

2016 BRSCC MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

RACE REPORT

April 2/3, 2016 | **Rounds 1 & 2**

SNETTERTON

Words and pictures by **JON ELSEY**



AVON
TYRES

Eibach
LIFTING

Pipercross

TOWNSEND
VEHICLE HIRE RUGBY

RACING
BEST EUROPE

GAZ SHOCKS

Sanspeed 

SNETTERTON: The inside line with James Blake-Baldwin



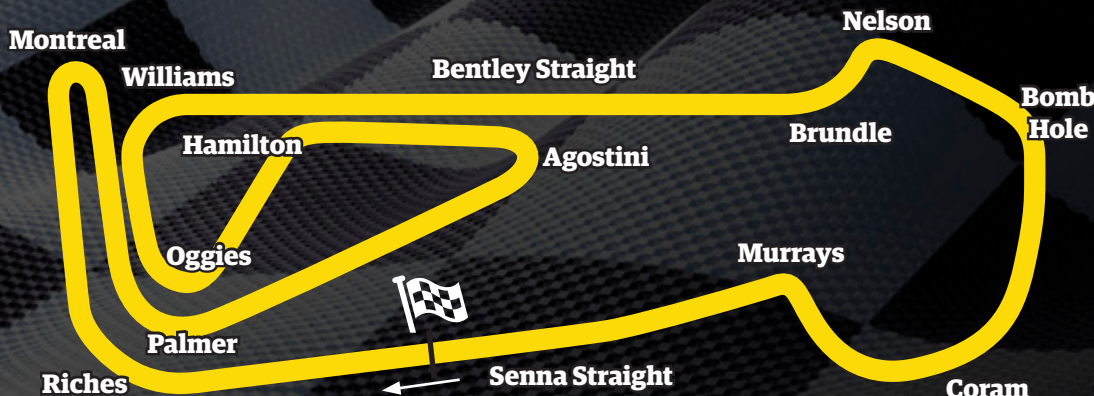
Interestingly, the new Avon tyres appear to be taking four or so laps to start working. Lap times seem to be down 1.5-2 seconds per lap until the tyres are up to temperature. Taking into consideration how long a lap is at Snetterton that's almost the half-way point in the race. Other drivers agree and it's going to take a while before we figure out what the best pressure setting is.

Believe it or not, Senna straight is faster than Bentley straight. 115mph as opposed to a top speed of 112mph achieved on the back straight.

The Bomb Hole has to be one of the most interesting bends. If you get it right, it's flat and 'pings' you out the other side and you JUST stay on the track. Get it wrong and the remainder of the lap is ruined. On average you could lose 0.5 seconds on that one short bend if you had to lift.

Coram is by far one of the hardest bends in the UK. The turn-in speed is 94mph and the bend gradually tightens all the way to Murrys which is a 50mph bend. It's all about how long you could stay on the power before easing off and applying the brakes for the left hander and trying not to put the car sideways. Depending how you set the car up dictates how long you could stay on the gas. A higher rear ride height means you can be fast out the Bomb Hole but slower on the exit of Coram. You could tell which cars were set up for Coram (i.e. Tom Roche).

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
KENT MX-5 SERVICES



26

The number of drivers entered for this event.



17

The number of litres of fuel burnt during a 20 minute race.

On the basis that 1.58 litres is used every lap, the fuel consumption during the race was just **7.19 MPG!**



1265 MILES

The total number of race miles, based on the laps completed by the 26 competitors across both races.



49

Number of pedal movements (brake, clutch and accelerator) per lap.



20

The number of gear changes on a flying lap.



32MPH

Speed the slowest corner, Montreal, is taken.



12

The number of corners in one lap of the circuit.



2.99 MILES

Length of one lap of the circuit.



70MPH

The speed retardation in the heaviest braking zone. Slowing from 102mph to 32mph on the approach to the Montreal hairpin.



100MPH

The turn-in speed for Riches, the fastest corner - **86MPH** at the apex.



1g

The highest lateral 'g-force' recorded turning through Riches Corner.



1.1g

The highest longitudinal 'g-force' is recorded when braking for the Montreal hairpin.



115MPH

The highest speed achieved on a flying lap, along Senna Straight on the approach to Riches corner.



2:15.284

The quickest lap time set by James Blake-Baldwin during qualifying. An average speed of **79.00 MPH**



James Blake-Baldwin got his season off to the best of starts by heading the first qualifying session.



Qualifying: Blake-Baldwin holds off Roche challenge to claim pole

Former BRSCC Mazda MX-5 Mk1 champion draws first blood in super close qualifying session

FOR once the pre-season hype lived up to expectations, as the BRSCC Mazda MX-5 SuperCup championship got off to an exciting start at Snetterton.

Now entering its sixth season, 2016 already looks like being a classic year for the popular formula.

On paper the fight for the title looks harder than ever to call with several former 'one-make' champions among the 30 drivers so far registered.

The predicted pre-season favourites rose to the fore when a thrilling qualifying session was headed by James Blake-Baldwin. He snatched pole position by the slenderest of margins from the returning Tom Roche, Alan Henderson and Jonathan Greensmith.

Pole winner Blake-Baldwin said: "Qualifying went really well, Tom and I followed each other round taking it in turns to do a bit of drafting, we're so close on times it's crazy.

"Tom seems to have a little bit more speed through the slow bends and I have the edge in the fast corners. Two tenths of a second in a 2:15 lap is nothing really."

TOP TEN

1. J. BLAKE-BALDWIN
2. T. ROCHE
3. A. HENDERSON
4. J. GREENSMITH
5. L. MURPHY
6. J. HARDING
7. C. GARNETT
8. A. PRESTON
9. J. GODDARD
10. P. CALLOW

"We're so close on times it's crazy. Two tenths of a second in a 2:15 lap is nothing."

Looking towards the race he said: "My starts haven't been too bad in the Mk3, but thankfully there are plenty of overtaking points on this version of the circuit. It's a track I really like compared to the 200 layout which I find a little bit boring.

"It's going to be really interesting, especially with that funny Welshman in his green thing behind me.

'Funny Welshman' Tom Roche just missed out on pole and ended the session with the second-fastest time. He said: "Qualifying was really close. The car is all new and to be honest it's sat too low.

"There was quite a lot of understeer which was great through the slow stuff where I'd catch James, but not so good for the fast corner onto the back straight [Williams] and Coram, which are so important round here. "I was waiting for the front all the time, it was a little bit frustrating but we've changed it now."

