

PlayStation Ginetta Junior Rounds 3 & 4: Silverstone



Nigel Moore makes it 4 wins out of 4 races with another double-race win at Silverstone this weekend 21st / 22nd July 2007.



Newcomer Kieran Vernon shines with a podium in race one, but a three-car accident wipes him out of race two, allowing Paul Marsh and Nick Ponting to take their first podiums.



Qualifying:



Heavy rain had cancelled testing yesterday (Friday 20th July) so Saturday morning's practice session was the first time many have seen the Silverstone National circuit.



While it was Nigel Moore who topped the practice timesheets, Nick Ponting would go on to take pole for race one, setting the fastest time in the Saturday afternoon damp qualifying session.

Double Anglesey race-winner Moore could only set a time suitable for 5th for race one, and Dominic Pettit ended his own last-lap fast charge early by skidding off into the gravel and hitting the tyre wall at Copse.



However, his second-best time of 1:29.124 was enough to give him pole for race two.

Kieran Vernon did enough to start both races on the front row in only his second weekend of Ginetta racing, but Fergus Walkinshaw only completed one timed lap, so will start at the back of the grid for race two. Engine problems on his number 91 car left the car parked in the garage for the remainder of the session.

Samantha Thom soon had a taste of Silverstone in the wet, when she spun on the first corner out of the pits into the back of Cassey Watson which temporarily halted the session for short time, but would recover to be the best of the new racers to start in 15th and 14th.



Race 1



Kieran Vernon made a perfect start off the line to lead into Copse ahead of pole-sitter Nick Ponting who was surrounded by cars into the first corner.

Starting from the back of the grid, was Cassey Watson who had a difficult qualifying session in the wet, and got demoted afterwards for being under the specified minimum weight in scrutineering checks after qualifying.

Dominic Pettit and Nigel Moore came together at the start going into the second corner that sent Moore into a spin and down the order to 8th. Meanwhile, Jefferson now in second place and on Vernon's tail, kept applying the pressure by remaining in car 20's slipstream whilst also keeping Pettit honest as closes up.

Fighting back, Moore made up three places on the second lap to 5th place. The three leaders pulled out a gap from number 34, Chris Clayton. But it wasn't too long before Moore - now in the BRDC Stars of tomorrow car - passed Clayton to join in on the leader's battle.

In the battle for the lead, Jefferson took the lead for three laps, Pettit and Vernon swapping places more than once, but all right behind race leader Jefferson.



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On the fifth lap, Vernon took the lead back and in doing so, Pettit followed with Jefferson now in third for a lap until Pettit then became the third place man behind Vernon and Jefferson.

All the time, Moore is bearing down on the leaders and on lap 7, the top 4 drivers are almost side-by-side. Moore and Pettit touch at Luffield - this time sending Pettit into a spin and down to 10th place, and between Luffield and the start / finish straight, Moore is able to pass Jefferson and Vernon to take the lead.

Moore then has to defend, with both Jefferson and Vernon keeping the pressure on. On lap 9, Vernon was only 0.074 seconds behind Moore, and Jefferson only 0.331s behind Vernon.

A last-lap challenge by Jefferson paid off for him to take second place from Vernon who would go on to take third - only half a second separating the top three drivers.

Further down the field, every car completed the 15-minute race distance including Samantha Thom, Michael Rich and Mia Morgan in their first ever race.

Nigel Moore then, makes it three wins out of three starts. "I got spun around going into the second corner" said Moore. "That put me pretty far back, but I was pretty consistent so that's what gained me back and the BRDC car's handling well.

"Kieran has got pretty good power down the straight and was in my slipstream at the end there, but I didn't lose it and was able to just carry on"

Taking his first podium for Ginetta racing, Vernon commented "It's my second race weekend and I'm quite happy to be on the podium. I think I could have won that race, but I didn't realise it was the last lap so may have tried a bit harder on Nigel down into the second corner, but it is a good result anyway and we just need to keep it consistent."

Race 2

Another fantastic battle between the top four drivers of the weekend was on the cards for the second race of this Junior Championship.

Dominic Pettit held his lead off the line with Kieron Vernon right up behind him, but Nigel Moore lost out to James Jefferson who was right back on his first race form now into third place. Nick Ponting from 4th, dropped down to 6th and his IDL Team-mate Tom Sharp up to 5th, lined up to close the gap between himself and Moore.

On the second lap, Jefferson took fastest lap and first place at Brooklands on the inside of Vernon and Pettit, who emerged in third, but Vernon would go on to retake the lead.

On the third passing of the field, Moore led from Tom Sharp and Paul Marsh who had previously got past Chris Clayton and Nick Ponting.

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In another effort to take the lead, Jefferson attempted to pass Vernon back at Brooklands, but the two touched, also causing Pettit to collide with the rear of Vernon's car.

While Jefferson retired to the side of the track with front right damage, Vernon makes it back to the pits, but Pettit continues for a further two laps with extensive bodywork and suspension damage before coming into the pits. He would then receive two points on his racing licences for continuing on the track with such damage.

"I got a good, solid start" said Pettit, "we were coming down the back straight on the third lap. Kieran overtook me going into the left hander, and then James crashed into Kieran and I collected Kieran.

"I wasn't going to give up going 'round, no flags were waved at me, it's just in the end my team told me to come in."

Jefferson added "The lap before, I passed Vernon and Pettit on that bend. I tried it again and thought Kieron saw me. I tried to miss him, but I just tapped him, he spun, I went into the side of him and Dominic hit him as well."

Action continued at the front between Nigel Moore and Tom Sharp - just 0.174 seconds separating them on lap 7, but three laps later, Sharp spun down to 5th place in his pursuit of the race honours.

Nick Ponting was now on track for his first Championship podium, in third place behind Paul Marsh - for whom it would also be his first podium, and their places remained to the flag.

In only her second race, Mia Morgan retired after lap four, unable to recover after a spin due to contact.

In his charge from the back of the grid, Fergus Walkinshaw took a 7th place finish, but Cassey Watson - on a similar charge was two places down in 9th when contact between herself and George Richardson lost her time.

Thomas Carnaby took two mid-place grid slots and two mid-table finishes in a strong weekend for the ever-improving driver. Testing and instruction since Pembrey and Anglesey developing results.

But Nigel Moore took four wins out of four races to extend his championship lead. "You can't ask for much more can you" he said afterwards. "They all went off in front of me so I got the lead, then it was basically just staying consistent and not dropping off."

"It feels great" said an elated Paul Marsh after his first podium ceremony. "We've been on the pace this weekend, been trying really hard. I made a mistake at the start so spent two or three laps trying to block Clayton off and then when that crash happened in front of me, it was like Christmas had come early again - and it was my birthday on Friday as well so a good weekend!"

Just as elated was race one pole-sitter Nick Ponting, getting on the third step of race two's podium: "Qualifying went really well, the first race didn't go so well - mid grid finish, then this race just sat back and watched all the accidents happen in front of me!"

The PlayStation Ginetta Junior championship returns to the Dunlop Great and British events in two weeks time at Donington Park.