

## 2018 1/12th Coventry Championships



### Report by Stuart Clarke

*The electrifying sound of stockcar racing around the iconic Brandon stadium may have had it's final day for the time being.. But on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, Coventry finally seen a return to stockcar racing for the first time in over a year.. Even if that may have been on a smaller scale version!*

*38 drivers made the trip to Bedworth's ex servicemen's club on a very chilly Sunday morning to compete in the Coventry championship. The event, which has been running since 1981 was opened up to any driver in the 12<sup>th</sup> section to compete in which enticed numerous drivers from far and wide which included 11 drivers from Urmston and the 1 ginger bearded man from Fordham!*

*The day started off with a 45 minute practice session for drivers to get their cars dialled in ready for what turned out to be a very action packed day with key battles progressing during the afternoon with plenty of bumper work included. After practice was concluded, a quick driver's briefing was then discussed by Rob Teuke.. His first main event that he has ran since becoming Rugby's new man in charge and from the responses that I overheard during the day, it looked like he and the rest of the team done a fantastic job running the meeting.*

*Next up was the concourse.. A chance for the driver's to show off their new bodyshells and an opportunity for some to try and give the big boys a clue what the plan of action was during the meeting (As shown in the photo below).*



*In the line up for the event, we had one of the more regular faces around the circuit in the name of Jon Cutts #53.. A three times winner of this event with his first win being all the way back in 1983.. Most probably even before half of Sunday's line up were even born!! We also had one of the favourites for the meeting Rugby's Matthew Bennett #413 (Pictured below) Who was the current title holder for the Coventry championship and he was looking to make it a hat-trick of wins after his recent spells on the top spot in this event in both 2014 and 2016.*



*Clive Buckler #100, a two times champion of this event, was also in attendance. He said recently on Facebook "It was good to see the Coventry Championships take a step forward. In 1981 (when this championship came about) there were no, British, World, or Euro championships, there was a National title. So to see it being accepted as a national championship, with its own recognized roof colour is just brilliant. Thank you".*

*The concourse winner went to Rugby's Jamie Collins #97 with his bright green glowing bodyshell (As pictured below). Unfortunately for Jamie, that was the only thing he was to win during the day after failing to make the semi finals after the qualification scores were calculated. He did however show one or two drivers what racing at Rugby is all about after some brutal races during the afternoon which never failed to disappoint!*



## Round one

*After the concourse was completed, round one was fast approaching.. The format for the day's racing was a set of qualification rounds where every driver had 4 heats with their best 3 lap scores to count towards their qualifying position. The top two drivers at the end of the 4 rounds would progress automatically to the final with the next 16 drivers competing in 2 semi finals where the top 3 from each of them were to qualify for an 8 car final.*

*The pace was set early on with Manchester's Anthony Wyper #30 leading the way after the first couple of heats before Stuart Clarke #150 beat his score by 1 lap. This wasn't to last too long after Matt Bennett #413 topped the table after his first heat with a comfortable 98 laps and his first win of the day.*

*Urmston's newest world junior champion Dylan Ashurst #55 had a difficult first heat with numerous issues with his car meaning he was way down the pecking order after his first round. Alan Woodward #64 was unable to start his first heat after technical difficulties in the pits even before he had chance to race! His daughter, Sophie Woodward #154.. A new comer to stockcar racing didn't have too much luck either with a car in very tricky conditions to race with.... Yet alone for a newbie!*

*Rugby's Stu Harding #164 didn't have the best of days either after countless issues with his car only really having the one good heat during his qualification rounds.. His daughter, Chloe Harding #709.. The youngest driver to race on Sunday earned a creditable 65 laps in her first heat which was her best during the day.*

*There was one final father and daughter duo in action on Sunday with Urmston's Anthony Wyper #30 and Leah Wyper #107 both in attendance also. Leah, very much following in her father's footsteps certainly had a successful day's racing in my eyes after managing almost 80+ laps in every race she was in. Well done Leah!*

*There wasn't too many shock results in the first set of heats however two Rugby driver's didn't have the best of days racing. One of them was youngster Brandon O'Neill #555. A broken baseplate even before the start of racing was the least of his issues! I think he spent more time cleaning up his tyre truer mess at the end of the meeting than he did race!! Better luck next time Brandon. Alan Greig #260 had the worst day of everyone without a single race completed after a major issue in his first race of the day.*