Third on the timing sheets was defending champion Alan Henderson, who said: "Qualifying was okay, I went out behind Tom

and James, who were running together with Jonny Greensmith. There were a couple of cars in between us and I was hoping to get past them straight away. Unfortunately one of the Sheard cars span right in front of me on the second corner so I lost that tow.

"As I was catching the group, they got faster together. I also went quicker at the very end but not enough. I really needed to be in the tow."

Jonathan Greensmith is delivering on his pre-season billing as one to watch, and said: "Qualifying was promising. We've found a new set-up and every time we go out and try something different we're finding better times."

The Yorkshireman rued: "It was a shame I just went slightly off during the session and lost the tow from James and Tom."

Before optimistically adding: "But onwards and upwards!"

An excited Liam Murphy said: "I'm really looking forward to the new season. With Tom back, James up there and Alan returning it should be good fun."

"So far the only track time we've had this year was the 20 minute free practice, so we've struggled with the new tyres because there is that much more grip you can go a lot faster."

"There's still a bit of time to come from me and hopefully we'll be right up there for the races."

The 19-year-old said: "It's also my first time on this track. The infield section is more technical than I thought it would be, but it's a good fast track and I like it."

"I think all the top five to six in qualifying will be up there this year. It got close last year but it's going to be even better this season."

A disappointed Jack Harding said: "I was hoping for a bit better in qualifying. I dropped from fifth to sixth on the last lap so I was a bit gutted about that."

"But it's a good starting place. My aim for the season was top three because I finished sixth in 2015, but having said that there are a lot of strong drivers this year. So it's going to be tough but if I can get top fives every round then that gives me a good chance."

The former Blendini Scholarship winner reported: "My car has had a lot of mechanical issues which have been sorted out and AK's put a really good set-up on it. It feels like a completely different car to drive now. It's had a smart re-spray and it looks good."

Talking of his reasons to switch to AK Automotive he said: "Alan won the championship so I thought AK must be good. They are just a good bunch on and off track."

Sheffield's Carl Garnett showed promising pace, finishing the session in seventh position. He said: "Qualifying went really well, a huge improvement from last year!"

"I came here on Thursday to try and learn the track, plus I've had a bit of coaching from Abbie Eaton."

"Hopefully we can push on and if I can get a top-ten finish for the first time ever, I would



Brand new car for Tom Roche proves to be on the pace straight out of the box.

be ecstatic. After being in the middle of the pack last year it would be a good step for us."

"The new Avon tyres are much better for me, you get so much more feedback so it seems I can move the car about a lot more whereas last year I didn't really have the confidence. This is only my second year of racing so anything I can get to give me added confidence is a bonus."

Rookie racer Jamie Goddard was delighted with his performance in the ex-Matt Davies car. The 24-year-old explained: "I haven't really done anything like this before. I've always wanted to get into motorsport and do a bit of racing but never really had the opportunity or funds to do it."

"It had to be front-engine rear-wheel-drive for me and I've had Mazda road cars in the past so thought I'd go for a SuperCup car."

"I haven't really thought about my hopes for

"I've always wanted to get into motorsport and do a bit of racing but never really had the opportunity or funds. It had to be front engine, rear wheel drive."

the season, just to progress. I've done track days and a few test days. I'm just going to go out there and see what happens."

Tenth on the timing sheets went to another new face in the paddock, Philip Callow who said: "It's my first time racing in the UK and my first time in the MX-5s."

"I was living in Asia for nine years and started racing at the Zhuhai circuit in China. I began competing in a Ginetta G20 in 2011 before moving to Singapore where I bought and ran a Radical SR8 at Sepang."

"I ran that for a season and a half then focused on coming back to the UK. London house prices made me choose the Mazda series! Having just bought a flat, it's the best bang for buck which matters to me."

"This is a discovery weekend for me, in an arrive and drive. I haven't committed to the season."

He added: "So far so good, I'm loving it. It's great to have Will and Jon from Concorde Motorsport guide me through."

"Fingers crossed if all goes well today I will probably walk away with a big grin on my face and be calling up Will to book again."

A pleased Ray Worley said: "It's probably my highest qualifying ever, but I like the tyres, they suit me well."

"I have loads more confidence, I'm getting a good amount of feedback through the steering wheel and the car feels really planted."

"It's fair to say that we're fans of the new Avon tyres."

Things didn't go quite so well for series sponsor Garry Townsend. His engine failed in free practice and to rub salt into his wounds, the car he borrowed was deemed to be underweight in post qualifying checks. Exclusion from the results meant the Rugby racer would have to start from the back.



Ray Worley finds the new Avon tyres to his liking and records his best-ever qualifying performance.

Jim Hart qualified a creditable 16th, just behind Boreham Motorsport teammate Ray Worley.



Jonathan Greensmith was pleased with his qualifying performance.



Driver coaching from former SuperCup champion Abbie Eaton appeared to pay off for Carl Garnett.



Former Radical racer Philip Callow quickly gets to grips with a Mk3 Mazda MX-5.



QUALIFYING RESULT

POLE POSITION

DRIVER: JAMES BLAKE-BALDWIN LAP 8 TIME: 2:15.284 SPEED: 79.00

POSITION	NUMBER	DRIVER	CAR		BEST TIME	BEST LAP	TOTAL LAPS	GAP	DIFF	MPH
1	2	James BLAKE-BALDWIN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:15.284	8	9			79.00
2	25	Tom ROCHE	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:15.491	8	9	0.207	0.207	78.88
3	1	Alan HENDERSON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:15.985	8	8	0.701	0.494	78.59
4	5	Jonathan GREENSMITH	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:16.321	4	9	1.037	0.336	78.40
5	3	Liam MURPHY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:17.214	7	8	1.930	0.893	77.89
6	43	Jack HARDING	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:17.375	6	8	2.091	0.161	77.80
7	19	Carl GARNETT	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:18.134	5	5	2.850	0.759	77.37
8	32	Alex PRESTON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:18.146	5	9	2.862	0.012	77.36
9	91	Jamie GODDARD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:18.282	6	9	2.998	0.136	77.29
10	44	Philip CALLOW	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:18.324	8	8	3.040	0.042	77.26
11	4	Will CHAPPELL	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:18.343	5	9	3.059	0.019	77.25
12	15	Andrew CAIRD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:18.378	5	8	3.094	0.035	77.23
13	76	Richard WICKLEN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:19.080	8	9	3.796	0.702	76.84
14	77	Jeremy CROOK	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:19.601	7	8	4.317	0.521	76.56
15	40	Raymond WORLEY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:19.917	9	9	4.633	0.316	76.38
16	27	Jim HART	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:20.051	4	8	4.767	0.134	76.31
17	71	Geoff GOURIET	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:20.297	6	9	5.013	0.246	76.18
18	36	David HENDERSON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:20.573	8	9	5.289	0.276	76.03
19	21	Simon FLEET	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:20.914	9	9	5.630	0.341	75.84
20	52	Steve DOLMAN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:21.935	7	8	6.651	1.021	75.30
21	41	David WILLOUGHBY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:22.874	9	9	7.590	0.939	74.80
22	69	George GRANT	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:24.310	4	9	9.026	1.436	74.06
23	13	Gregg CATTON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:28.065	4	7	12.781	3.755	72.18
24	8	Ian McDONALD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3		2:30.236	5	6	14.952	2.171	71.14
EX	89*	Garry TOWNSEND	Mazda MX-5 Mk3							

