

## **Flying Ryan joins the club**

Saturday 01 April will be remembered for quite a while to come for 3 reasons. The first reason is that it was round 2 of the SW Adair Tyres Northern Ireland Sprint Championship at Nutts Corner. This event was put together and superbly run by North Ulster Car Club and what a superb job they did.

The second reason it will be remembered is because it's the day that Ryan McGimpsey took his first ever outright event win in his little class 14 Jedi Mk1 with a superb drive, and the third reason to remember it is because it's the day that Sprint Co-Ordinator David Evans fooled the entire paddock and 90% of the championship followers with his April fools stunt which backfired on him as no one now believes a word he says!! (Including the contents of this report)

The atmosphere round the damp paddock on Saturday morning was one of the best atmospheres this paddock has seen in a long time as everyone was itching to get a run out at Nutts corner. 70 entries graced the paddock on Saturday morning and little did they know how good a day they were about to have. As usual North Ulster put on a superb event with all cars getting 2 practice runs and 3 timed runs fitted in between starting at 10am and the last car starting their last run at 1500hrs. So 5 runs in 5 hours, and this included a couple of offs and stoppages! Honestly what a super day!!

In the morning the wet conditions favoured the 4wd competitors and after his previous superb event at Kirkistown the event previously, Ryan Murray was tipped to be the man to beat. Ryan proved his tippers correct although sadly he had an issue in practice which side-lined him for the timed runs.

In the interval between practice and timed runs all the competitors were looking sky wards to try to make the decision as to whether to stick to wets or dry tyres. I personally saw Ryan McGimpsey bolting his slicks on as the rain began to spit, and I did wonder if Ryan knew something which the rest of us didn't? Afterall, it has been proven previously that the championship weather reporter has no notion about the weather!! Ethan Faulkner was deciding what to do for the best however his hand was being forced by his father Kenny who was all too comfortable sitting in his trailer with a cup of tea in one hand and a sandwich in the other. Others were also trying to decide what to do for the best and walking round the paddock it was a mixed bunch of slicks, wets and those with no choice on the matter.

Once everyone started their first timed runs the conditions started to improve and the times started to tumble. Ryan's tyre gamble worked as he set the initial pace ahead of Ethan and Jack Boal who returned in his GTR Hayabusa was third. Interestingly this was to remain the top 3 running order all day. As each run went on each of the top 3 went faster and Ethan took a little bit more out of Ryan each run whilst Jack nibbled a bit more from Ethan each run as well leaving it tight at the top. I watched the second timed runs and the pace was superb amongst those I witnessed through the top half of the circuit.

At the end of the day Ryan took his first ever Fastest time of the Day and event overall win with a superb drive. Ryan is now the third McGimpsey to win an event outright as both his Father Robert and Brother Ricky are multiple winners. This is a

fabulous achievement and there cant be too many other championships which have a father and 2 sons who have all been outright winners?

As I alluded to above the atmosphere and craic round the paddock was superb and it was great to get talking to all the competitors again and to hear how everyone helped each other out. I spoke to 1 driver who couldn't thank his fellow competitor and biggest rival enough for lending him the tyres he was running on – yes that's right, one competitor lent another his tyres for not only this event but the previous one as well so that he had a full set of good wets to run on!! There was another competitor who told me that his biggest class rival was having issues with his car and couldn't continue for the day so he had offered him his car to get points and continue the day. You don't see sportsmanship like this in too many other sports!

It was great to see so many new faces and returning faces as well round the paddock. This is further proof of the success and popularity of our championship. It was especially good to see Ian Howard and Seumas Hobbs return in their Maguire Mini's as these little cars really are a spectacle to watch. We also saw Jack Boal returning along with Adrian Kielt, Gardiner McIlwaine Alwyn Buchanan John Golden John Murphy Mervyn Johnston, Richard Beattie and Arnie Wishart, who rolled up in an automatic Chevrolet Corvette on road tyres and wondered if he was mad or not. IT was also good to see Jason Harkness and Shane Murray both making their championship debuts as well. Jason in a Mazda MX5 and Shane Murray in a beautiful Escort Mk2 in which he dominated class 11. Hopefully the sprint seed has been well and truly sewn with these 2 newcomers.

In terms of the categories the unofficial title of fastest mini in the west went to Karl Johnston once again. Karl took the win ahead of Gerry McGarrity who narrowly pipped John Golden in this epic battle. Gerry had a secret weapon with him this week as he brought Dermot O'Hagan with him for the day. We didn't see exactly what happened but Dermot was observed driving the mini into the scrutiny bay followed quite quickly by Gerry McGarrity who was running after him telling him to get out of his car before he blew it up as well!! It's a good job these fellas are friends!! Gary Milligan however once again played the long game card and he got his championship marshalling out of the way so that once the wet events are over he can have a clean sweep all season and take the maximum number of wins in this category without having to miss a round to marshal. Is that good thinking or him being crafty? Only time will tell.

