

SPORTING SCENE ROUND-UP

IN BRIEF

Irish hot rod offer

In order to help boost entries at next month's National Hot Rod meetings at Nutts Corner Oval and Ballymena Raceway, the promoters are offering travel subsidies to all drivers coming to the event from the mainland UK. Competitors heading to Northern Ireland for the double-header on September 3/4 will be given £100 travel money per event, as well as discounts on ferries. Contact Darren Black on 07980 630703 for more information.

Running up that hill

The Connaught Competition Engines Irish Hillclimb/Sprint Championship resumes this weekend following an 11-week hiatus. Saturday's sprint event is at Naul, County Meath, where Simon McKinley set the record last year on his way to the title, while Sunday will see the first-ever car event at the new kart circuit at Whiteriver Park, near Collon, Co Louth.

Willis is willing

Trevor Willis says this weekend's MSA British Hillclimb event at Shelsley Walsh could be crucial to his bid for second in the points. Willis is currently third, 15 points behind Roger Moran and 23 clear of Wallace Menzies. "If I can get momentum heading into the last few rounds I can make a push for second and hold off Wallace," said Willis. "They are both strong drivers so any edge I can get this weekend will help me a lot."

ROUND-UP

Chris Cowley emerged victorious in an action-packed **BriSCA F1** final at Northampton Raceway last weekend, where places and bumper work exchanged practically on every corner of every lap. Cowley barged his way into the lead just after the halfway mark and held off a charge from Will Yarrow to win, while further back Andy Smith and Mick Sworder's race-long duel captivated the fans. Intense battles also raged for the minor places, which included four cars slamming into the wall on the final turn and Dan Johnson ending up on top of Mat Newson's car.

Rob Speak edged even further towards his ninth **BriSCA F2** World title by winning the first of the two semi-finals at Hedgesford. Gordon Moodie shadowed Speak for the entire race but settled for second, despite many people, Speak included, expecting a last-bend assault on the race leader. In the second semi-final, Chris Burgoyne headed James Thackra and Andy Palmer, both of whom have won major title races at the final venue, King's Lynn, in recent years.

Gordon Moodie also took wins at the Cowdenbeath Racewall F2 meeting, by winning the final and then the Grand National.

RESULTS

BriSCA F1, Northampton Raceway: 1 Chris Cowley; 2 Will Yarrow; 3 Craig Utley; 4 Andy Smith; 5 Mickey Randall; 6 Craig Finnikin; 7 Luke Davidson; 8 Mat Newson; 9 Mick Sworder; 10 Josh Smith.

BriSCA F2 World Championship Semi-Finals, Hedgesford Hills

Semi-Final one: 1 Rob Speak; 2 Gordon Moodie; 3 Chris Bradbury; 4 George MacMillan; 5 Daz Kitson; 6 Jack Aldridge; 7 Robbie Dawson; 8 Mickey Brennan; 9 Allen Cooper; 10 Justin Fisher.
Semi-Final two: 1 Chris Burgoyne; 2 James Thackra; 3 Andy Palmer; 4 Sam Wagner; 5 Steve Green Jr; 6 Adam Rubrey; 7 Neil Hooper; 8 Jon Palmer; 9 Richard Stott; 10 Mat Stoneman.

BriSCA F2, Cowdenbeath: 1 Gordon Moodie; 2 Chris Burgoyne; 3 George MacMillan Jr; 4 Charlie Whitfield; 5 Gregor Turner; 6 Robbie Dawson; 7 Mark Dewes; 8 Derek Ashcroft; 9 Ian Forster; 10 Holly Glen.

SPEED BID FOILED

Suspension damage halts electric attempt



Bluebird was damaged at Pendine



Rallycross in the USA: plenty of spectators, but not enough cars

US Rallycross series cut short due to thin field

The three remaining rounds of this year's US Rallycross Championship have been cancelled due to a lack of entries.

The championship, which has been contested by the likes of X Games winner Liam Doran and American rallycross hero Tanner Foust, had received strong team support earlier in the year. But organisers have been forced to curtail the series as too few drivers were still committed.

"We appreciate the support of the teams, however it is critical that rallycross is always presented as the best competition possible, so that it becomes the successful and exciting sport that we know it is capable of being," said series organiser J.B Niday.

