

The British Grand Prix's star attraction was the first appearance in this country of OMC's new 3½ Litre 16 carburettor V8 outboard engine, the largest unit yet manufactured. This 16th event included a welcome return to this country's circuits of several familiar faces plus the new John Player Special Trio and the twin Gordons Gin rigs.



Van der Velden treats Bob Goodfellow to a victory lap!



Ricky Frost shattered a turn buoy.

The Boys are back

BY BOB BRISTER

Good support came from the monohulls but race officials expressed disappointment at the drivers meeting of the reduced Formula 2 entry. The OE's, SE's, NSE's and two NSD's were therefore condensed into one event. My top marks for the weekend went to the new starting method. No more wavering flags, but instantaneous red and green lights, something which must be taken up by all circuits.

HILL BACK ON FORM

First race on Saturday saw Formula 2 World Champion John Hill get left at the start. Sweden's Lasse Strom dashed away in the lead with SE champion Ricky Frost in second place ahead of Rotterdam's Cor Krouwel and Bristol's Dave Jerwood both with OE's. By lap five Hill was chasing Strom and with five laps to go overtook the Swedish driver and took the chequered flag. Frost's Trimate was still third with Jerwood and Krouwel following. Willy Grey led the NSE's in his K Zed doors rig, with Colin Hayes and Dave Hutchings following up.

White horses could be seen breaking on the dam wall before the start of the second Formula 2 heat. Whilst all the 850 and 750cc rigs left the pontoon safely disaster overtook them when they turned into the wind. Hill, who was already in the lead lifted and veered off course. Further behind Dave Jerwood and Bob Andrews shunted and the resulting matchwound ensured that neither driver would take any further part over the

weekend. Pat Ainge barrel rolled, and Kor Krouwel, Dave Hutchings and Rick Frost decided that enough was enough and pulled out.

Before heat three commenced the drivers conferred and went out to test the conditions. The race officials wisely agreed to put the heat back to the last race of the day. This heat saw Hill jump the lights and it was the one race he did not win in the McEwans Lager Burgess. Strom was again second, Kor Krouwel third with Ken Deller and Jack Moore, in his new Hodges, following. This was Moore's first race since breaking his leg eight weeks previously at Iver. Willy Grey won the Capitol Marine Trophy with a hat trick of wins, although Colin Hayes had fastest lap. In the 750cc NSD Class one of the weekends two lady drivers, Pat Ainge, finished first ahead of young Andy Hiscock who had also entered the 2 litre Class.

CLOSE 2 LITRE RACING

Sixteen UK drivers, plus New Zealander John Nicholson, lined up for the Tissot sponsored ON event, and credit must go to all these drivers for providing some first class racing over the two days. The short course helped to bunch the pack with action taking place at most turns. Walsall Litho's Malcolm Burnapp was first away with Nicholson's Barrus Mariner in hot pursuit, and it was not until the half way stage that the New Zealander's Seebold nipped past the Burgess to take the flag. In third place was the ever improving Scottish dentist, Alan Nimmo, with Tissot's Peter Inward fourth and Mark Wilson, who just could not get his

injection unit to fire first time, fifth. Fiona Brothers in her Colt Cars Seebold Mariner came sixth with Hiscock seventh. Five others finished including Steve Kerton's Plymouth Gin plagued with power trim problems.

Heat two saw Wilson again left at the start but he passed Nicholson who got no further than the second turn. Meanwhile Burnapp was radiating enjoyment as he was able to hold off Nimo's challenge. William's Rolatruc started in seventh and moved up to third by the end, followed by Inward and Brothers. Young Andy Bateman, having his first competitive ON drive on Chasewater in his new Barrus Mariner rig, finished sixth ahead of Wilson, Cliff Roberts, Jim Peverelle, Bryan Brown and Steve Kerton.

The first heat trio repeated their success in heat three with Fiona improving to fourth and Tony Williams fifth. Rescue converged on Andy Hiscock who barrel-rolled his Burgess near the dam wall and such was the keenness of this driver that he was back racing next day with another boat. Sunday's heat four produced the same leaders but with Williams finishing above Fiona.

The final race for ON craft was for the Atlantis Trophy and whilst Burnapp again tore ahead of the pack Nicholson, after one incredible right angle turn at full chat, nipped through to take the flag. Although the Colt car rig retired ten boats crossed the line. It was fast exciting stuff and an excellent opener to the Worlds at Nottingham in August.

