



ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE
19 APRIL 2014



ASTON MARTIN
RACING

ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE OULTON PARK



On April 19th the Aston Martin GT4 Challenge returned to the picturesque Oulton Park circuit to kick off its fifth year. Now supporting the British GT Championship, the Challenge was part of a busy paddock, buzzing with anticipation of the year ahead.

Qualifying got underway at 10:50am in dry, bright, but slightly breezy conditions. New tyres for 2014, supplied by Michelin, added a new dimension to the session as the drivers began to understand how to best use the new rubber.

Series newcomer Jade Edwards, set the early pace having secured a deal to race only the afternoon before, together with Frank Yu. The Griffin brothers, Liam & Kieran, also new to the GT4 Challenge took pole position in their black & pink GT4 with a time of 1:46.136, over a second faster than the 2013 pole time. Richard Taffinder & Tim Eakin maintained their qualifying momentum from 2013 with yet another front row start, 1.197 off the Griffins' time. Jade Edwards & Frank Yu ended up 3rd, with Jade setting the quicker time as Frank got used to the challenging Oulton Park circuit.



Des Smail and Richard Meins were reunited behind the wheel of a GT4 car, having competed together in the 2013 Aston Martin Centenary Race at Brands Hatch. Their time of 1:48.352 was enough for 4th on the grid, just 0.223 seconds ahead of Tom Black & Chris Kemp in the #24 Vantage Racing car. The MB Racing machine of Mike Brown & Paul Cripps took 6th position, ahead of Paul Whight and the highly experience Bob Berridge. Kevin Norville and Calum Lockie qualified in 8th place, running once again with Track Club. Father and son pairing, Chris & Mika Brown ended their first ever qualifying session in 9th place, highly respectable given their lack of experience. David Tinn and John Dickson rounded out the field in 10th place, just 0.206 seconds behind the Browns.

ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE

QUALIFYING CLASSIFICATION

Pos.	No.	Team	Drivers	Time	Gap	Diff
1	6	JWB Motorsport	Kieran Griffin & Liam Griffin	1:46.136		
2	56	Hills Racing	Richard Taffinder & Tim Eakin	1:47.333	1.197	1.197
3	8	Craft AMR	Jade Edwards & Frank Yu	1:48.142	2.006	0.809
4	46	D J Smail Ltd	Desmond Smail & Richard Meins	1:48.352	2.216	0.210
5	24	Vantage Racing	Tom Black & Chris Kemp	1:48.575	2.439	0.223
6	7	MB Racing	Mike Brown & Paul Cripps	1:49.658	3.522	1.083
7	18	Stratton Motorsport	Paul Whight & Bob Berridge	1:50.613	4.477	0.955
8	27	Track-Club.com	Kevin Norville & Calum Lockie	1:53.657	7.521	3.044
9	12	Stratton Motorsport with AMR	Chris Brown & Mika Brown	2:01.447	15.311	7.790
10	47	Stratton Motorsport	David Tinn & John Dickson	2:01.653	15.517	0.206

ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE OULTON PARK



By the time that the race got underway at 1.53pm, the skies had clouded over, however the track was still warm and dry.

At the rolling start, Tim Eakin in the #56 immediately put Liam Griffin under serious pressure as the field approached Old Hall. Liam managed to fend Tim off, remaining ahead as they charged down towards Cascades. Following the opening lap exchanges, Liam Griffin and Jade Edwards (now in 2nd place) began to build a lead over the 3rd place Tim Eakin. David Tinn overtook Chris Brown on lap 2, as Richard Meins was keeping Tim Eakin busy, just under one second behind.

Paul Whight in the #18 began to catch Kevin Norville in the #27 Track Club car as the laps progressed, eventually passing him on lap 4. The #47 of Tinn & Dickson was seen to be trailing fluid from the right rear of the car, but this was discovered to simply be a fuel over-fill and was no cause for further concern. During the opening 12 laps, the lead didn't get any larger than 0.9s, both Liam and Jade were giving no quarter. During this time, Tom Black, driving the Vantage Racing car had been closing on Mike Brown in the MB Racing car at 0.7s per lap. This great progress was curtailed by a trip through the gravel at Druids for the #24 car, resulting in a pit stop to check for any resulting damage.



