



Mat Jackson earned a hard-fought 2nd place at Rockingham and a points-scoring P10 at Silverstone

**MOTORBASE / FOCUS BTCC**

# UPS AND DOWNS

Mixed emotions for the Motorbase crew after conflicting results at Rockingham and Silverstone recently...

Photos: Matt Sayle



We headed to Rockingham lying second in the Independents Championship, just 10 points off the lead, so our goal for the weekend was clear – leave Rockingham in the lead! And thanks to a stellar drive from the guys that's exactly what we did!

Mat Jackson started Race 1 in P11 (despite posting a lap time less than half a second off the pole sitter's best, showing just how close the grid is these days) and a fantastic flying start saw the #3 Focus up into P8 by the first corner. A strong drive then saw Mat eventually cross the line in P7, with both Rory Butcher and Martin Depper struggling with the harder

tyre in the first race.

Race 2 saw Mat starting from 7th, and another trademark flying start saw him move straight up to P4. Another clean pass saw Mat slot in third before a reckless lunge from Josh Cook forced him off the track, having to take evasive action to avoid a race-ending accident! Having dropped to fourth as a result, Mat was able to take full advantage when Cook later collided with Matt Neale too, taking both cars out of the race and promoting Mat to P2! A defensive masterclass saw Mat keep the hard-charging BMW of Colin Turkington behind him so he could claim second spot and secure his 6th Indy win of the season.

These results, coupled with further points from Race 3, saw us leave Rockingham with a nine-point lead in the Indy Championship. But then, bad luck hit three weeks later at Silverstone...

Changeable weather conditions made it very tricky during Saturday's qualifying session, but an outstanding start in Race 1 saw Mat leap from his P17 starting position to P9 by the end of lap 1. Mat fought hard, eventually taking P5 from Turkington and catching Matt Neal's Honda. Unfortunately, heavy contact between the Civic and Focus resulted in Mat picking up a puncture that all but ended his race.

Race 2 was a similar story, and despite starting from P24 as a result of the disappointment from the first race Mat soon found himself in P14 and setting the fastest lap at that point in the race! But a heavy shunt from behind ended his race and any hopes we had for a top 10 finish and possible reverse grid draw for Race 3.

The third and final race of the day was the most successful of the weekend, with Mat fighting his way from the back of the field to

earn a P10 finish. But despite the tremendous efforts from the entire team and all three drivers, we still leave Silverstone with a distinct feeling of 'what if...' hanging over us.

Still, there's no time to ponder in motorsport – racing is racing. So we're dusting ourselves down and getting ready to put on a strong showing at the final race of the year at Brands Hatch next time out...

