

Lights Out – The Aero Morgan Challenge gets underway.

Snetterton 3rd April 2022

A report by Bob Bull.

Snetterton was the venue for the opening two races of the 2022 Aero Challenge, and the drivers, and spectators were treated to a couple of cracking races, full of drama. Qualifying had Will Pratt taking pole position ahead of Andrew Thompson, while in third place, 2015 Champion Tom Andrew was at the helm of his new Plus 6 2000, in a fetching shade of green. Martin Pratt, Brett Syndercombe, Phill Thomas, John Milbank, Steve Lockett, Tony Less, and Oliver Pratt made up the top ten. Unfortunately, come the race Martin was unable to make the start after a terminal problem with his new Baby Doll, thus moving T Hirts (as it says on the side of his car) into tenth place, driving the MMC Plus 4 2000.

When the red lights went out it was Andrew Thompson who made the best start, with Will Pratt close behind, which is where he stayed for the 10 laps. Tom Andrew rapidly made third place his own, and showed the potential of the Plus 6, by closing on the leading duo but never able to get past. Tony Lees had a lonely race in fourth, but John Milbank and Brett Syndercombe stuck together like glue for 5/6th places, Brett missing out by a mere third of a second in sixth, when the flag fell. Class 4 winner, Steve Lockett took 7th. with Tony Hirst leading home a string of cars in 8th followed closely by Tim Parsons, making a welcome return after winning the 2018 Championship. Tom Richards, and Oliver Pratt. Phillip Tisdall scraped home ahead of Peter Cole by less the half a second for another close finish. Further down the field Tim Grigsby made his maiden outing in the Challenge with the ex-Andy Green +8 finishing 18th, while another debutant, Phil Merson in his first ever race, beat Tony Kilby by 0.632 seconds for 19th. position. Meanwhile back at the front Will Pratt, having stared at the boot of Thompson's ARV6 all race long, somehow passed Andrew to win by 0.026 of a second, out dragging him from the final corner. Despite losing the win, Andrew declared that he had enjoyed the race, while Will looked a little stunned by his achievement. Only non-finisher was Phill Thomas who had mechanical trouble, so a good start to the season, with plenty of close racing, and the promise of more to come in race two.

With Phill Thomas's Baby Doll restored to health, and starting last, the rest of the field lined up in race one finishing order, Will Pratt once again facing the fast-starting Andrew Thompson. Sure enough Andrew launched the Silver ARV6 off the line in to the first corner, with Tony Lees briefly ahead of Will Pratt, who speedily disposed of the yellow V8, and set off in pursuit of Thompson, however, James Sumner spun into the barriers from the start, causing a red flag, and stoppage of the race. After some

delay the grid reformed, in its original order, for a race over seven laps, this being the last race of the day. Once again Andrew got the better of Will away from the line, and the rest of the pack stayed clear of trouble this time, however, half way round the lap Will lost control, spinning in front of the field. The following cars were delayed as they dodged around the stationary Morgan, leaving the leader well clear of any pursuers, completing the lap some eight seconds ahead of Tom Andrew. Getting underway last, Will Pratt produced a master class of overtaking to recover to third place at the end of the seven laps. Tony Lees came home fourth, but this time he had John Milbank hot on his heels, while Brett Syndercombe just held off a charging Phill Thomas for sixth, and seven places. Remember, Phill had started from the back of the grid, so seventh was an excellent result. Tony Hirst reprised his first race performance leading a train of cars across the line, Peter Cole, Tim Parsons, and John Richards all within 1.4 seconds of the Morgan Motor Company official entry. Steve Lockett should have been in this group, but a trip across the grass while trying to pass Tony, dropped him behind them all. Phil Tisdall, Oliver Pratt, Greg Parnell, Simon Sherry, Tony Kilby, Richard Fearn, Tim Grigsby, and Phil Merson completed the finishers. John Richards was not classified.

By taking two class wins with fastest lap. Brett Syndercombe leads the points table scoring 22 points, ahead of Andrew Thompson on 21.

The Plus 6 2000 of Tom Andrew is being developed by Mint Motorsport with the intention of making it serious GT4 contender, and has the blessing of MMC in this endeavour, a second and third place finish suggests things are going to plan.

MMC Motor Sport, Manager, Mark Evans said he was pleased with the performance of his new 'baby', declaring there was a lot of development still to come.

Next outing is Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire on May 8th. Why not go along and support the Championship, and drop by and chat to the drivers, they are always happy to speak to fellow Morgan lovers,.