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WINS FOR TAYLOR & DZIURZYNSKI AT OULTON PARK SEASON OPENER



Two very different races saw wins for Paul Taylor and Didge Dziurzynski as the 2009 Volkswagen Racing Cup in association with Hankook roared into action at Oulton Park today (Monday). Taylor enjoyed a straightforward race one win, despite mechanical issues, to lead the field home by a distance as his rivals hit problems, while Dziurzynski stayed just clear of his pursuers to claim an exciting victory in the second event.

For Dziurzynski it was a last-gasp victory for his venerable Mk II Golf GTI - he had been due to debut his new mount, a Mk IV machine, at Oulton before mechanical problems intervened. Oulton also marked the first appearance in the series of the new Scirocco, Liam Griffin claiming pole in his example for the opening race and Michael Kurton claiming third in that round to give the new car its first podium finish.

Griffin led the pack away at the start of race one but his lead was shortlived, the Addison Lee Scirocco getting out of shape through Old Hall Corner and spinning in the pack, fortunately without hitting anything. James Walker's Golf GTI, starting from the outside of the front row, was meanwhile swamped off the line by row two runners Martyn Culley and Taylor. The latter kept his momentum going to take the lead round the outside of the first corner.

The first corner dramas saw the field broken up at the front right away, Taylor leading at the end of the first lap well clear of Walker, who in turn was more than five seconds clear of Steve Chaplin's Beetle in third. A driveshaft failure sidelined Walker's Golf on lap two, handing Taylor a 10-second lead the experienced racer was never going to squander.

Fulbrook and then Peter Felix found ways past Chaplin, who next had pole man Griffin on his tail. Alas the Beetle and Scirocco clashed at Hislop's chicane, putting both cars out.

Fulbrook had the rapid Felix closing in, the latter's Golf setting new fastest laps on consecutive laps as it closed on the reigning champion's Bora. But just as a good battle looked likely, Felix pulled off with a suspension upright failure after contact, leaving Fulbrook well ahead of new third-placed runner Kurton.

With the first three well spread the order at the front stayed the same till the end, with Taylor taking the win despite losing fourth gear as the race progressed. With Fulbrook second, Kurton gave the new Scirocco GT its first podium finish on its race debut.

"I could see cars in my mirrors every now and then," said Taylor after a lonely race, "and I lost fourth gear, so I was changing from third to fifth and slipping the clutch. I was far enough in front to hold on, but I don't think we will be able to sort the gearbox before the second race so it will be a case of driving around and collecting points. But anyway, it's a good start to the season."

"It was exciting early on," said Fulbrook. "I saw a car spinning and people braking, and I had to take to the grass in avoidance. I kept the car straight and came back on in third, but when I got temperature in the tyres the car was good. We made a lot of changes to the car overnight which has got us back on the pace."

"We knew the Scirocco was quick as Liam put his car on pole," said a happy Kurton, "but I was a little more conservative and it paid off with a finish. We've done quite a lot of testing and it is now a very stable car and quick through the corners."

Behind the lead three the attention was on the battle for fourth between Dziurzynski, up from 20th on the grid, and the rapid Jamie Perry, who climbed up the order as the race progressed after starting from the pit lane, and just failed to take the position at the end.

Culley claimed sixth ahead of Andrew Smith's TDI Beetle, which enjoyed an encouraging race debut, Darren Blumson's Beetle RSI, Peter Wyhinny in the Caddy and championship newcomer Dan Crossley's Golf GTI.

Culley and Perry were on the front row for race two, the latter opting to start the race, as he had the first round, from the pit lane, his engine down on boost and the racer not wishing to be slow away with the entire grid behind him. Taylor's four-wheel drive saw him make a stunning getaway from row three, his missing gear not affecting him off the line, but Culley held sway and led at the end of lap one. His tenure at the front was short, however: the car was losing fluid and, after crossing the line ahead at the end of lap two, Martyn pulled off and parked the Vento.

That put Dziurzynski at the front in the oldest car in the field, but as he led into lap four he was met by the Safety Car, sent out after Griffin went off in his Scirocco at the Shell hairpin. Racing resumed with just less than seven minutes to go, Dziurzynski controlling the restart to lead from Taylor and Fulbrook, with Felix climbing up through the order to fifth behind Peter Wyhinny's Caddy on lap six.

Fulbrook claimed second through Cascades with three laps to go, but Dziurzynski held on at the front, the top three close together as they took the flag. In third was Felix, who set fastest lap on the last lap of the race but was unable to get past Fulbrook, after a drive from 17th on the grid. Sadly for Felix he was excluded from the results after post-race scrutineering.

"I had Joe and Peter really close behind me at the end," said Dziurzynski. "Paul Taylor was obviously struggling with gears, and I was lucky to slip past him when I did. I got a good start when the Safety Car went in, there was a lot of oil on the circuit which made it tricky - I was sideways a few times. We have the new car ready, but we have to take things as they come and we have proved that this car can still do it!"

"We were on the back foot with set-up at the start of the weekend," said Fulbrook after completing a double of second place finishes. "The team did well and told us where we were going wrong - but everyone else was starting from the back so it was a good time to play my Joker and double up my points. Two seconds with a car that is not 100 per cent - I'd have taken that at the start of the weekend."

Despite his missing fourth gear Taylor held on to take what would become third place, with Wyhinny in the Caddy fourth ahead of Kurton's Scirocco. Chaplin was another to come through the order, finishing sixth from 19th on the grid, with Perry seventh after his pit-lane start. Tim Snaylam, Andrew Smith and Darren Blumson completed the top 10.

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