*In the picture, one of the 3 father and daughter duo's racing at the event. Stu Harding (Pictured left) and daughter Chloe Harding (Pictured right).*

## **Round two**

Round two had one or two little shocks in the next set of heats with Rugby's Stuart Clarke #150 having a broken steering after a collision with fellow Rugby driver Stu Harding #164 and eventually losing out on plenty of laps. The same heat also encountered issues for Ryan Malt #120 after a sensor lead issue during practice before the race started. This resulted in Ryan missing the start of the race and leaving him pressurised to get the laps in his remaining heats. Fordham's Jim Burkett #546 also had an issue in his second outing after his steering servo broke during his race. Luckily for the sole Fordham driver, he had a good first round lap score to give him a slight chance at making the semi finals.

The main man of the hour Urmston's Anthony Wyper #30 strolled to victory in his second heat beating Rugby's Matt Bennett #413 by one lap. Dylan Ashurst #55 was a couple of laps off the pair, however after his first heat issues this was a positive result in the young man's favour setting him up for his remaining two heats. World champion Rob Teuke #14 was slowly coming into play after a heat win in his second outing with 93 laps. Rob Walley #919 wasn't too far behind Rob with 92 laps which was a slight improvement to his first heat. Both however looking in a comfortable position to qualify for the semi finals.

## **Round three**

The laps were certainly starting to improve heat by heat with numerous drivers managing to improve on their last two heat results. Once again, Anthony Wyper #30 led the way with the highest laps so far on the day with 101 laps closely followed by Matthew Bennett #413 with 100. Dylan Ashurst #55 managed 99 laps.. His best score of the day so far along with Stuart Clarke #150 also getting his highest laps of the day.

Rob Teuke #14 was improving heat by heat with 90,93 and 95 laps in his opening 3 races.. Easily cruising into the semi finals for sure. Rob Walley #919 was very much on the same path as Rob with 90,92 and 94 in his heats. The Eccles brothers Brandon #531 and James #532 were both walking into the semi finals with consistent race results during their 3 heats a piece. Gary Osborne #218 was another driver who had been consistent in his opening rounds which seen him easily get into the semi finals with a race to spare.

Plenty of drivers were comfortably strolling into the semi finals which included the two older racers at Rugby Clive Buckler #100 and Jon Cutts #53. Owen Bates #515, Billy Clague #163 and Ryan Cattell were the other drivers who you could probably say were safely through to the semi finals with a race to spare. However, for everyone else the semi finals were fast approaching and A brief break for lunch gave everyone the chance to look back on the results so far and grab a bite to eat.

## Round four

Last chance time! With quite a few driver's already safely through to the semi finals without any major upsets, there was only a small number of driver's that could earn the last couple of spots in either of the two semi finals. The malt brothers Ryan #120 and Josh #121 both needed a decent result in their final outing and they certainly did just that with the pair of them both beating their current lowest laps after their three previous results. This meant that both Ryan and Josh qualified for the semi finals with the younger brother of the two qualifying in 16<sup>th</sup> with just three laps separating the two of them as Josh qualified in 17<sup>th</sup> to earn his spot in the 1<sup>st</sup> semi final grid.

Clive Buckler #100 was another driver who needed a good result in his last heat of the four rounds and he proved his quality with his joint highest score of the day to earn his semi final spot in 11<sup>th</sup>. Urmston's Billy Clague #163 was another driver in consistent form during the day as he earned his position in 9<sup>th</sup> place on the day. Josh Smith #191, Gary Osborne #218, Owen Bates #515, Brandon Eccles #531 were other drivers who bettered their original lowest score in their final race which allowed each of them to eventually complete the line up for the two semi finals.

Only one place remained to qualify in 18<sup>th</sup> place.. The last spot for one of the remaining non-qualifiers to snatch in a last gasp chance and it was none other than Fordham's Jim Burkett #546 who bettered his second race score to earn the last qualification spot on the day after beating Rugby's young gun Scott Darvill #173 by one lap after all rounds were completed. Not too many shock exits in the qualification rounds occurred however Urmston's Peter Ashurst #46, father to Dylan #55 did miss out however after a difficult meeting. Stu Harding #164, Mark Craig #141 and Ian Bingham #391 were a number of drivers to miss out on the day also.

