

BMCRC
Round 01
Oulton Park

As the rest of the world slowly begins to return to normal, so too does the world of motorcycle racing. The British Superbike Championship has had two official tests, but it is the British Motorcycle Racing Club that got racing underway on the May 7 and 8 at Oulton Park. The weekend's schedule saw classes enjoy qualifying and race one on Friday, followed by two races on Saturday.

Team Respro MRO 600

Team Respro return as sponsors of the MRO 600 series for 2021 - the series most associated with stepping into the British Superbike paddock over recent years - with former series runner-up Adam Hartgrove returning for the opening round of the season.

The 2017 silver medalist and 2016 Rookie 400 champion showed why he was one of the riders to make the step up to the National Superstock 600 Championship, qualifying on pole by nearly three and a half seconds in the wet conditions.

He was joined on the front row by Glenn Walsh, himself almost three seconds up on Dawid Krawiecki, to make it an all Yamaha R6 front row. Alex Barker qualified ninth as the highest clubman on the grid.

Despite the track drying for the afternoon's seven-lap race, Hartgrove converted his pole position into a race win, setting the fastest lap in the process to take victory by just shy of 10 seconds.

The battle for the honours of 'best of the rest', however, was a far closer-fought affair. Cameron Fraser and Louis Valleley both set their fastest times on the penultimate lap as they duked it out for second place. Come the chequered flag half a second was the gap between them, as Fraser took the spot.

Walsh and Krawiecki finished fourth and fifth, while an impressive ride for former Yamaha Past Masters champion Doug Edmondson saw him swap a 250 two-stroke for a 675cc four-stroke Triumph and finish sixth.

Barker, in 11th picked up the Clubman win.

At a glance at the time sheets you could be forgiven for thinking that both of Saturday's wet races were predictable, with an identical top four from both races. Krawiecki was twice a winner, ahead of Walsh, Hartgrove, and Edmondson.

Krawiecki's win in the first race of the day, aboard his Code Blue Ltd Yamaha, came after taking the flag three seconds up on Walsh. A further three seconds back was Hartgrove, two seconds ahead of Edmondson, as the four riders came home in a rather processional manner.

Yet despite a repeat finishing order in race two, the spectacle was anything but. Krawiecki disappeared at the front, pulling out a lead of nearly 12 seconds come the chequered flag, but three riders battling for two podium positions provided the action.

Half a second covered all three in the end after a race-long scrap, just a tenth splitting Walsh and Hartgrove in second and third.

Alex Barker, in seventh and sixth, was twice a Clubman 600 winner to make it a clean sweep. Craig Howton and Mitchell Gilbert finished second and third in class in both races.

In the three Rookie 600 races Dan Burnham took two wins on his Triumph, with Matt Pallett winning the final race on his Kawasaki.

Reactive Parts MRO Powerbikes and MSS Performance and Syntol Lubricants Clubman 1000

There were just two races for arguably the premier class with the British Motorcycle Racing Club over the weekend, with Reactive Parts MRO Powerbikes riders taking part in one eight-lap race on Friday followed by another eight-lap outing on Saturday.

Dry qualifying for the class saw Suzuki-mounted Tom Tunstall set pole, ahead of two Kawasaki ZX-10Rs of Ritchie Thornton and Michael Austin, but the GSX-R pilot struggled in the wet conditions that swept in for the race, crashing out on lap three after dropping down the order.

Instead, Mark Cheetham came through from the second row to grab the race by the scruff of the neck, and despite not setting the fastest lap of the race, his consistency saw him eek out a lead of nearly eight seconds to take a comfortable win.

Thornton held station in second, with former Rookie 400 and Thunderbike Ultra champion Aiden Patmore picking up the bronze medal. Former Powerbike champion Peter Baker was fourth after qualifying seventh, and Cecil Dinsmore rounded out the top-10 to take the Clubman win.

Saturday's race was also ran in tricky wet conditions, but Patmore mastered them the most to pick up 25 championship points. Another second for Thornton means he sits one point off Patmore and Cheetham's joint championship lead, after Cheetham added a third place to Friday's win.

Dinsmore made it two from two in the Clubman 1000s, taking the class win in 11th place.

For the Rookie 1000s there were three races over the weekend, but only one winner. Antony Hunter was three times victorious but his margin of victory came down drastically from one race to the next. His 14 second advantage in race one was cut to seven in race two. In the final race he beat Seamus McGlynn by just half a second to complete his hat-trick.

ACU Team Green Junior Cup and Senior 300

There was plenty to pique your interest in the opening round of the Team Green Junior Cup and Senior 300 series for 2021, as long-time racer across a range of classes over the years,

Phil Atkinson, went toe-to-toe with reigning Junior Cup champion Mikey Hardie and last year's runner up Jack Kirsch.

It was the South African veteran Atkinson who set the fastest time in qualifying to start from pole. The front row was completed by two Junior Cup riders, Dylan Mellor and Kirsch. Race one became something of a two horse race. Despite plenty of other riders exhibiting similar pace - the likes of Graeme and Mickey Hardie and Danny Huskinson found themselves caught up in the traffic early on, and set their fastest times on the last lap - Atkinson and Kirsch were left to contend for the win. Atkinson claimed it, though by less than a second, as Kirsch collected the Junior Cup win.