THE SHOW STEALING MONOS

The largest Sunday crowd your scribe has



Spalding, Percival and Salabert.

Back in Town...

seen at Chasewater were also entertained to some hairy monohull racing for the Capital Marine Trophy. Twenty one NF and NE boats lined up in the pontoon for the three heat event and the 750cc Team Yamaha were disappointed that they could not go off with the 850cc NF's. Whilst they would not have caught the leaders their 15 second delayed start did not stop some drivers challenging the NF back markers!

Heat one saw NF Champion Ron Whitney lead from start to finish whilst Colin Rundles St. Catherine's Freezer boat could only make second place after passing Neil Hall's GEC Bristol. Gary McLaughlin's driving seems to improve with every race as he moved up from sixth to third. Ray Bailey again suffered from starting problems but progressed from ninth to fifth.

The 750cc's were led by Andrew Elliot with Clive Chapman in hot pursuit. Chapman was desperately trying to keep his rig in calm water (if that ever exists in mono racing) because the other Yamaha Bristol of Champion Mick Chic was policing him waiting for one mistake. Behind these came Rob Parkes, Malcolm Williams (Cobbs for Dulux) and Arthur Cross.

Heat Two was fast and hairy between Whitney and Rundle. The latter taking the lead from the champion three laps from home only to roll it half a lap from the chequered flag. Neil Hall made it to second whilst Chic evened it up with young Chapman. One driver, Geoff Goodman was thrown from his boat below timing control right on the buoy turn. Rescue were fast on the scene and

the local Chasewater drop front boat was able to pick up the driver before any harm was done. Heat Three saw Whitney complete the hat trick for the Codsall Office Supplies Trophy and Griffin Golden Helmet. Even though Chic won the NE heat, with Elliott second and Chapman third, Elliott came out overall winner of the Lady Brecknock Trophy.

OMC V8 DEBUT

Two heats were held each day for the unlimited craft and John Player injected some big cash prizes. Four of the new eight cylinder Johnsons were in the hands of Cees Van der Velden, Roger Jenkins, Bob Spalding and Tom Percival. V6's went to Francois Salabert, making his debut for the JPS Team, Netherlands' driver Arthur Mostert, who was driving one of the three Beneteau sponsored boats, Jonathan Jones and John Millward. Evinrude V6's propelled Andy Bullen and Hans Pelster.

First lap saw Spalding's JPS out in front but closely followed by another Velden boat, in the hands of it's designer, Cees Van der Velden. The Dutchman took command on lap six and set the format for the event. Jones, in his first unlimited race, managed to corkscrew his Gordons Gin Velden through 360 degrees and still land the right way up. Team-mate Jenkins stayed third throughout the heat with Mostert's and Salabert's V6's following ahead of an unhappy Percival.

The full length course made it difficult to judge or make first impressions on these monster engines. Top weight appeared to make cornering nowhere near

as tight as the ON's but this was probably said about the two litre rigs when they first appeared and only time will tell.

The first laps of heat two showed a vast improvement in Salabert's driving. Leaving the pontoon in fourth place he was third on lap two, ahead of the other JPS's and behind Jenkins and Velden in the first two slots. Lap eight however brought the Dutch leader to a dead stop. The boat appeared to hook at the end of the straight and it demolished the turning buoy. It looked as if the boat had been holed and Jenkins flew past, smiling behind his visor, with Salabert in second place ahead of Percival, Jones, Pelster and Bullen, Spalding and Millward. Fate however robbed Salabert of second place when his unit stopped only two hundred yards from the finishing line.

When Velden's rig returned to the pits divers again covered the bottom of the hull with hessian before it was pulled out of the water. This was how the rig arrived and how it stayed until it returned to Holland. That evening however the driver/designer was seen to put a substantial plywood patch on the back end of the tunnel – or was it a replacement, and for what? The secrecy of covering the hulls reminds me of a similar situation at Chasewater in 1978 when, in the World Championships, Molinari's boat dug in and disintegrated. When the remains were brought up even fast covering up did not prevent eyes seeing the small air operated brakes at the ends of the tunnel. The DIY repair apparently worked well and Velden, who even swapped engines with Percival to prove the point, went on to win even though Spalding gave him a good run for his money by leading for the first eight laps in heat four. Velden therefore had a hat trick of three wins. Roger Jenkins finished second overall with Bob Spalding third. One wonders if it would have been any different if Molinari had been competing? ●