*Car 89 - Excluded from result for Eligibility (car underweight)

Car 44 - Lap time disallowed for exceeding track limits

POLE POSITION

2 Tom ROCHE	1 James BLAKE-BALDWIN
4 Jonathan GREENSMITH	3 Alan HENDERSON
6 Jack HARDING	5 Liam MURPHY
8 Alex PRESTON	7 Carl GARNETT
10 Philip CALLOW	9 Jamie GODDARD
12 Andrew CAIRD	11 Will CHAPPELL
14 Jeremy CROOK	13 Richard WICKLEN
16 Jim HART	15 Ray WORLEY
18 David HENDERSON	17 Geoff GOURIET
20 Steve DOLMAN	19 Simon FLEET
22 George GRANT	21 David WILLOUGHBY
24 Ian MCDONALD	23 Gregg CATTON
26 Garry TOWNSEND	25 Alex KING



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Race 1: Henderson shines in slippery conditions

Reigning champion kicks off title defence in fine form

EVEN though the Norfolk circuit was bathed in early morning sunshine, heavy overnight rain had left the Snetterton tarmac damp. Despite the weather gods' best efforts it stubbornly refused to dry.

That left many drivers with a dilemma as to how to set up their cars - the vast majority having never driven on the new Avon tyres in the wet before.

Pole-sitter James Blake-Baldwin commented: "Unfortunately pole doesn't look like the place to be today. Turn one is just going to be like hitting ice, and getting off the line well with wet rubber is just not going to happen."

He added: "I think it will be a case of losing a few positions at the start and everyone going round in single file until the dry line is wide enough to get past another car."

Third on the grid Alan Henderson agreed: "The tarmac on the pole side here is always bad when it's wet. I was watching a video of mine from last year in damp conditions and going off the line it was spinning the wheels."

"James may well struggle off the line, but I'm

PODIUM

- 1. A. HENDERSON**
- 2. T. ROCHE**
- 3. J. BLAKE-BALDWIN**

just behind so I won't fare much better."

Tom Roche joked: "Is James making excuses already about the starting side?"

Before adding: "Yes, it's a bit damp, which I normally like, but I've never tried this car on these tyres in the wet. It should be interesting."

Despite his initial concerns, when the lights went out it was Blake-Baldwin who got

Tom Roche pumped in some quick lap times towards the end



the jump to lead the pack away. Henderson followed him into Riches with Roche slotting into third, but by the Montreal hairpin the Blendini driver had squeezed his way into second.

Jonathan Greensmith struggled off the line, dropping to sixth behind Liam Murphy and Jack Harding. But once in his stride, MX-5 City backed Greensmith quickly made up for his tardy start by overtaking Harding at Agostini before setting his sights on Murphy.

Roche too was on the attack, and made good use of the substantial tow available on the long Bentley Straight to take the lead with a well-timed pass on the brakes into the Brundle/Nelson complex.

At the end of an intense opening lap Roche led Blake-Baldwin by just a quarter of a

“Unfortunately pole doesn’t look like the place to be today. Turn one is just going to be like hitting ice and getting off the line well with wet rubber is just not going to happen.”

second, with Henderson a similar distance behind. Murphy was three seconds back shadowed by Greensmith with Harding in sixth. Carl Garnett, Alex Preston, Philip Callow and Will Chappell fought over the remaining top ten positions.

However, perhaps the most impressive opening lap was by George Grant, the 54-year-old picking off seven rivals. The Paul Sheard-run driver wasn’t the only one carving his way through the order. Amazingly Garry Townsend who started at the back with a delayed start also picked up five spots.

Not faring so well were Simon Fleet and newcomer Jamie Goddard who dropped four and three places respectively.

The second lap saw action aplenty with Callow and fellow newcomer Alex King losing positions after succumbing to the slippery conditions in separate incidents at Riches. Moments earlier this corner had witnessed Blake-Baldwin being ousted from second by Henderson, a crucial move which released the North East racer to chase down the leader.

In fact, such was the speed advantage Henderson had, that towards the end of the lap he was running side-by-side with Roche along the Bentley Straight and through the Brundle/Nelson complex of corners. Dogged determination saw the Blendini driver just hold on by the Bomb Hole, but it seemed only a matter of time before the lead would change. Indeed, crossing the line to start the third lap the reigning champion took to the outside line for Riches and snatched the lead with an audacious move.

Greensmith too was on the move and passed Murphy to claim fourth before running out of road at Coram and having to

Jim Hart leads David Willoughby through Nelson during the early stages.



Will Chappell chases down Alex Preston at Brundle on the final lap.



Philip Callow impressed with a top ten finish on his SuperCup debut.



take to the grass and short-cut the final corner.

But to think that all the action was confined to the leading trio would be to do a massive disservice to the rest of the field. The dice for fifth was just as intense with Harding, Murphy and Preston running bumper-to-bumper. Not to mention the terrific four-car scrap being played out over eighth featuring Chappell, Garnett, Wicklen and Goddard, or the 12th place fight disputed by Caird, the recovering Callow and Ray Worley.

By lap four, it was obvious that Harding was struggling in the conditions and the Wakefield driver lost out to Murphy at Montreal, before Preston wrested sixth at Agostini with Chappell closing in.

Further back, the fast starters of Grant and Townsend were engaged in a terrific duel for 15th, with a similarly enthralling scrap over 18th between Geoff Gouriet and Simon Fleet.