"Rallycross needs to be as exciting as fans demand it to be, and with too few entries [the events] would not be able to provide a good enough spectacle."

Early exit for Salo on his rallycross debut

Former F1 driver Mika Salo retired from his first-ever rallycross event in Finland recently after suffering mechanical problems.

Salo, driving the same 530bhp Ford Fiesta that WRC driver Mikko Hirvonen competed in last month, suffered gearbox failure in the Finnish Rallycross Championship round at Joensuu. He finished tenth overall in the Supercar class.

"The event was fun and I learned a lot, but I lacked the experience needed," said Salo. "I did not have the time to get used to my car, and when the third gear packed up in the second heat it was game over."

Nataas on top as rain spoils German drag run

Norwegian driver Thomas Nataas came away with the most points in the Top Fuel class at last weekend's FIA European Drag Racing round in Germany after bad weather cut the event short.

Wet weather caused delays throughout the weekend, forcing all classes to run to a shorter revised schedule. Nataas however was able to put in a 4.854s/304.94 mph run to defeat Timo Lehtimäki in round two of the eliminations on Sunday afternoon.

Earlier in the day he had defeated Team West-Tec driver Andy Carter, who was only able to post a 9.390s/85.66mph after letting off the throttle early due to engine trouble.

Tommy Johnson Jr still leads the championship with only one round remaining at Santa Pod next month, but looks set to miss it due to a lack of funding and his doping suspension (see separate story).

The Santa Pod finale takes place at the Wellingborough strip on September 8-11.



Medicine led to Johnson's ban

Johnson banned for FIA doping violation

FIA European Drag Racing Championship leader Tommy Johnson Jr missed last weekend's Nitrolympix round after his FIA competition licence was suspended for failing a drugs test.

Johnson Jr, who was on course to take this year's crown after three dominant performances, was unable to compete at Hockenheim after the results of the test were confirmed leading up to the event.

The Anderson Racing driver had been taking prescribed medication while racing in the US-based NHRA series, but hadn't realised that the medication was banned in FIA-run championships.

"Tommy was tested at Alastaro then received the results of the test two weeks after the event and his licence was suspended," said team owner Karsten Andersen. "There is an appeal at the end of August, but last weekend would have been our last event of the season anyway due to a lack of funding."



Blyton now runs sprints

Blyton in line to run British Sprint round

The MSA British Sprint Championship could run at Blyton in 2013 following the track's recent redevelopment.

The Lincolnshire venue has undergone a £500,000 facelift since it came under new ownership last year. A variety of motorsport disciplines such as autotests and club sprints already run on its brand-new 1.5-mile asphalt circuit.

Blyton Park has recently been granted an MSA licence, making it eligible to hold a number of events. The British Sprint series

is an obvious target for the venue, especially as it already plays host to rounds of the Toyota Sprint Championship.

However, MSA British Sprint Championship co-ordinator Paul Parker says that although the potential is great at Blyton Park, he ruled out the possibility of the series visiting in 2012.

"Richard Usher has done a fantastic job at Blyton Park and there is huge potential for sprints there in the future," said Parker. "It has a testing course and would be a good challenge for drivers but it we won't got there in 2012. In 2013 there is more chance as the circuit will have hosted a number of sprints by then."

REPORT: DUTCH

European Rallycross: Valkenswaard, Holland

By Tim Whittington

Organiser: FIA When: August 12-14 Where: Eurocircuit, Valkenswaard Championship: FIA European Rallycross Starters: 80

Reigning European champion Sverre Isachsen hit back at his critics last weekend by taking an emphatic victory at Valkenswaard.

Isachsen had failed to finish the Belgian round of the championship a week previously, but in Holland he did the best job across the weekend, and stood atop the podium flanked by Ludvig Hunsbedt and Andy Scott. Scott had won the B final to gain a place in the Supercar A final, and snatched third place at the last corner.

It was Belgium's Michael de Keersmaecker who secured pole position for the A final after numerous set-up changes on Saturday night helped him recover from 18th overall. The former Super1600 and TouringCar champion had not found good pace in his Ford Focus all year.



Andy Scott grabbed third