



Rory Butcher impressed on his first ever BTCC outing in the third Focus at Knockhill

MOTORBASE / FOCUS BTCC

BACK IN ACTION

After the summer break the Team Shredded Wheat Racing with Duo Focus STs are back on track battling hard...

Photos: Matt Sayle



After a brief spell away from the race track, the second half of the 2017 BTCC got underway at Snetterton recently. We enjoyed a successful tyre test at the same track a couple

of weeks before, so the team was quietly confident heading to Norfolk for rounds 16, 17, and 18.

Unfortunately mechanical gremlins cost Mat Jackson during Saturday's qualifying session, meaning he started Sunday's first race from P13. Starting from the middle of the pack is always tricky, and contact on lap two saw Mat drop to 19th. A spirited drive saw him fight back to P11 by the chequered flag to earn some vital points.

A trademark fast start in race two

saw Mat claw his way to P6 by the end of the first lap. He then endured some close battles throughout the race, before a clever move past Jack Goff jumped the #3 Focus to P4 on the penultimate lap. The third and final race was fraught as usual, with Mat starting from P5 after the reverse grid draw. Mat did well to avoid the carnage on the opening lap, but did take a hit from the side on lap 2, forcing him down to 7th. Again, Mat enjoyed some close racing, and

when the opportunity to sneak up the inside of Matt Neale and James Cole presented itself on lap 5, he duly made the most of it bringing the Focus home in P4 for a second time, and claiming a second Independent race win of the day.

Meanwhile, Martin Depper's weekend proved to be a slow-burner; making progress from P30 starting place in race one to his highest place finish of P17 in race three.

Team manager, Oly Collins,



The team built a third Focus in record time to get ready for Knockhill



FAST FLEET

said: "The weekend finished up pretty well for us in the end. When you end qualifying out of position this season, it makes for a very difficult race day, but both drivers did very well and we've strengthened our Indy lead this weekend."

The team then headed north to Knockhill for the next three rounds of the Championship. The big news for us here was that we fielded three cars again; former Motorbase GT driver (and Knockhill regular) Rory Butcher piloted the freshly-built third

Focus (which the team managed to build from scratch in just a couple of weeks!) in front of his home crowd.

And what a debut weekend for Rory in the BTCC! Finding his feet and getting a feel for the 'elbows-out' nature of the BTCC in the first race, race two saw the rookie charge through the pack to finish P10, earning a points finish in just his second ever BTCC race!

Things looked like they were going to get better for race three when it looked like Rory had been drawn to

start from pole position! However, after Josh Price was excluded from the race two result Rory was promoted to P9, which meant he was then demoted to P2 for the start of race three. Still, a courageous battle to the flag saw Rory claim another P9 finish.

Knockhill started in disappointment for Mat Jackson when an uncharacteristic mechanical issue meant his first race was over before it had even begun. This meant he had to start from the very back of the field in

race two, but after a spirited drive he fought his way past 14 cars to finish 17th. Yet another hard charge in the final race of the weekend saw Mat overtake another 10 cars to finish P7.

The results from Snetterton and Knockhill leave us sitting second in the Independent Teams Standings (just 10 points off the leaders), sixth in the overall Team Standings, and with Mat sitting second in the Independent Drivers table too.

Next up, Rockingham Speedway, and hopefully more trophies...

Rory Butcher enjoyed an excellent BTCC debut, securing two top-10 finishes and earning a Jack Sears Trophy win too



Mat Jackson suffered a few mechanical issues, but still managed to increase his points tally