With the race passing the halfway point there was still no discernible dry racing line – meaning a racing driver's least favourite conditions – neither wet nor dry.

“I thought I was supposed to have a ten second penalty but there was nobody there to tell me when to go, so after about five or six seconds I went.”

Leader Henderson appeared to be faring better than most and began to edge away from the chasing Roche and Blake-Baldwin.

Meanwhile, Harding's race was hampered by braking issues and as a result he spun at Riches costing the Yorkshireman six places.

With six laps completed, the fight for tenth place was settled when Garnett made a mistake at Riches and lost out to Callow with Caird following through at Montreal, just as Jeremy Crook passed Grant to take 16th.

With one lap remaining Greensmith was all on his own for fourth, some 13 seconds behind the lead trio and ten seconds in front of fifth-placed Murphy, who was being hunted down by the Preston and Chappell pairing.

With time running out and dry patches becoming evident, Roche began pumping in quick laps to bring himself back into contention. A good tow along the Bentley Straight saw the Welshman close to within a couple of car lengths of the leader, setting up an exciting sprint finish.

But Roche's best efforts were thwarted by a textbook final lap from Henderson. He shone when it mattered to take the Race 1 laurels. The AK Automotive driver kick started his title defence in the best possible way by beating Roche by half a second.

Blake-Baldwin took third with Greensmith



Liam Murphy heads Jonathan Greensmith,
Jack Harding and Carl Garnett on
the opening lap.



Alex King.



coming home a lonely fourth.

But all eyes on the pit wall were focused on who would finish fifth as Liam Murphy just held off Preston and Chappell at the flag - the trio covered by just over a second.

Also worthy of note was the debut drive from Goddard. Competing in his first ever race, the Royston racer managed an impressive eighth, and marked himself out as one to watch.

Wicklen took ninth with Callow just holding off Caird, to claim tenth despite his earlier spin.

The closest finish of the race was between Townsend and Ray Worley. The pair crossed the line separated by a mere five hundredths of a second in their quest for 14th.

Despite driving an unfamiliar car and starting at the back with a time penalty, championship stalwart and series sponsor Garry Townsend carved his way through the field making up 12 places along the way.

A happy Alan Henderson said: "I didn't expect to win to be honest. We took a gamble and ran with basically a dry set-up and upped the tyre pressure a bit - it was a total guess."

He added: "The conditions weren't too bad but these new tyres are a bit weird. In the dry they are nice and progressive but in the wet they're very snatchy. I suppose it's the same for everybody we've just got to put up with it."

"Towards the end Tom put in a couple of

monster laps, about a second a lap faster I think. But, we're all so close and from a racing point of view it's going to make for a great season. You never know when you might get a curve ball during a race to mix up the championship points."

Runner-up Tom Roche commented: "It was really tricky out there, I was not expecting it to be anywhere nearly as wet as it was. The track was absolutely soaking for the first few

"It was challenging to say the least, I almost span on the green flag lap!"

laps and I assumed it would dry out quickly, but it didn't.

"Alan showed huge commitment, he was so much braver than James and me and as a result he drove better in the opening laps and got away from us."

The final step on the podium went to an exhausted James Blake-Baldwin who said: "That was really hard work, I feel like I've run a marathon."

"Despite my earlier reservations, I got a really good start. We were all trying different lines to see where the grip was for the first few laps and unfortunately I chose wrong and Tom snuck past. I remember thinking 'I won't make the same mistake again' but on the next

David Willoughby.



Steve Dolman



Simon Fleet.



lap Alan managed to sneak round the outside too! It's entirely my fault but you live and learn!" he laughed.

A disappointed Jonathan Greensmith revealed: "That was the worst start I've had in 20 years, truly horrendous! Fortunately I got back behind James and Tom quite quickly, but then I came around a corner thinking 'there's a dry line' but there wasn't and I went off on the grass. Nice and gentle but I knew straight away that I wouldn't be able catch the front three, so I thought 'fourth will do'.

"It was a shame for the spectators because everyone's new to the tyres, so we don't know how they are going to perform. We went out on a dry set-up and are finding things out all the time."

A relieved Liam Murphy finished fifth and said: "I'm pleased with that, I got a good start but I really struggled in the damp conditions. I had a big moment at Coram towards the end of the race. I went into the corner in fourth gear but should have really been in third because of the wet. I lost it but fortunately managed to bring it back."

Sixth-placed Alex Preston said: "I'd say I had quite a bad start, I found it tricky to get the car off the line. Even being cautious with the throttle I was getting wheel spin so I immediately lost a couple of places.

"It was great when I managed to catch back up with Jack Harding and Liam Murphy. We

were having a great scrap, then Jack went off."

He added: "To be honest, I was a lot more confident when the conditions were worse. Once it started to dry out I could see Will [Chappell] was catching me but I seemed to be able to get better drive out of the corners that mattered, which made it hard for him to overtake me.

The Windsor-based driver added: "It got very close on the last lap. I think a back-marker held Liam up which meant it was tight between the three of us at the finish."

Seventh-placed Will Chappell was closing in on Preston and the recovering Murphy at the flag and said: "I just needed a bit more time. I think I had four fastest laps and it was coming to me.

"Alex pipped me at the line, but with a couple more laps I could have put him under pressure and really made him defend, or got underneath him."

The Concorde Motorsport driver added: "These tyres take some getting used to and don't appear to be lasting very long. One set lasted two test days which is a bit concerning.

"They seem to be harder to get the heat into compared to the Federals."

SuperCup debutant Jamie Goddard finished the highest of the first-time racers and said:

"I'm pretty pleased with eighth, but I didn't get a very good start. I didn't really know what would happen at the first corner so I played it

"We're all so close and from a racing point of view it's going to make for a great season. You never know when you might get a curve ball during a race to mix up the championship points."

a little bit safe and lost three or four places.

"I slowly started to get more confident as the race went on. The other guys knew what they were doing and had respect for each other. I thought 'no-one is going to punt me off' so I tried to do the same and just built it up rather than going too far and having to pull it back."

Philip Callow also impressed in his first MX-5 race. The London-based driver finished tenth and said: "It was challenging to say the least, I almost span on the green flag lap!

"I had a good start and made up two places off the line and then had the inside for Riches and got up to seventh or eighth.

"Then it all went wrong on lap two, I ended up spinning facing the pack, but luckily everyone including my teammate Will [Chappell] missed me. It dropped me to 14th or 15th, but it was good fun coming back through the field. I started tenth and finished tenth so I'm pretty happy."