The modified category was very hotly contested today with Dan Campbell taking category honours in his Starlet as well as 5<sup>th</sup> overall. Stephen Colbert expertly guided the family sunbeam to second in category and 9<sup>th</sup> overall ahead of third placed Marc Johnston who gave us all a lesson in driving an Escort Mk2 to third modified car. Marc is not championship registered so points for third modified car went to Marc's father Raymond in the family Escort who finished fourth in modified. Sadly Ryan Murray's earlier issue prevented him having a good run today as it would have been interesting to see how the previous events modified category winner would've fared today.

In the specialist category Jack Boal was the winner on the day as well as being third overall but by virtue of registering too late for the event Scott McMullan took

category top marks in his Reis Aero. Scott has a bit of a taste for top category points after last year and finished ahead of Andy Hawthorne and David Hawthorne in that order. Andy once again proving to be the fastest Hawthorne if only by a mere 1.81 secs. Poor Steven was fourth in the category after having a bad day.

Roadgoing category honours once again went to the on-form Crawford Ewing Snr in his Meganne. Crawford finished a fabulous 18<sup>th</sup> overall in his Megane with Paul Forsythe second in the category in his Peugeot 106 ahead of Crawford Ewing Snr who was third, leaving poor Paul as the meat in a Ewing sandwich or the Peugeot In a Meganne bap?? Il let you decide which one suits best.

In the Heaslip Ladies Challenge Trophy it was a tightly fought affair and sadly only 2 of our ladies were out to play. Amy Hawthorne once again took the title both on corrected and real times in her little clio finishing ahead of Emma Campbell. I saw both Amy and Emma on their second runs and both these girls were going hard. Amy has gathered a lot more confidence in the handling and the brakes of the little clio and is now beginning to push the envelope. Emma has also stepped up a bit and is now pushing harder than ever before in her little 106. It looks like this could be another closely fought battle this year, and with Kathy due to return at the next event it will all tighten up. Interestingly there has already been 1 newcomer in Jenny Pollock already this season and there are 2 other ladies at least who have registered but just not yet appeared so I predict another healthy year for the Heaslip Ladies Challenge.

The next and third round of the 2022 SW Adair Tyres Northern Ireland Sprint Championship takes place at Kirkistown on 06 May hosted by Larne Motor club . At present there are still entries available for anyone who wishes to compete. Entries can be found on [WWW.rallyscore.net](http://WWW.rallyscore.net)

Now for the class battles:

### **Class 1 – Road Cars up to 1700cc**

Hot off the tail of his class win at the last event Stephen Donnelly was in fighting form as he started his timed runs, sadly though for Him Paul Forsythe was also feeling fast, and not wanting to be beaten twice in a row Paul Forsythe did what it took to beat Stephen Donnelly in what was a clinking tussle all day. In the end the winning margin was a mere 1.02secs and that was the biggest margin between these 2 guys all day, with the pairs fastest times being set on their third timed run. Alan Wallace must have predicted a tight battle today and sought battle refuge on the bank as he completed his marshalling duties.

### **Class 2a – Road cars over 1700cc**

Crawford Ewing Jr really has got the bit between his teeth this year in his Renault Megane with another class win. Mark Crawford pushed him hard though and, in the end, the winning margin was only 1.23 secs ahead of Mark. Crawford Ewing Snr took third in his Megane after a very close battle all day with Ian Thompson in his Porsche boxster. The drive of the day went to Arnie Wishart who misunderstood the weather report and turned up in a Chevrolet Corvette. Arnie wins the award for smile of the

day as he spent his entire runs literally going from lock to lock on the corvettes steering rack. Whilst it may have been fun for us to watch its bound to have been hard work in there but Arnie did however get nearly double the mileage of every other competitor as he saw every inch of the Nutts corner tarmac. Fair play Arnie and great to watch. We all look forward to seeing his son Stephen having a run in the corvette!!!

### **Class 2b – Road cars Mazda MX5 challenge**

In class 2b Craig Ewing once again took top spot in his little Mazda ahead of second placed Robert Fitzgerald. Aaron Moody pushed hard to finish third a mere 0.92secs ahead of fourth placed Barry McCann, who lead a tight battle to finish ahead of Wayne Clyde and Jason Harkness in that order once again the Mazda's proved to be close with 5 of them finishing a mere 3.64 secs apart!!

