got past Anderson into Clervaux for the last time but one to secure fourth. The Mk1 Fiesta Turbo of Simon Smail had moved up to sixth by the flag. Adam Kinmond had been chasing the Fiesta before the big Rover slipped back with a fuel leak but still took seventh from Steve Sadler's Peugeot 205 Gti. Class A winner Ian Mitchell was ninth in his Vauxhall Nova from the pretty Fiat coupe of classmate Paul Bowers, John Kinmond's Mini led the category initially but was forced to drive at half-throttle to reach the chequered flag in third. The rare Fiat X1/9 Prototipo of Phil Morton wouldn't make it to the end after first coming together with Robin Benn's Capri before the little sports car's engine cried enough. The TVR Vixen of Mark Wynn made a startling exit on the last lap at Tower after the throttle return springs snapped and sent the Blackpool machine on a high speed trip into the stubble. Sonny Gray led the XR2s early on before his engine went off song and handed the win to Arron Hunter.



Race Two: The second fifteen-minute encounter took place on Sunday afternoon, with the grid decided by the opening race results. Opening race winner Myles Castaldini took up pole position in the Davrian modsport and top Scottish Classic Sports and Saloons contender Alastair Baptie formed up alongside. The second row was home to Donald Dewar's Golf and the 250bhp Ginetta of Colin Calder. The first three rows were completed by the MGB BT V8 of Ewan Anderson and the much-modified Fiesta of Simon Smail. The repaired spaceframe Mk1 Escort of Steve Barnard would take the start from 19th position. David Morrison hoped to join Barnard on a charge from the back of the grid with his modsport MG Midget, having replaced the clutch slave cylinder between the two races but the release bearing was eventually found to be the cause of his problems so the Chesterfield man elected to take an early bath. David Brewis also withdrew his Davrian after its earlier retirement. Alastair Baptie led the opening stages and the gruff MGB GT V8 fended off Myles Castaldini for longer than in Race One before the Davrian repeated its Sunny In move to take over the lead on lap five. Castaldini had steadily extended the gap to the determined Scot before Baptie sailed straight on into Complex but the MG continued to claim second, finishing some 10.504 seconds adrift. Colin Calder leapt up to third on lap one but the 'Blue Bullett' was caught and passed during lap five by Donald Dewar's Golf, who had slipped to fifth behind Ewan Anderson's MGB GT V8 early on. The Volkswagen crossed the line another 10.250 seconds behind Baptie to complete the podium. Steve Barnard had flown into the top ten by the end of lap one and was almost in a position to threaten Calder for fourth in the closing moments, despite having to cool his front brakes, when the Ginetta spun entering the Complex for the penultimate time. Calder had also been struggling with his brakes and was having to pump the pedal, which eventually caught the Scot out and Barnard ran into the rotating Ginetta with nowhere to go. The Escort slowed with something not feeling right at the front of the car but Barnard still crossed the line in fifth, with the Mk1 Fiesta Ecoboost of Simon Smail passing the special saloon on the final tour. Anderson's MG also briefly got ahead of Barnard after the incident but fell back to eighth on the last lap behind Adam Kinmond and Steve Sadler. Ian Mitchell and Paul Bowers ran each other close for Class A honours at the foot of the top ten but both trailed John Kinmond's Mini until it expired before half-distance and the Nova just fended off the Fiat 128 to complete a double victory in the smallest capacity class, whilst Arron Hunter took his second victory of the day in the XR2s.



Jon Fletcher Trophy: A special award was to be handed to the leading aggregate Modsports driver, named in honour of the former Lotus Elan exponent. David Morrison took the honours in 2024 but this year it would be the turn of double race-winner Myles Castaldini to be presented with the silver tray. The overall race winner from each race also received a bottle of liquor from the Black Shuck Distillery's range of tipples, presented by CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports and Special Saloons series coordinator Steve Watton. Two-time victor Castaldini took home a bottle of Spiced Rum after Race One and for Race Two's triumph was presented with a bottle of Passion Gin.



Peter Baldwin Trophy: Similar to the above prize, the top Special Saloon driver would take home the cup in memory of the famous Mini Clubman-BDA pilot. Joe Ward, custodian of the ultra-successful ex-Gerry Marshall V8 Vauxhall Firenza 'Baby Bertha', was triumphant with the legendary Supersaloon in 2024 and this year Steve Barnard claimed the prize unopposed as the only eligible car on the entry list but the rapid Escort would have been tough to beat regardless.



After a year of transition for the CHASE Equipment Historic Modsports and Special Saloons, bigger and better things are promised for 2026 as the tie in with the SMRC becomes more permanent.