



MOTORBASE FOCUS BTCC

SEASON SIGN-OFF

The Motorbase crew end the 2017 season with an Independent Win...



The changeable weather conditions at Brands Hatch posed all the teams a bit of a puzzle when it came to tyre choice for Sunday's opening race. For us, both Mat Jackson and Martin Depper opted for slicks, while highest-place qualifier (P12) Rory Butcher decided to gamble with wets. Initially it looked like a wise move, but as the track dried out it soon favoured those running slicks. This was good news for Mat, who carved his way through the field from his P15 starting position to P5 by the end of lap 3! He then set his sights on P4 on the next lap, but unfortunately the gap to the leading trio proved a step too far to catch before the end of the race, finishing fourth.

Mat then repeated his stellar performance in the second race of the day, and for a brief spell it looked like a fairy-tale ending could be on the cards as Mat moved past Ash Sutton and Tom Ingram into P2, and started closing the gap on Aiden Moffat in the lead. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be, and despite his best efforts Mat came under pressure from the fast-charging Hondas

and had to concede a couple of spots, taking a second P4 finish of the day and a 7th Independent win of the season. "Race 2 was mega. We were out at the front for most of the race before getting muscled out of it which was frustrating, but the car had great pace," Mat says, "The tricky conditions I think played into our hands. It helped to even out the playing field and throws the BoP out of the window."

We then headed into Race 3 with a mathematical chance of retaining the Independent Teams' crown, but we needed to rely on a DNF from Tom Ingram's Speedworks Motorsport Toyota to stand a chance. Mat made a storming start, into P4 on the opening lap, and then slipping past Ingram into P3 on lap 2. But any hope of keeping the title soon faded when Ingram abruptly pushed Mat onto the wet grass, as Mat swerved back onto the track he collided with Championship challenger, Colin Turkington, who was unfortunately forced to retire from the race. Mat managed to fight his way back to P7, but it wasn't the way he, or any of the team, wanted to end the 2017 season.

Brands proved equally as difficult for Mat's teammates, Martin and Rory, but the duo displayed an heroic performance in the final race of the season, making their way through the field. Martin's P23 finish didn't tell the full story, as he was running as high as P14 at the mid-point (and even recorded

Mat ends the season with another Independents win



the fastest lap of the race too!), while Rory battled through to earn his fourth points-scoring finish in just four meetings as he came home in P12.

Team Manager, Oly Collins, reflects on the weekend: "Not a bad way to end the season. Mat managed to score some good results but was unlucky to have not to have got the win in Race 2. Martin and Rory were awesome in Race 3 on the slick tyres. Fair play to them both, it was a really good call to take the risk and it so nearly paid off."

He continues: "Congratulations to this year's Champions. It's been an interesting year to say the least, but now our focus turns to 2018 with the aim of coming back stronger with a championship challenging campaign!"

And that echoes the thoughts of all of the team, as we look forward to what seeing what 2018 brings... **FF**



Photos MATT SAYLE