By lap 16, Liam had begun to pull away from Jade at the front, just prior to the pit window opening on the 30th minute. Unfortunately Richard Meins suffered a spin in the #46 at Lodge, which brought out the Safety Car. Kevin Norville was the first to take advantage and dove in to the pits for his mandatory stop. The Safety Car period slashed the lead that Liam Griffin had built up, so he would have it all to do again once the track went green.

ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE OULTON PARK



Richard Meins in the #46 recovered to the pits to check for damage and was able to continue. Unfortunately, the #27 Track Club car suffered an impact on the front left corner and was forced to retire. The #7 MB Racing car pitted on lap 26, with the team performing an almost perfect pit stop, just 0.3s over the minimum allowable time. Great work by the team manager and pit crew. By lap 30, all the cars had pitted at least once, bar the #6 & #56 who were running 1st & 2nd. Drama befell the #56 car as only a handful of laps after inheriting 2nd place, the car ground to a halt with a suspected fuel issue, bringing out the Safety Car for the 2nd time.

Following the lengthy recovery of the Hills Racing car, Kieran Griffin, now behind the wheel of the #6 JWB Motorsport machine held a commanding lead. More bad luck then hit the #46 machine, with Des Smail now at the helm, hitting the barrier at Lodge and being forced to retire.

A third Safety Car period was triggered when Bob Berridge and Frank Yu came together. Frank appeared to lift on the entrance to Druids, leaving Bob nowhere to go. The resulting impact broke the oil cooler, resulting in a fire at the rear of the car. Fortunately, Frank was able to get out of the car unscathed, with Bob able to continue with just a damaged bonnet.

When the track went green again with 15 minutes to go, Kieran Griffin led from Paul Cripps, with Bob Berridge 3rd. Chris Kemp was in 4th place, ahead of John Dickson, Richard Taffinder and Mika Brown. In the closing stages, Bob Berridge overhauled Paul Cripps for 2nd and Chris Kemp pushed Paul Cripps very hard, closing to within 0.599s.

ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE OULTON PARK



At the flag, it was the #6 JWB Motorsport car that took the win by a lap, followed by Bob Berridge in second with Paul Cripps rounding out the podium. Chris Kemp took 4th, followed by John Dickson 5th and Richard Taffinder 6th after their fuel dramas. Chris & Mika Brown brought the #12 car home safe and sound to finish their first race, no mean feat given the dramas that unfolded around them.

The next round of the GT4 Challenge takes place at Rockingham on May 4 & 5. Anyone interested in hospitality passes to attend as a spectator/guest or competing in the race on an 'arrive and drive' basis with Stratton Motorsport should go to www.astonmartin.com/gt4challenge for further information.



ASTON MARTIN GT4 CHALLENGE

RACE CLASSIFICATION

Pos.	No.	Team	Drivers	Laps	Time
1	6	JWB Motorsport	Kieran & Liam Griffin	51	1:40:57.924
2	18	Stratton Motorsport	Paul Whight & Bob Berridge	51	1:42:43.678
3	7	MB Racing	Mike Brown & Paul Cripps	50	1:41:00.785
4	24	Vantage Racing	Tom Black & Chris Kemp	50	1:41:01.384
5	47	Stratton Motorsport	David Tinn & John Dickson	48	1:41:00.360
6	56	Hills Racing	Tim Eakin & Richard Taffinder	46	1:41:28.359
7	12	Stratton Motorsport with AMR	Chris & Mika Brown	45	1:41:14.377
DNF	8	Craft AMR	Jade Edwards & Frank Yu	35	1:12:30.865
DNF	46	D J Smail Ltd	Des Smail & Richard Meins	31	1:10:39.112
DNF	27	Track-Club.com	Kevin Norville & Calum Lockie	20	42:47.979



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