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moleracing 2023 season Summer Update

After the big clutch strip down and win at Pembrey, the last report also finished with a head gasket leak test kit being ordered. It turned out that there were combustion gasses pressurising the water system, so an engine out strip down was needed to change the gasket. The radiator was found to have a small weep and so that was repaired and thus eliminating the cause of the overheat and head gasket issue



This was caught early and no damage done, all was well when the test was repeated and we set off for Lydden with confidence.

Lydden

A very windy day at this Kent circuit despite Goodwood Festival of Speed nearby being cancelled. I struggled to find the form I had of the last time we were here just 6 weeks ago and only managed a 4th and 5th place. Chris

Jones was however well on form and won the run off in a sub 1 litre bike engined Force. Some clutch issues hindered my launch with the car creeping on the line slightly. I managed to adjust this out by the end of the day, but something is not right despite all the work!

Kirkistown

The 'summer break' saw 3 weekends off from racing and chance to catch up with friends for lunch out, some 'Giulia Time' and recharge the batteries following 5 days at Silverstone photographing for the IMechE Formula Student event.

I went to Northern Ireland on my own this year, with no extra weeks holiday as Giulia didn't have so much left after Japan recently. The car/clutch ran ok until the last few runs. It was a wet, dry, wet weekend for the 7 contenders that made the exciting, but long trip.

Heavy rain was forecast overnight, and I had travelled with wets on to avoid a change first thing, but the organisers delayed the start an hour or so and with a strong wind I elected to go out on slicks which was the right decision. The day was mainly dry, but lots of oil and cement dust put down to clean up the track. I was pleased with my first run off which was a second place, behind Graham Blackwell. Pete Goulding came out for the 2nd run off with a brand new set of Avon tyres (no Pirellis are being manufactured this year) and won, I managed 3rd with Blackwell between us.



Great meal in the evening at the circuit and a few beers



On the Sunday, we start at midday due to the local church requirements and it makes a relaxed day. The field had halved overnight and runs came thick and fast, needing the leaf blowers on the cars to cool down between runs.

Simon Bainbridge had a turbo signal failure and went to 1000 bhp on his run, and amazingly nothing broke!



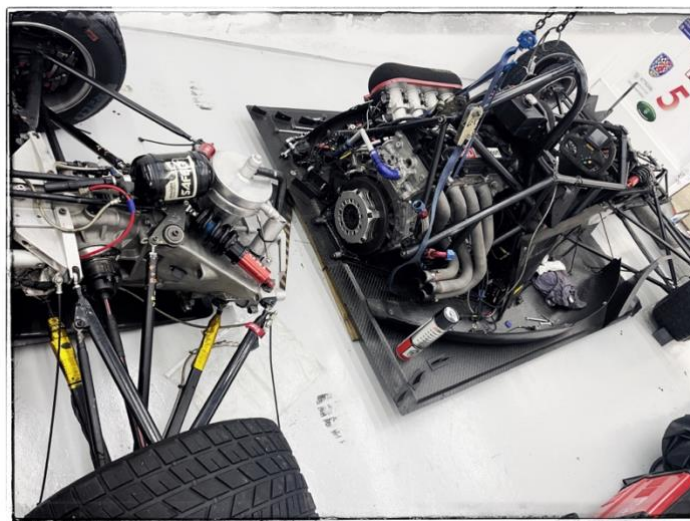
For the run off we switched to wets after an intense short downpour. I pushed too hard and didn't make the chicane, so nil points for me, but not disappointed as we need finishes of 3rd or higher due to dropped scores, so 'do or die' is the motto!

Rain master Bainbridge (shown here) took a storming win on wets some 6 seconds ahead of the Blackwell, Goulding combo and the circuit steamed as the sun came out

At the end of the meeting, the clutch creep started again and back in the paddock I managed to make the clutch release OK with a couple of extra pumps of the pedal. In the garage back home I tried this again and suddenly pedal went, as though the hydraulics had failed somewhere. It needed a full strip of the car again and I found a part of the seal had broken, perhaps severed in my multiple pumping. Anyway, my third trip to Colchester where TTV kindly replaced the seals and at the contact bearing FOC.

Snetterton

I was due to be at Carfest again having been invited back, but despite this invitation in 2022, I wasn't on the list as I didn't receive an email and hence didn't reply, so they thought I wasn't interested. So, a last minute entry to Snetterton was put in in an attempt to score a few more points. Martin came along for a 'retirees motorsport weekend' away before his car is ready for Pembrey. His help much appreciated as always.



With both title contenders above me (Pete at Kirkistown and Graham at Snetterton) having purchased new sets of Avon tyres (Pirelli are not making any this year and are not sure about next year even) I was at a disadvantage, and

Graham certainly made the most of his new set on Saturday winning both run offs but by the end of the day they the fronts were shot and needed replacing. If Avon's only last one day, this is going to become a seriously expensive game next year.



Sleep wasn't too bad at the circuit despite being on the infield of a 24 hour 2CV race going on all night!

The surprising and impressive performance both days was John Loudon who solved season long oil issues and nearly won the Sunday morning run off in his methanol fuelled bike engine car, just 0.04secs behind Pete Goulding. I could only manage another 4th place and was some 2 seconds off my PB. Post event this was diagnosed in excessive rear toe in – no idea why I had put that much on the car.