### **Class 5 – Road cars specialist Production cars**

Gardiner McIlwaine took the top spot in class 5 today from, ermhhh himself. Sadly no one else wanted to play alongside Gardiner today, when he called for them so he came out by himself and had a superb days craic as usual. Gardiner was going well and across his 3 timed runs he managed to shave nearly 12 seconds off his time!!

### **Class 6a Modified Cars – Series Production cars 8v**

Class 6a was somewhat smaller than usual today with only 3 cars entered and a new driver in the midst. Indeed this new driver, Ricky McAlonan took the class win in his Corsa finishing ahead of Karl Johnston and William Hutton in that order. Gary Milligan was again missing as he undertook his marshalling duties and kept a watchful eye over proceedings.

### **Class 6b Modified Cars – Series Production cars 16v**

As of recent events Stephen Colbert was the man to beat today in his Talbot Sunbeam. Stephen lead from start to finish and finished 9<sup>th</sup> overall and third modified car. Ken Colbert dual drove the same Sunbeam as his son and took second in class 1 mere 1.45 secs ahead of third placed Andrew Straney who was out in his venerable Astra. Seamus Murray, James Lightbody and Dessie Martin rounded out the class in that order.

### **Class 7 Modified Specialist Production Cars 2WD.**

Jack Boal proved to be the man to beat in his GTR Hyabusa which he piloted to third overall!!! To say he was pushing was an understatement as he pushed hard to set a 99.38 sec run!!! Scott McMullan was second in class 7 a massive (for Scott) 6.46 secs behind Jack. Scott was however delighted to thrash Andy Hawthorne back to third. Andy finished a mere 1.71 secs behind Scott despite pushing hard. It was rumoured that in a quest to beat Scott Andy went out , minus his glasses, with the thinking being that if he couldn't see the corners coming and then he wouldn't know to slow down!!! David Hawthorne finished fourth a mere 0.22 secs behind his father but nearly 3 days (well 5.45 secs) ahead of Steven Hawthorne who had a disaster of a day, constantly blaming David for his bad luck. Either way I'm sure the family banter was off the

scale that weekend. Also, a big big thanks is due to Andy Hawthorne for all his work in the background and the advice he issued to certain individuals on Saturday morning. His superb advice and kind words was taken in and has planted a seed which may well benefit everyone in the long run!!

### **Class 8 Sports Libre cars Special Saloons**

Class 8 was probably as big as its been in a long time when Richie got 2 friends to Play with. It was great to see Ian Howard and Seumas Hobbs returning to the championship in their Maguire Minis. Neither of these 2 fellas need any introduction amongst the paddock. Ian Howard took the class win ahead of Richie O'Mahoney in his stunning SHP Escort. With Seumas Hobbs third after having a mechanical issue which sadly ruled him out. Richie told us a superb story at the event which just sums up the entire sprint paddock. I won't go into details but I will say that 1 person's substantial generosity severely helped another competitor out and that actions like this would be completely unheard of in probably any other sport in the world. Honestly if you know you know, but at the same time if you knew you wouldn't be surprised. Richie was also doing his best to crank up more points whilst his big competitor Jim Hutchinson remains out of action. Richie knows that he needs as big a lead as he can muster before Jim Returns and he like the rest of us wishes Jim a speedy recovery and a quick return to the paddock as Richie is running out of space in his cupboard for first place trophies!!!

### **Class 9a Sports Libre cars Saloons and GT`s**

All joking aside, we are going to have to rename class 9a "Campbell Class as once again it was a case of who is the fastest Campbell. On this occasion Daniel proved to be the fastest in his starlet and he was superb to watch, especially during the greasy practice sessions. If you haven't seen his onboard yet check it out on the championship face book page or you tube. Honestly, it's a superb watch. I don't know how he manages to peddle that hard!! Second went to John Murphy in his Ford Ka. John has finally come to grips with this little car and is pushing harder and harder with each event. Third went to the ever-trying Emma Campbell who meep meeped all day to take another third in class well done Emma

### **Class 10 Sports libre Cars – small capacity Rally cars**

What a class, class 10, has suddenly turned into. However once again Marc Johnston completely tore the etiquette book up. Marc had a superb drive and finished 10<sup>th</sup> overall with a run of 111.5, which is 1.42 secs faster than his father Raymond. Alan Roddy took third in class in his little saxo. Now to explain the etiquette remark, Marc once again borrowed his father's car for the day and completely annihilated his dad in his dads car!! Now that's considered to be bad craic in anyone's etiquette book. It was however superb for us to watch as both father and son were flying and both were egging each other on and so this rivalry makes this family battle superb to watch. Im not sure which of them drives the van home afterwards but I know for a fact that both fellas are laughing all the way home having such a good days craic, which is superb to see. Raymond was however heard to comment that he was glad Marc wasn't championship registered. Marc, I can get you registration forms if required.....