The full qualification results can be seen below.

Car No.	Drivers Name	Round1 Laps	Round2 Laps	Round3 Laps	Round4 Laps	Best	Pos	SEMI 1
						3		
4	Rob Coleman	69	73	72	74	219		
14	Rob Teuke	90	93	95	96	284	4	
30	Anthony Wyper	96	99	101	98	298	1	
46	Pete Ashurst	81	86	83	81	250		
53	Jon Cutts	89	92	85	92	273	13	6-8
55	Dylan Ashurst	67	95	99	89	283	5	1-9
64	Alan Woodward	-	41	-	41	82		
97	Jamie Collins	84	84	76	78	246		
100	Clive Buckler	82	90	97	92	274	11	7-8
105	Loz Collins	74	70	78	77	229		
107	Leah Wyper	79	83	84	80	247		
120	Ryan Malt	91	77	91	86	268	16	
121	Josh Malt	93	89	75	83	265	7	4-8
141	Mark Craig	88	86	73	75	249		
150	Stuart Clarke	97	82	98	97	292	3	2-8
154	Sophie Woodward	34	-	-	49	83		
163	Billy Clague	82	89	93	93	273	9	
164	Stu Harding	71	84	62	33	217		
165	Michael Clague	78	81	67	75	234		8-8
169	Alan Harding	73	68	81	75	229		
173	Scott Darvill	86	85	90	87	263		
191	Josh Smith	84	95	77	89	268	15	3-8
192	Max Harding	87	86	86	81	259		
197	Craig Charles	71	79	69	65	219		
218	Gary Osborne	92	89	86	92	273	12	
244	Simon Hartley	75	81	76	77	237		
260	Alan Greig	9	-	-	-	9		
391	Ian Bingham	84	86	86	80	256		
413	Matt Bennett	98	98	100	95	296	2	
515	Owen Bates	86	92	92	94	278	7	5-8
531	Brandon Eccles	89	93	90	95	278	6	
532	James Eccles	93	87	93	88	274	10	
546	Jim Burkett	97	44	97	81	264	18	
555	Brandon O'Neill	30	65	84	39	208		
629	Alfie Jones	81	85	87	72	253		
709	Chloe Harding	65	61	1	53	179		
904	Ryan Cattell	95	88	86	87	270	14	
919	Rob Wallev	90	92	94	66	276	8	

### **Semi final one**

*The grid for the first semi final had a front row of Stuart Clarke #150 as the pole sitter with Dylan Ashurst #55 starting just beside him. Owen Bates #515 and Billy Clague #163 formed row two with the two golden oldies from Rugby just behind them in the names of #100 Clive Buckler and #53 Jon Cutts. Josh Smith #191 and Josh Malt #121 started the semi final at the back of the 8 car grid.*

*An early get away from Dylan Ashurst meant that he was in pole position to qualify for the main final. Stuart Clarke was very much up there all during the race however a broken bodyshell half way through the race meant a difficult spell for him to maintain his position.. Luckily enough part of the bodyshell split and allowed him to continue the race with no more issues! The race started to become scrappy with everyone trying their hardest to make the top 3 and a surprise late finish by Josh Smith #191 allowed him to earn the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final spot in the semi final top 3. Josh Malt #121 was next closest however trailed short to Josh by 3 laps. Owen Bates #515 finished 5<sup>th</sup>, with Jon Cutts #53<sup>th</sup> in 6<sup>th</sup> beating Clive Buckler #100 in 7<sup>th</sup> and Billy Clague #163 in 8<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Semi final two**

*The world champion Rob Teuke #14 was at the front of the grid for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semi final of the day with Brandon Eccles #531 started next to him on the front row. Rob Walley #919 and Brandon's younger brother James Eccles #532 started on row two with Gary Osborne #218 and Ryan Cattell #904 on the third row. The final row consisted of Rugby's Ryan Malt #120 and Fordham's Jim Burkett #546.. Straight away, this looked the trickier of the two semi finals with each of the driver's all had consistent race pace.. A difficult top 3 to choose from!*