Graeme Hardie was third and second Senior 300 rider across the line, ahead of Huskinson, who came through from 12th on the grid, and his son Mickey Hardie, who was second in the Junior Cup standings.

The pace quickened on Saturday, despite two more wet races for the class, but it was Mickey Hardie who upped his speed the most to take a brace of victories.

The 113 Events Limited-supported rider ran out a comfortable winner in the morning, taking the chequered flag with a handy five and a half second advantage of Senior 300 class winner Atkinson and Huskinson, who completed the podium.

In the afternoon, though, it was anything but comfortable as four riders - two Junior Cup and two Senior 300s - went at it for the win.

As the quartet streamed across the line to take the flag just over one and a half seconds covered the lot of them, with Atkinson missing out on a podium by five hundredths of a second.

Mickey Hardie bagged his second win, with Junior Cup title rival Kirsch second by a little over a tenth of a second. Huskinson's third gave him the Senior 300 victory.

MRO Minitwins

A dry qualifying led into a damp and two wet races for the MRO Minitwins, but the conditions mattered little to Dan Harris, as he took all three wins to make it a perfect start to the season.

Harris qualified on the front row in third, behind Cameron Harris - not related - and pole-sitter Matt Wetherell, but as the conditions changed for Friday's race he was one of only two riders able to get into the 1:58s. The other was Glynn Davies, who finished second.

The duo left Wetherell to finish third, after contesting the remaining podium spot with Keith Povah, Cameron Harris, and Richard Harris - brother to Dan Harris - though none were able to break the 2:00 lap time marker, highlighting Dan Harris and Davies' pace at the front.

Dan Harris' remarkable speed continued, and in race two, with the rain coming down, he set a best lap time nearly five seconds quicker than eventual runner-up Povah, he bested Kevin Lilley to the silver medal position by a tenth of a second.

Despite conditions still being wet for the final race, Povah discovered some form and this time pressured Harris as the pair both raced for the win. But after setting his fastest lap on the final circulation Harris claimed it by three quarters of a second.

MSG Racing and FWR Tyres-sponsored Wetherell rounded out the podium places.

Mark Gillam made a dream start to his Rookie Minitwin campaign, collecting three wins from three starts.

DFDS Yamaha Past Masters

After just one round of the season it'd take a brave person to bet against Doug Edmondson securing another DFDS Yamaha Past Masters championship, after he decimated the field at Oulton Park to take three wins from pole position.

Scotts Carson and Grant completed the front row in qualifying, and Carson held position to finish runner-up to Edmondson in race one, but he was never in a position to challenge the Stan Stevens Tuning Yamaha rider for victory, something Edmondson took by 26 seconds.

The battle for third was the one worth watching, however, as just over half a second overed Geoff Mook, who bettered Grant and Rik Ballerini.

Another comfortable win for Edmondson came in race two, with Carson again second, this time with reigning champion Peter Branton third by half a second from Ballerini.

A best race lap five seconds faster than his nearest challenger allowed Edmondson to take his third win by nearly half a minute and make it a dream start to the season. Alan Cooper was second, denying Carson three second place finishes, meaning he had to make do with third.

The Lansdowne Classic British Championship

Sam Clews won all three races in the Lansdowne Classic British Championship at Oulton Park, though despite a 100% win record, it was anything but a foregone conclusion.

Clews set the quickest time in qualifying aboard his Norton, the most popular manufacturer in the field though there were examples of Velocettes, Matchless, and Royal Enfields in action, too.

From the head of the grid he took victory in race one, besting Michael Russell by a tenth of a second. The pair, though, were the class of the field, with third placed Chris Bassett over 30 seconds behind.

The same was true in race two, though this time Clews was able to pull out a slightly more comfortable lead come the chequered flag, winning from Russell by one and a half seconds. This time Andrew Glasgow beat Bassett to third.

Another Clews-Russell one-two rounded out the weekend's action, but it was third different rider picking up the bronze medal, with Ian Bain pipping Glasgow to the finish.

Steve Jordan Motorcycles Thunderbike Sport

Reigning Thunderbike Sport champion Jack Sim took two wins from three starts at the opening round of the 2021 season at Oulton Park, with Adam Jamison collecting the other available victory, beating Sim to the line in the final race of the weekend.

Sim qualified in the middle of the front row, as Elliot Fricker took pole, but it was Sim, aboard his Platform Lift Engineers Limited Yamaha who converted his front row into a win in race one. Fricker finished second on his Petwise.org Honda.

Two more Yamahas scrapped it out for third, with Ricardo Branco coming out on top in his battle with Shaun Wallis.

For Sim, victory number two came in the first of Saturday's two races. He set the fastest lap of the race along the way, with the only other rider able to get close on time, Jamison, but after finishing eighth in race one, he was never able to take the fight to Sim. Sam Digby-Baker stood on the bottom step of the podium.

