

## National 250GP Round 7 – Oulton Park Race report

Oulton Park was the venue for round 7 of the 250GP ACU National Championship & NG Cup, kicking part 2 of the season off after the summer break at a venue considered by most as the favourite for 250GP machines.

A result here would really set the tone for the remaining part of the season, which is made up of a tasty selection of circuits and events including Anglesey, Pembrey and Thruxton. Despite losing the BSB support slot at Brands in October the season is well alight with things really closing up at the top of the Championship and 125 points still on offer.

### Qualifying

The St Neot's Motorcycles TZ Yamaha of Andrew Sawford set the pace in qualifying with a blistering early lap, which was even more impressive when you consider the reigning Champion and number 1 plate holder was spat off the TZ at very high speed last time out at Pembrey!

Chasing Sawford was Pembrey double winner Ant Hodson on board his DJG Construction / TSM Yamaha, Championship leader heading for Oulton - Daniel Jackson with the Team Sigie Yamaha and Lee Goddards LLG Racing RS Honda completed the front row.

Heading up the second row was the returning Ian Gardner from Towcester on board his TZ. Ian has been out of action for some time following a big Cadwell Park crash, which destroyed the TZ meaning his racing was put on hold long term. Gardner was just ahead of Melksham's Darrell Higgins on the Dennis Trollope TZ, the J&RB Racing / File Tuning TZ, and reigning NG Cup Champion Adrian Martin was next and rounding out the second row, Carl Hudson with his DWH Racing Honda.

The best of the NG Cup qualifiers was Wiltshire's Roy Keen, enjoying a superb return to racing this term with some great results on the card already.



### Sawford - strong from the off.

Remarkably, and in contrast to the words of the weatherman, the whole event was dry from start to finish despite a pretty dark horizon for much of the afternoon. Pole man Sawford got the drop into Old Hall on lap 1 to stay out of trouble and quickly set about gapping the battle for 2<sup>nd</sup> between Jackson, Lee Goddard, Ant Hodson, Darrell Higgins and the gorgeous sounding reverse cylinder TZ of Rich Grinling, who was enjoying mixing it with the front runners on the older TZ instead of his normal RS Honda.

**DUNLOP**

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Ian Gardner's brilliant qualifying position of 5<sup>th</sup> on the grid accounted for nothing as his TZ's battery gave up at the start causing him to coast to a halt after only 200 metres.

With Sawford sitting comfortable and keeping Jackson at arm's length, Hodson settled into 3<sup>rd</sup> and Higgins into 4<sup>th</sup>. After a poor start, Adrian Martin found himself chasing The Hicks Heating and Plumbing TZ of John Lewis and Carl Hudson's Honda but a message in the shape of huge slide at the ultra fast Island Bend sent Martin onto the grass at almost 3 figures. Saving that one, Martin made a better job of it later in the same lap as the TZ went sideways exiting Lodge ending his charge through the field.

In a race of high attrition, next to suffer was title challenger Dan Jackson who, while chasing Sawford at the front, came into contact with a back marker exiting the Shell Hairpin on lap 8 sending the TZ to the ground and frustratingly out of the race. Jackson's exit left Sawford clear to take the win from a delighted Ant Hodson who moved past Jackson at the head of the Championship chase by a slender 3 points as a result. In the battle of the race, Higgins just held off Lee Goddard at the flag to collect the final bottle of Champagne. Possibly the result of the day was next up with Grinling's TZ in 5<sup>th</sup>. Lewis comfortably took 6<sup>th</sup> ahead of Carl Hudson 7<sup>th</sup>, Guernsey's Phil Guillou in 8<sup>th</sup> and a brilliant ride from Sian Brooks in 9<sup>th</sup> on her Spyre Ltd RS Honda, who enjoyed a close battle with NG Cup leader Roy Keen. Brooks slipped past Keen with 3 to go and the pair dueled for the remaining laps and were only separated by .4 of a second at the line in favour of Brooks.

### **Roy Keen collects maximum point with a Cup win – just**

Roy Keen's excellent 10<sup>th</sup> on the road was strong enough to take the win in the NG Cup but had to watch out for Colchester's Gary Vines who sat just behind the Keen/Brooks race waiting to capitalise on any mistakes. Adrian Morris brought his Tattenhall Local Care Ltd. TZ home for 3<sup>rd</sup> in the NG Cup.

Another great ride came in the shape of Lou Goddard on her LLG Racing Honda. Lou had a serious off at Anglesey last year and has sat out since then, making her 4<sup>th</sup> in the NG Cup race and 15<sup>th</sup> on the road all the more remarkable – a ride which earned Lou the Dunlop Performance of the Day Award and a front Dunlop boot. The rear tyre was awarded to Rich Grinling for his efforts on the older (but still beautiful) TZ Yamaha.

For rounds 8 and 9, the series heads to the stunning Anglesey Coastal circuit where Lincolnshire's Ant Hodson will defend his 3 point title lead, but it is getting really interesting at the top of the table in both Championships so keep a close eye on things from here on in! In addition, the grid will welcome a very strong influx of Irish contenders, all keen to post results on the mainland in the premier National 250 Championship.

### **Championship standings after 7 rounds**

***Hodson 118, Jackson 115, Sawford 91, Grinling 83, Higgins 67, Hudson 56, Goddard 51, Guillou 43, Snow 41, Dunn 38.***

### **Cup**

***McCullagh 120, Harrison 87, Keen 80, Vines 80, Hunt 67, Barrett 64, Cox 64, Skaife 41, D Hudson 38, Lou Goddard 26***

Next Rounds - Anglesey Coastal  
Circuit 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> August



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