*All the drivers got off to a fairly even start as the race was very smoothly ran with everybody giving it all they had to beat the opposition. However after the 5 minutes ran out and the buzzer sounded for the end of the race there was only 6 laps separating 1<sup>st</sup> place and 8<sup>th</sup>! WRD man Rob Walley #919 who was the winner of semi final two after beating world champion Rob Teuke #14 after both finishing on the same number of laps. Brandon Eccles #531 managed to earn the last spot for the final with a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish pipping Ryan Cattell #904 to the line with the same laps also. Ryan Malt #120 also finished on the same number of laps as both Brandon and Ryan, however a 5<sup>th</sup> place finish was all that he could get!*

*6<sup>th</sup> place went to #218 Gary Osborne with Jim Burkett #546 and James Eccles #532 finishing in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. A very close semi final just shown how tough the competition was and with the grand final just around the corner, it made everyone realise there wouldn't be much difference in winning the final and coming last in it!*

### **All comers race**

*Before the grand final, an all comers race took place which included 10 non qualifiers to have one last race for the day. Myself personally, I was rather busy trying to fix my shell in time for the final and never got chance to check out the racing but from the sounds of it there was a fair bit of bumper work involved.. Then again, what do you expect when you have a 10 car race!!*

## Coventry Championship 2018 Final



**Photo – From left to right..** Dylan Ashurst #55, Stuart Clarke #150, Rob Walley #919, Brandon Eccles #531, Rob Teuke #14, Josh Smith #191, Anthony Wyper #30 and Matthew Bennett #413

*Final time! Anthony Wyper started as the pole man with his main rival and retaining champion Matthew Bennett just to the right of him. Young Dylan Ashurst started on row two with Rob Walley and Rob Teuke and Stuart Clarke formed row three. Bringing up the rear was Josh Smith and Brandon Eccles.. A very tough line up indeed!*

*An early get away from Anthony and Matt allowed them to gain some space between themselves and the rest of the field with Stuart and Dylan very close behind. Bumpers were certainly flying in from everywhere to try and make the competition realise that they weren't in for an easy ride! Rob Teuke had steering issues during the race which unfortunately put the world champion out of contention early on. Brandon was certainly getting into a fair bit of trouble as he tried to get past the field however with plenty of bumper work from Stuart and Dylan made it very tricky for him to find a way through easy.*

*However in the end quality eventually came through as Urmston's Anthony Wyper beat Rugby's Matthew Bennett by one lap in a thrilling stockcar race with 97 laps. 3<sup>rd</sup> place went to Rob Walley, a very positive result for the WRD man after he kept his nose clean during the race. 4<sup>th</sup> place went to Dylan Ashurst with Josh Smith earning a respectful 5<sup>th</sup> place. 6<sup>th</sup> place went to Stuart Clarke after probably spending more time using the bumper rather than getting the laps in! 7<sup>th</sup> place went to Brandon who certainly had a tricky day for his own high standards with the unfortunate Rob Teuke finishing in last place... If only it was raced in Holland Rob!!*

*So many congratulations goes to the man in form right now Anthony Wyper #30 I'm sure he was glad after beating his main rival... For once! Also congratulations goes to Craig Charles #197 for winning the top white grade award, Billy Clague #163 winning the top yellow grade award, Ryan Malt #120 winning top blue grade award and to Dylan Ashurst #55 winning the top junior trophy. Thankyou to everyone that made the day what it was and I'm sure we will see you all soon for Rugby's national in just over a month's time!*



*Rob Walley #919 3<sup>rd</sup> Place*



*Matthew Bennett #413 2<sup>nd</sup> Place*

*Anthony Wyper #30 1<sup>st</sup> Place*





*Graham Eccles (Father to Brandon and James) recently said on Facebook "Great meeting at Bedworth for the F1 Coventry Regional Championship. Well done and thanks to everyone. The Rugby guys always remind us what stockcar racing is all about. Young James (Eccles #532) was destroyed in one heat but thanks to signs by Mark (Craig #141) he was back out again soon.*

*Urmston's Mark Craig #141 also said on Facebook "What a cracking day at the Rugby stockcar clubs Coventry champs. 37 drivers, great track, lots of tech talk and most all of lots of banter. Thankyou to everyone from Rugby".*

*Rugby's Stuart Clarke said "Good to see some familiar faces today at the meeting, disappointed I couldn't get going in the final but I certainly played a part in making it a real stockcar race with the front bumper! Congratulations Anthony on the win and thankyou once again to all the people who made the day happen".*



*Race report by Stuart Clarke #150*