### **Class 11 Sports Libre Cars – large capacity Rally cars**

Class 11 today was won by a completely new competitor Shane Murray. Shane admitted that he was running in a newly built Escort Mk2 which can only be described as beautiful and was also trying to get in some last minute seat time before the following weekends Circuit of Ireland Rally. However Shane had so much craic on Saturday that he could be easily convinced to do more events which is great to see and hear. Ian Getty finished second in his beautiful MK 2 Escort finishing just ahead of Derek Robinson in his Sunbeam. I spoke to Derek Briefly and he admitted that he was a bit nervous of Nutts corner after he took a slightly scenic route the last time he was there and that he would be treating the top half of the circuit with a bit more respect today. Whilst Derek may or may not have been more respectful at the top of the circuit he was as far from respectful as you can be round the bottom. The word hooligan springs to mind, but great to see all the same!!!

### **Class 12 4WD sports Libre Cars**

Class 12 was also very well supported again today. Ian Lancashire proved to be the man to beat in the class but only after Ryan Murray Suffered an issue in practice which saw him side lined during practice. After the previous events result and the wet and greasy start to today Ryan was topped for the top spot overall. Ted Johnston finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in class a mere 7.59 secs behind Ian which is some going for Ted in Escort. He is finally getting used to the car and coming to grips with it again, although some new tyres would help massively Ted!! If any of Teds customers see the price of a haircut rising its nothing to do with the price of electric its down to the price of tyres!! Adrian Kielt took third in his Subaru and advised that when Ryan first discovered his issue that he had offered to lend Ryan his Subaru to drive for the day. Whilst this further shows how friendly and family like a paddock we have it highlight that Adrian has never seen just how hard Ryan pushes a scooby.

### **Class 13 Formula Racing cars**

With only 2 drovers out to play in class 13 today it was always going to be tight. Stephen Wishart proved to be the man to beat and by jove was it tight. Stephen steered his works Swift SC96 to a class win by 2 hundredths of a second, or 0.02 of a second. Talk about close. Henry Campbell and Stephen had fought hard all event and there was never much more than the width of a crisp bag between them but in the final run Stephen took the win by 0.02 of a second. If only Henry had eaten 1 less rasher of bacon at breakfast time, he could've had the win!! Great to see this class so close!!

### **Class 14 small Capacity Racing Cars**

Class 14 was another class which was a little underrepresented in terms of numbers today, compared to previous events. However what it lacked in numbers it made up for in quality. Ryan McGimpsey took the class win, and the FTD from Ethan with a stonking last run. Ryan just was on form today, and you just knew from his first run that you were witnessing something special. Ethan was going well, and I mean very well but he just couldn't match flying Ryan despite pulling in huge amounts of time over Ryan on each of his runs. Third place went to Alwyn Buchanan in his swift

FR89 which he was coming back to terms with after the season lay off. 1 Interesting point to note was that exactly 1 year ago at this round Ethan made his championship debut at this event and finished third overall, this year, one year later he finished second. Can Ethan keep this up next year to win overall??

### **Class 16a Historic Road Cars**

As if you didn't know Gerry McGarrity was the man to beat in class 16a in his mini. But this time he finished ahead of John Golden in his Mini Cooper S. John who was running under the Manx Mini stable of Karl and Mervyn Johnston today had a blinder of a third run and only finished 0.69secs behind wee Gerry. Mervyn Getty finished third in his MGBGT just ahead of Returnee Richard Beattie in his mini. Vincent Rodgers was fifth ahead of Kevin McNamee and James Acheson in that order. In the battle of the MG's Vincent was very confident after of practice that he was going to be the fastest MG. He wouldn't admit if it was because he was a better driver than Mervyn or because Mervyn had crammed too many horses under the bonnet for the conditions, but as the day progressed the results said it all.

### **Class 16b Historic Saloons and Sport scars**

After an epic battle the previous week Stephen Harvey was left to play by himself today when no one else wanted to Play with Stephen. Stephen therefore had a fairly unchallenged run to take class honours but his time of 119.04 severely put him in the middle of the pack with many fast men around him both above and below him, so he had plenty of people to tussle with in the main field. Interestingly looking at his times Stephen clearly didn't get the memo about it being wet and slippery and drying as the day progressed, neither did he see the rain on his windows as clearly as everyone else did as Stephens Times were fairly similar across all 3 runs indeed his last run was only 2.32 secs faster than his first run. This tells you one of 2 things... either Steven was really flying on his first run, or he didn't go as fast on his last run as he could've done..... Il let you decide which option it was but if you know Stephen you'll agree it was the first one.