Twelfth placed Jack Harding also had a rollercoaster of a race. The ITG-sponsored driver recalled: "I was battling for fifth with Liam [Murphy] and Alex Preston. We struggled a bit with the wet, Alex came past me and I kept up with him but I was locking the fronts constantly on the slower corners like the hairpin. So I twisted the brake bias towards the rear, and as I got on the brakes for turn one it was just too much and it just snapped the rear round and that was it. I

Andrew Caird just missed out on a top ten finish by three tenths of a second.



thought I'd saved it but then it just touched the grass. I managed to drive back through the gravel, came on at about 14th and ended up finishing 12th so I got a couple back but it's going to make Race 2 a bit difficult."

Optimistically he added: "The plan is to get past as quick as I can because I know I'm a second quicker than the guys in front."

Arguably, Garry Townsend put in the performance of the race and explained: "My engine let go during practice which was a bit of a blow.

"I borrowed a car off AK Automotive which was really good of them, and when I got it weighed, Chris [Baker] the scrutineer said it was 1127kg - well above weight.

"But when he weighed it again after qualifying it was 15kg underweight so I don't know if the reading was wrong initially."

The former short-oval racer admitted: "I thought I was supposed to have a ten second penalty but there was nobody there to tell me when to go, so after about five or six seconds I went.

"I'd noticed during the green flag lap there was a dry line around the outside of some of the corners so I just drove round there and cut them up straight away."

He added: "I actually spun halfway through the race and lost a couple of the places I'd gained and probably would've caught a few more people in front. The conditions made it a bit more fun."

George Grant also impressed particularly over the opening lap. He said: "I was



Garry Townsend (above) and George Grant (right) were star performers during Race 1 gaining an impressive 17 positions between them.



pleasantly surprised by how quickly I managed to get the car off the line.

"I'm usually confident with my race starts and braking points, especially in the wet, so given the conditions I decided to really go for it on the first lap, which paid off nicely in the end."

DRIVER TRACKER

GRID POSITION	LAP 1	LAP 2	LAP 3	LAP 4	LAP 5	LAP 6	LAP 7	LAP 8	FINISHING POSITION
1 James BLAKE-BALDWIN									1 Alan HENDERSON (+2)
2 Tom ROCHE									2 Tom ROCHE (-)
3 Alan HENDERSON									3 James BLAKE-BALDWIN (-2)
4 Jonathan GREENSMITH									4 Jonathan GREENSMITH (-)
5 Liam MURPHY									5 Liam MURPHY (-)
6 Jack HARDING									6 Alex PRESTON (+2)
7 Carl GARNETT									7 Will CHAPPELL (+4)
8 Alex PRESTON									8 Jamie GODDARD (+1)
9 Jamie GODDARD									9 Richard WICKLEN (+4)
10 Philip CALLOW									10 Philip CALLOW (-)
11 Will CHAPPELL									11 Andrew CAIRD (+1)
12 Andrew CAIRD									12 Jack HARDING (-6)
13 Richard WICKLEN									13 Carl GARNETT (-5)
14 Jeremy CROOK									14 GARRY TOWNSEND (+12)
15 Raymond WORLEY									15 Raymond WORLEY (-)
16 Jim HART									16 Jeremy CROOK (-2)
17 Geoff GOURIET									17 George GRANT (+5)
18 David HENDERSON									18 Geoff GOURIET (-1)
19 Simon FLEET									19 David WILLOUGHBY (+2)
20 Steve DOLMAN									20 Simon FLEET (-1)
21 David WILLOUGHBY									21 Steve DOLMAN (-1)
22 George GRANT									22 Jim HART (-6)
23 Gregg CATTON									23 David HENDERSON (-5)
24 Ian McDONALD									24 Gregg CATTON (-1)
25 Alex KING									25 Ian McDONALD (-1)
26 Garry TOWNSEND									26 Alex KING (-1)



(left to right) Tom Roche, Alan Henderson and James Blake-Baldwin celebrate on the Snetterton podium.



Simon Fleet leads Jim Hart through Nelson on his way to 20th position.



Richard Wicklen had a great race-long tussle with Jamie Goddard.



Geoff Gouriet and Jeremy Crook during to first half of the opening encounter.

RACE 1 RESULT

FASTEST LAP

DRIVER: TOM ROCHE LAP 8 TIME: 2:25.997 SPEED: 73.20 MPH

POSITION	NUMBER	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	RACE TIME	GAP	DIFFERENCE	AVERAGE MPH	BEST LAP TIME	BEST LAP
1	1	Alan HENDERSON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:15.522			70.34	2:26.518	8
2	25	Tom ROCHE	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:16.085	0.563	0.563	70.31	2:25.997	8
3	2	James BLAKE-BALDWIN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:17.730	2.208	1.645	70.21	2:26.530	8
4	5	Jonathan GREENSMITH	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:34.383	18.861	16.653	69.26	2:29.578	8
5	3	Liam MURPHY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:46.442	30.920	12.059	68.59	2:29.739	7
6	32	Alex PRESTON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:47.392	31.870	0.950	68.54	2:29.541	8
7	4	Will CHAPPELL	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	20:47.527	32.005	0.135	68.53	2:28.612	8
8	91	Jamie GODDARD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:04.540	49.018	17.013	67.61	2:31.454	8
9	76	Richard WICKLEN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:07.148	51.626	2.608	67.47	2:32.560	7
10	44	Philip CALLOW	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:08.996	53.474	1.848	67.37	2:32.134	8
11	15	Andrew CAIRD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:09.343	53.821	0.347	67.36	2:31.545	8
12	43	Jack HARDING	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:17.492	1:01.970	8.149	66.93	2:32.032	8
13	19	Carl GARNETT	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:19.382	1:03.860	1.890	66.83	2:34.919	8
14	89	Garry TOWNSEND	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:24.046	1:08.524	4.664	66.59	2:32.551	7
15	40	Raymond WORLEY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:24.105	1:08.583	0.059	66.58	2:33.451	8
16	77	Jeremy CROOK	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:28.469	1:12.947	4.364	66.36	2:33.217	8
17	69	George GRANT	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:37.035	1:21.513	8.566	65.92	2:37.007	7
18	71	Geoff GOURIET	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:53.853	1:38.331	16.818	65.07	2:39.070	8
19	41	David WILLOUGHBY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:55.750	1:40.228	1.897	64.98	2:36.974	8
20	21	Simon FLEET	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	21:55.932	1:40.410	0.182	64.97	2:38.566	5
21	52	Steve DOLMAN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	22:09.186	1:53.664	13.254	64.32	2:39.384	8
22	27	Jim HART	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	22:19.098	2:03.576	9.912	63.85	2:42.940	5
23	36	David HENDERSON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	22:28.569	2:14.047	10.471	63.35	2:41.093	8
24	13	Gregg CATTON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	22:30.476	2:14.954	0.907	63.31	2:41.005	8
25	85	Ian McDONALD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	22:41.256	2:25.734	10.780	62.81	2:41.726	8
26	152	Alex KING	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	7	20:46.883	1Lap	1Lap	60.00	2:46.526	7