In race three not only was Jamison able to get close to Sim, but was able to come out on top as the duo fought over the win: just two tenths of a second his winning margin. Digby-Baker was again third.

Steve Jordan Motorcycles Thunderbike Extreme and Thunderbike Ultra

The combined grids of the Thunderbike Extreme and Thunderbike Ultra classes saw three winners stand on the top step of the podium over the course of three races.

The first winner of the weekend was Steve Palmer, taking the overall and Ultra class win on his Mk1 Transit Racing Suzuki, yet the podium was completed by the winner and runner-up in the Extreme class; Donald Gilbert and Jack Sim.

13 seconds behind the winner was the Ultra class runner-up, Mark Wilby, in fourth, while fifth placed David Abraham finished third in class. Third in the Extreme class was James Reveley in ninth.

A red flagged race two, which saw race one winner Palmer crash out at the halfway point, was won by Wilby. Cecil Dinsmore was credited with second, the pair first and second in the Ultra class.

David May, in third, was the leading Extreme rider, finishing ahead of Gilbert and Sim. Abraham was the third Ultra rider on the time sheets in sixth.

KnC Motorsport Suzuki's Dinsmore made it three winners from three races with victory on Saturday afternoon. Palmer, returning to action, finished second, with the Extreme class winner, Gilbert, finishing third. He, in turn, finished ahead of the third placed Ultra rider, Wilby, with Sim and May completing the Extreme class podium in fifth and sixth.

Chilton Motors BMZRC 250

Reigning champion Peter Woodall qualified on pole in the Chilton Motors BMZRC 250 series, but it was Chris Kent who took a brace of wins. The weekend's third victory went to Andrew Wales.

In true MZ-racing fashion the margins of victory in two of the three races were slender. On the Buxton Powder Coating MZ Kent won Friday's race by two tenths of a second. Just over a second covered the entire top four, with Woodall second, Wales third, and Chris Rogers fourth.

Wales' margin of victory in race two was nearly 16 seconds over Josh Ashmead, after both Woodall and Kent crashed out in unison on lap five, leaving Wales to ride to victory. Third went to Gary Howlett.

Kent and Woodall were back in action in the final race of the weekend and again finished one-two. This time Kent bested the reigning champ' by less than a tenth of a second, with Wales less than half a second back again in third and Ashmead another half a second behind in fourth.

RKB-F1 and F2 Sidecars

The RKB-F1 and F2 Sidecar Championship races at Oulton Park played host to a number of British championship teams, utilising the weekend for additional track time ahead of their season. However, these were omitted from the final results.

Friday's win went to the F1 outfit of George Holden and Oscar Lawrence with Gordon Pottinger and Dave Dodd second overall. Craig Goodier and Mark Stone completed the podium, taking the F2 win in the process.

Saturday's opener saw Holden and Lawrence take another win, heading an all-F1 podium of Christopher Wright and Paul Bailey and Paul and Tom Kirby. The F2 winner was the pairing of Mick Alton and Keith Brotherton.

But with Holden and Lawrence only managing one lap of race three, Wright and Bailey seized the opportunity and claimed their first victory of the season. Kirby and Kirby's second place made it two F1s in the top two, but Goodier and Stone's F2 class win came with a fine third overall.

EDlasia Formula 400

Richie Welsh proved he could win in the dry and the rain at Oulton Park, taking two wins from three races over the weekend, finishing second in the other.

The former class champion qualified fastest, and strolled to victory in a dry race one on his FZR400 Yamaha. Some 28 seconds behind, Joe Thomas finished second and James Seath third in a fairly processional affair. Alan Cooper's fourth gave him the Sub-64bhp class win.

If Friday's race was processional, Saturday's two were anything but. Cooper, on his Sub-64bhp class, Twistgrip Motorcycles Yamaha went head-to-head with Welsh in the rain and managed to snatch the win by a mere three hundredths of a second. Thomas was three seconds back to round off the podium.

It was a similarly close margin in the final race, but this time between Welsh and Thomas, five hundredths of a second the gap at the line. James Robinson was third, with Cooper fourth to take another 25 points in the Sub-64bhp class.

Blue Haze GP and GPF

The GP-spec and production two-stroke machines of the Blue Haze series left just that over the start/finish as they piled into turn one three times over the course of the weekend at Oulton Park.

In the GP class Phil Atkinson, the reigning champion, won Friday's dry race handsomely from Kevin Wholey and Michael Russell. However, the South African was only able to manage one more visit to the podium from both of Saturday's wet races.

Finishing third in the day's opener, he was unable to quite match Russell and Jack Worth's pace at the very front, as they finished first and second.

Wholly returned to the podium in race two to narrowly take the win from Russell and Worth, a second and a half covering the trio, with Atkinson fifth behind Andrew Glasgow.

In the GPF races Ian Mackman converted pole position into victory on Friday, before Scott Carson and Billy Perkins took a win apiece on Saturday.

Carson and Perkins completed Friday's podium, with Carson only two tenths off the win.

But on Saturday morning Carson raced to a comfortable win, this time with Perkins second and Mackman third. In the afternoon Perkins took the win from Denis Halil and Mark Haigh.