As we gathered for the final run off of the weekend, my radar showed a heavy shower 8 minutes away, we decided to go for the change to wets despite it being dry much to everyone's surprise, but soon everyone followed and no advantage was to be had – me and my gadgets – too many people believe me!

First away was Graham Blackwell who spun and returned in early, Pete Goulding managed the first lap and set off on his second and then I was released on the track. 2nd corner, I found myself going backwards at 60mph, but did a full 360 for marks that would have done well on Strictly come dancing. I decided to continue to post a time at least, only to promptly spin again two corners later. In the mean time, Pete had spun on the bend just before the finish line and technically I got caught up in his spin and could have had a rerun, but morally that didn't seem right, so I didn't. In the end after the first three cars spinning out, thunder and lightening immediately overhead, the organisers abandoned the meeting as 'too dangerous to run and protect marshals out on track' and then the heavens opened even more as we packed up!



All weekend the clutch was creeping and starts had to be modified as launch didn't work well. A larger master cylinder to move more fluid was fitted back home and finally I appeared to have a working clutch and hopefully all will go well for Pembrey.

Pembrey

Just 5.5 hours this time for the journey to south Wales and a hot weekend was ahead. The biggest incident early on was John Loudon's rapidly improving force putting two conrods through the block.

Steve Broughton had missed a few events getting the SBD DJ Firestorm better and absolutely nailed the first day, taking a class record and two run off wins from the lightweight 1.4litre machine. A small clutch adjustment after practice for me with a warm clutch, but now with the cylinder a larger diameter, the system did have actual adjustment and it worked for the rest of the weekend and I think my season long issues are over!



I was pleased with 2nd place in the run off, just over 4 tenths behind Steve and also ahead of the Ecoboosts. On the final run off of the day, Steve won again and not quite so good for me but still a 3rd place which moved me closer in the championship standings.



I confess to a beer or two too many that evening in the heat of the day and a 3.30 finish and being a happy chappy! Hangover or not, the following morning saw a wet practice and then the first run off on a very damp track, but I elected for slicks and amazingly posted a time that no one bettered to take the win! Maybe more beers, more often?..... and to wrap up the weekend, a 3rd in the pouring rain this time with Simon Bainbridge taking his customary 'very wet track' win.

Off for a quick 'Safari' holiday now before heading to Blyton Park on the 23rd/24th September to hopefully maintain that 3rd position overall and keep the pressure on every one else, perhaps even capitalising on any mishaps/spins/minor offs from others. Will the pressure at the top tell – why not come along to Lincolnshire and watch.....

Cheers
Steve/Smiles

British Sprint Championship 2023 after round 6		
Pete Goulding	1.6T Mygale FF200 Ecoboost	443
Graham Blackwell	1.6T Mygale Ecoboost	435
Steve Miles	2.0 Van Diemen RF96mm2020	429
John Loudon	1.1 Force TA	390
Steve Broughton	1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004	386
Simon Bainbridge	4.2 Chrono V8 TT	364
Grahame Harden	1.3 Radical PR6	355
Simon Wallis	1.1 OMS 3000M	352
Carole Torkington	1.5 OMS CF08	319
Nicholas Scott	1.6 Force TA	296
Matt Hillam	1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004	227
Chris Jones	1.0 Force TA	195
Nick Houston	1.0 OMS Hornet	115
Zoe Kingham	Westfield/1.4 DJ Firehawk CT004	114
Robert Tonge	1.4 Force TA	81
Martin Pickles	1.0 Jedi Mk 1	79
Steve Brown	1.3S Empire Evo2	61
John Munro	1.4 OMS CF07	54
Graham Porrett	1.1 OMS 2000	
Mark Anson	1.1 Jedi Mk6	
In 2023 there are now 41 rounds with the best 18 scores to count		

Schedule & Results 23		Overall	Run Offs
26 March	Cadwell	2 nd / 100	2 nd & 2 nd 😊
2 April	Anglesey Nat	1 st / 120	12 th & 1 st 😊
30 April	Anglesey Int	4 th / 120	3 rd & 4 th 😊
14 May	Blyton Eastern	2 nd / 110	3 rd & 2 nd 😊
15 May	Blyton Outer	3 rd / 110	13 th & 2 nd 😊
20 May	Lydden	4 th / 120	2 nd & 1 st 😊
3 June	Pembrey	5 th / 80	6 th & 2 nd 😊
4 June	Pembrey	4 th / 80	4 th & 1 st 😊
15 July	Lydden	4 th /85	4 th & 5 th 😊
5 August	Kirkistown	6 th /100	2 nd & 3 rd 😊
6 August	Kirkistown	5 th /50	DNF & 3 rd 😊
26 Aug	Snetterton	4 th /100	4 th & 4 th 😊
27 Aug	Snetterton	4 th /80	4 th & 4 th 😊
9 Sept	Pembrey	3 rd /55	2 nd & 3 rd 😊
10 Sept	Pembrey	3 rd /46	1 st & 3 rd 😊
23 Sept	Blyton Park		
24 Sept	Blyton Park		
30 Sept	Anglesey		
1 Oct	Anglesey		
8 Sept	Knockhill		
14 Oct	Castle Combe		