POLE POSITION

2 Tom ROCHE	1 Alan HENDERSON
4 Jonathan GREENSMITH	3 James BLAKE-BALDWIN
6 Alex PRESTON	5 Liam MURPHY
8 Jamie GODDARD	7 Will CHAPPELL
10 Philip CALLOW	9 Richard WICKLEN
12 Jack HARDING	11 Andrew CAIRD
14 Garry TOWNSEND	13 Carl GARNETT
16 Jeremy CROOK	15 Ray WORLEY
18 Geoff GOURIET	17 George GRANT
20 Simon FLEET	19 David WILLOUGHBY
22 Jim HART	21 Steve DOLMAN
24 Gregg CATTON	23 David HENDERSON
26 Alex KING	25 Ian MCDONALD



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James Blake-Baldwin takes victory in an exciting Race 2.

Race 2: Blake-Baldwin on form in four-way classic

Dry conditions give a telling insight into the thrilling championship battle to come

RACE 2 took place in perfect conditions, a fact born out by the closeness of the racing. The 26-car grid lined up in the finishing order of Race 1 with Alan Henderson taking pole position. Alongside the County Durham racer sat Tom Roche with James Blake-Baldwin and Jonathan Greensmith poised ominously behind on the second row.

At lights out, Henderson just nosed ahead of the Blendini driver to lead into Riches.

A feisty Blake-Baldwin looked up for the challenge and had passed Roche by the Montreal hairpin and was soon applying pressure on the race leader. So much so that both he and Roche overtook Henderson on the ultra fast Bentley Straight, with Greensmith in close attendance.

At the end of a frenetic opening lap, Blake-Baldwin weaved his way across the line desperately trying to break the tow back to the chasing Roche, Henderson and Greensmith.

In their wake sat Liam Murphy with Will Chappell in sixth followed by Richard Wicklen and Jack Harding with Alex Preston

PODIUM

- 1. J. BLAKE-BALDWIN**
- 2. A. HENDERSON**
- 3. J. GREENSMITH**

and Andrew Caird rounding out the top ten. Phillip Callow ended his promising debut SuperCup meeting on the inside of Murrays retiring with a mechanical failure, following a high-speed off-track excursion at Corum.

The first lap had also not been kind to Preston, as engine problems saw him lose several places off the start. The BLiNK



Jeremy Crook comes under pressure from Ray Worley.

Motorsport run driver dropped into the middle of a great battle for sixth which also starred Wicklen, Harding, Caird and Jamie Goddard.

Preston's problems were compounded a lap later when an optimistic late-braking lunge from Goddard saw the inexperienced newcomer slide into the side of Preston's car, putting Goddard out on the spot and dropping Preston down to 23rd with a mountain to climb.

Meanwhile up at the front, Roche swept into the lead by passing Blake-Baldwin with a bold overtake in the braking zone for Brundle at the end of the Bentley Straight.

Blake-Baldwin was not about to take that lying down and immediately attempted to retake the position at Riches next time around. Coming from a long way back, the Farnham racer locked up and while the move didn't stick it was an early warning for Roche that the Kent MX-5 Services driver meant business.

As the lead pairing continued to squabble Henderson and Greensmith clawed their way back into contention, setting up a thrilling four-way fight.

Entering the Brundle/Nelson complex for the third time Blake-Baldwin did to Roche exactly what the Welshman did to him a lap earlier and regained the lead.

The excitement increased at the start of lap four when Roche employed the technique of bump-drafting to literally push Blake-Baldwin over the line. The lead quartet were separated by a mere three quarters of a second.

Conversely, Murphy was having a lonely time of it three seconds down the road in fifth with Chappell equally isolated in sixth.

At the rear of the field Alex King added to his eventful meeting with a spin at Hamilton



George Grant leads fellow Paul Sheard-run racer Steve Dolman and Simon Fleet through Riches.

Simon Fleet under attack from Alex Preston.



"I was lucky to make it to the end of the race to be honest as every now and then you could feel it hiccuping."

and Steve Dolman also dabbled in a spot of rallycross when he took to the grass at Murrays.

A lap later Henderson got a good drive out of Montreal to get the better of Roche at Palmer. In their wheel-tracks sat an eager Greensmith, perfectly poised to pounce if any of the lead trio tripped over themselves.

A little further down the order a great race-

long scrap had developed between Harding and Wicklen for seventh.

Equally tight was the fight for 14th between Garry Townsend, Jeremy Crook and Geoff Gouriet.

In the gripping battle for the lead Henderson was coming under increasing pressure to keep Roche and Greensmith at bay. Perhaps unsurprisingly, things came to a head on lap seven with light contact between the AK Automotive and Blendini drivers at Brundle.

Roche briefly gained position but his glory was short lived as it soon became apparent that the touch had caused damage to a wheel rim and an immediate flat tyre sent the Welshman off at the Bomb Hole and ultimately to the pit lane.

This destroyed the awesome four-way fight

Jack Harding battles his way through from 12th on the grid to finish sixth.





Richard Wicklen and Jack Harding battle over seventh.



Ray Worley gets as high as 14th before finishing 17th.



and allowed Blake-Baldwin to scamper away.

On the following lap Greensmith seized a chance to take second at Montreal only to see his advantage disappear in a cloud of dust as he ran wide at the next corner.

With the leading five cars now strung out, it was time for the hotly contested battle over sixth, seventh and eighth to enter the limelight. Harding, Wicklen and Garnett took centre stage in the race's best battle at the sharp end.

Also throw into the mix the titanic scrap between Townsend, Caird and Gouriet fighting over ninth, not to mention Ray Worley, David Willoughby and Simon Fleet squabbling over 15th, there was plenty to entertain the SuperCup faithful.

Having changed a wheel Roche rejoined the action on the final lap - no doubt with one eye on the championship by taking home what could be crucial points for finishing 24th.

In the end Blake-Baldwin comfortably took the victor's spoils ahead of Henderson with Greensmith taking the final podium spot.

Murphy came home fourth with Chappell fifth. Harding held on to sixth while Garnett usurped Wicklen in the dying stages to claim seventh. Caird just edged Townsend to the line in the battle for ninth, with Gouriet agonisingly missing out on a top ten finish by just a tenth of a second.

Other tight finishes in a great race saw Willoughby get the better of Fleet by seven hundredths of a second, while Jim Hart pipped Dolman by a meagre two tenths.

Delighted race winner James Blake-Baldwin said: "That was hard work, right up until the point Alan and Tom had their little coming together.

"The fact that [Jonathan] Greensmith was up there as well and we were in a four-car train for three quarters of the race was immense."

"I suppose you can't really go by the first event but it's so close that it's hard to imagine it would be any different anywhere else, if not closer."

He reflected: "I suppose you can't really go by the first event but it's so close that it's hard to imagine it would be any different anywhere else, if not closer.

"I'm pleased I've won the second race of the season and if we continue with different drivers winning it will be great for the championship."

The 28-year-old added: "It's also great that we are as much mates as we are rivals. It's

Alan Henderson and Tom Roche head the field into Riches at the start of a hugely entertaining race.



nice to get so close in a race and push each other to the absolute limit, and then be able to have a beer together in the evenings."

Second-placed Alan Henderson confessed: "I had a misfire on the car. On the way to the assembly area the car cut out completely. We wiggled a few wires around and fortunately it came back to life. I was lucky to make it to the end of the race to be honest as every now and then you could feel it hiccuping.

"It was good hard racing, yes there was that little bump with Tom, which put him out, but I think it was just a racing incident."

Looking forward the reigning champion predicted: "I think it will be a tough challenge this year, there's work to do on the car to get the best out of the tyres, but it's the same for everybody. I think we might see things open up, we really don't know what's coming in the next few rounds.

"It will be entertaining racing I think, as long as we can keep it on the track and keep it clean."

Third placed Jonathan Greensmith enthused: "It's hard work keeping up with these young 'uns."

The 41-year-old continued: "Having four of us nose-to-tail is like the good old days, plus I think Liam's going to be there in a couple of races and I wouldn't be surprised to see eight of us battling it out later in the year.

"I'm really enjoying it, I'm a lot happier with the car but I didn't quite have enough to really give it some.

"Although I did get past Alan briefly but then either something happened to the car or it was my lack of experience and I went off.

"Overall, I'm really happy with third."

A frustrated Tom Roche explained his demise: "Under the bridge turning into Brundle was the only place to overtake really.

"I don't think he would have meant to do it but it was unnecessary contact and it's taken me out of the race."

"I don't know if Alan locked up under braking or just ran a bit wide but he made contact with me and it broke my wheel. I'm a bit annoyed, because we all passed each other under there and gave each other room and then towards the end of the race I think Alan knew that if I'd have got past I'd have caught James.

"I don't think he would have meant to do it but it was unnecessary contact and it's taken me out of the race.

"This new type of wheel is supposed to be

Carl Garnett on his way to an impressive seventh position.



David Willoughby heads David Henderson.



stronger but it certainly lost that battle!

"It's a real shame, my car felt quickest but once I'd got in front there was a hell of a tow so I never really got away.

"It's probably more competitive than before, given how even the cars are."

While it was exciting at the sharp end, once again there was notable strength in depth with many close battles through out the field.

It all bodes well for possibly the most competitive season ever in the BRSCC MX-5 SuperCup.

Henderson leads the table by a single point heading into the Anglesey triple-header.

"Having four of us nose-to-tail is like old days, plus I think Liam's going to be there in a couple of races and I wouldn't be surprised to see eight of us battling it out later in the year."

This meeting has now been given extra significance, as the driver heading the standings following the visit to North Wales will be invited to compete in the prestigious MX-5 European Cup Final in Barcelona in July.

Three lucky drivers will then win a chance to race in the Mazda MX-5 Global Cup at the legendary Laguna Seca circuit in California later in the year.



Race winner James Blake-Baldwin takes it on the chin from Alan Henderson and Jonathan Greensmith.



Geoff Gouriet.

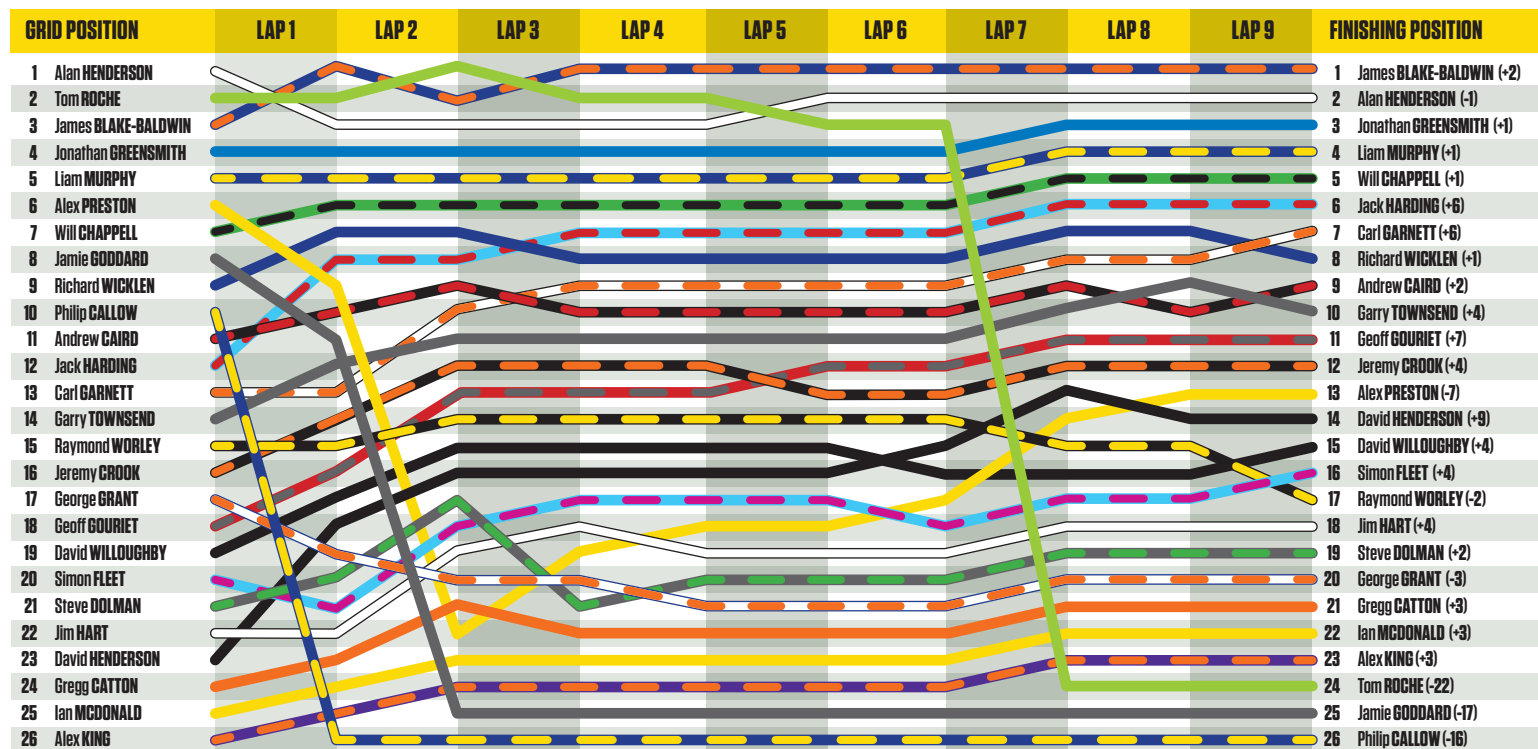


Andrew Caird.



Garry Townsend.

DRIVER TRACKER





Tom Roche, James Blake-Baldwin, Alan Henderson and Jonathan Greensmith ran this close for three quarters of the race.



Steve Dolman.



Alex King and Ian McDonald chase Gregg Catton and Jim Hart.



Liam Murphy on his way to fourth.

RACE 2 RESULT

FASTEST LAP

DRIVER: JAMES BLAKE-BALDWIN LAP 7 TIME: 2:16.280 SPEED: 78.42 MPH

POSITION	NUMBER	DRIVER	CAR	LAPS	RACE TIME	GAP	DIFFERENCE	AVERAGE MPH	BEST LAP TIME	BEST LAP
1	2	James BLAKE-BALDWIN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	20:37.969			77.70	2:16.280	7
2	1	Alan HENDERSON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	20:42.056	4.087	4.087	77.44	2:16.442	2
3	5	Jonathan GREENSMITH	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	20:46.352	8.383	4.296	77.17	2:16.546	2
4	3	Liam MURPHY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	20:56.830	18.861	10.478	76.53	2:17.576	2
5	4	Will CHAPPELL	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:01.070	23.101	4.240	76.27	2:18.264	2
6	43	Jack HARDING	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:03.353	25.384	2.283	76.14	2:18.468	9
7	19	Carl GARNETT	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:05.197	27.228	1.844	76.02	2:18.287	6
8	76	Richard WICKLEN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:05.742	27.773	0.545	75.99	2:18.690	8
9	15	Andrew CAIRD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:14.538	36.569	8.796	75.47	2:18.669	5
10	89	Garry TOWNSEND	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:15.589	37.620	1.051	75.41	2:19.567	5
11	71	Geoff GOURIET	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:15.695	37.726	0.106	75.40	2:19.897	6
12	77	Jeremy CROOK	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:20.277	42.308	4.582	75.13	2:20.141	6
13	32	Alex PRESTON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:25.790	47.821	5.513	74.81	2:19.183	5
14	36	David HENDERSON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:28.964	50.995	3.174	74.62	2:21.165	6
15	41	David WILLOUGHBY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:33.490	55.521	4.526	74.36	2:21.503	4
16	21	Simon FLEET	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:33.559	55.590	0.069	74.36	2:20.092	5
17	40	Raymond WORLEY	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:34.369	56.400	0.810	74.31	2:20.693	4
18	27	Jim HART	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:38.904	1:00.935	4.535	74.05	2:21.553	5
19	52	Steve DOLMAN	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:39.161	1:01.192	0.257	74.04	2:20.758	5
20	69	George GRANT	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	21:58.156	1:20.187	18.995	72.97	2:24.262	4
21	13	Gregg CATTON	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	22:13.410	1:35.441	15.254	72.14	2:25.582	6
22	85	Ian McDONALD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	22:23.432	1:45.463	10.022	71.60	2:25.354	9
23	152	Alex KING	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	9	22:54.988	2:17.019	31.556	69.95	2:27.890	8
24	5	Tom ROCHE	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	8	22:04.053	1Lap	1Lap	64.57	2:16.305	4
DNF	91	Jamie GOODARD	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	1	2:29.299	8 Laps	7Laps	71.58	2:29.299	1
DNF	44	Philip CALLOW	Mazda MX-5 Mk3	0						

SNETTERTON: Trophy winner's gallery

ROUND ONE



1st: Alan HENDERSON



2nd: Tom ROCHE



3rd: James BLAKE-BALDWIN

BRSCC Mazda MX-5 **SuperCup2016**

CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

1	Alan HENDERSON	198	198
2	James BLAKE-BALDWIN	197	197
3	Jonathan GREENSMITH	190	190
4	Liam MURPHY	186	186
5	Will CHAPPELL	180	180
6	Richard WICKLEN	170	170
7	Jack HARDING	168	168
8	Alex PRESTON	166	166
9	Carl GARNETT	164	164
10	Andrew CAIRD	164	164
11	Garry TOWNSEND	156	156
12	Tom ROCHE	153	153
13	Jeremy CROOK	148	148
14	Geoff GOURIET	146	146
15	Ray WORLEY	140	140
16	David WILLOUGHBY	136	136
17	Simon FLEET	132	132
18	David HENDERSON	130	130
19	George GRANT	130	130
20	Jim HART	124	124
21	Steve DOLMAN	124	124
22	Gregg CATTON	114	114
23	Ian McDONALD	110	110
24	Alex KING	106	106
25	Jamie GODDARD	86	86
26	Phillip GALLOW	82	82



ROUND TWO



1st: James BLAKE-BALDWIN



2nd: Alan HENDERSON



3rd: Jonathan GREENSMITH

NEXT MEETING: ANGLESEY, 7th & 8th May 2016

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