



A dry and pleasant evening greeted drivers, teams and fans as they gathered at HRP Lochgelly Raceway this past Saturday for the latest slice of stock car action presented by Hardie Race Promotions. This past Saturday marked the start of a championship bonanza as no less than nine championships will be contested in the next seven race meeting culminating at the Superstox World Championship Weekend at the end of August.

The honour of commencing the run of summer championships went to the CC Rods who contested their biggest race of the year as the drivers gathered to battle for the Scottish Championship. 2015 Champion Ian Taylor has not raced in the formula this year so, with other previous winners also having moved on, a new champion would be crowned. A good number of cars arrived in the pits ahead of start time including several new drivers to the formula – the drivers who did not meeting the minimum appearance criteria would be gridded behind the main group of cars for two heats of racing (the second starting in reverse order to the first) to determine the grid for the big Scottish Championship race.

The first heat saw a win for one of 2016's top drivers Craig Watson as the East Wemyss pilot held off Kirkcaldy's Kevin Hutchison and Methil's Ian Walle to claim the all-important win. The second was started in reverse order from the first to ensure no driver gained an advantage and a great race ensued but it was Stirling's Paul Muir who took full advantage of his pole position start to remain ahead of the field all the way to the chequered flag with Lanarkshire's Kevin Connor and Bonnyrigg's Jamie Brown rounding out the top three in a race where one of the pre-meeting favourite's championship challenge ended when Ian Walle's car was left stranded on the home straight. Watson's win in heat one, coupled with his fourth place in heat two, was enough to secure pole position with Muir on his outside in his unique Ford Puma. As the green flag dropped; it appeared that Muir attempted to hold Watson down on the inside of the track but spun as a result while Watson continued to lead the race as it headed past halfway and beyond. Lanarkshire driver Ian Donaldson has had a bad run of luck of late but was looking good for second place until the leaders came up behind a back-marker. While Watson plumped to go around the outside of the slower car, Donaldson chose the inside line and this proved crucial as Donaldson managed to take the lead with little time to spare to claim the CC Rods Scottish Championship ahead of Craig Watson and Kelty's Colin Wotherspoon after a great night of CC Rod racing.



The ProStocks were also in attendance and this was the last chance for drivers to test their cars on the tricky HRP Lochgelly Raceway circuit before their British Championship here at the end of August. Cowdenbeath's Paul Barron debuted a stunning new Ford Escort and was immediately involved in the action as he despatched several cars in heat one as Scottish Champion Tam Melrose from Dalkeith cruised to victory. The second heat saw Melrose's rival for the points championship claim his customary win as Thornton's Ricky White took the win ahead of Melrose who immediately left Lochgelly to race a Micro Banger at Cowdenbeath to be the second driver to manage two events on the same night after Hot Rod legend Billy Bonnar. The feature final saw Melrose, White and Barron having a great battle but

it was White who doubled up as he claimed victory in the final ahead of Barron and an improving Sean Devine from Leslie. The Scottish fans will be hoping some of these drivers can maintain their form to keep the British Championship in Scotland.



The Stock Rods were back in action after what feels like an eternity due to championships being held elsewhere and HRP's own Siobhan Martin deserves huge credit for a fantastic drive at Ipswich which netted her second place in the European Championship. A greatly improved number of cars arrived to do battle with more cars confirmed as being almost ready to go and the Stock Rods went on to produce a great show. Cowdenbeath's Garry Gilfillan took full advantage of his white grade start to carry a huge lead into the latter stages of heat one but he could do nothing about a fast-moving Derek Conner as the Lanarkshire driver swooped past for victory. Gilfillan made no mistakes in the second heat as he took an excellent win while heat one winner Conner was loaded as he sent the Vauxhall Nova of James Halkett airborne on the home straight – not the done thing in a non-contact formula. The feature final was a fantastic race with some thrilling close action with Alan Cuthbert remaining in the lead for the majority of the 25 lap race despite his exhaust occasionally bouncing off the bumpier sections of tarmac but it was not to be as former multi-champion Chris Lattka and Scottish and National Points Champion Siobhan Martin managed to get past Cuthbert in the closing stages with Lattka taking the win by a small distance while Cuthbert held on for an excellent third to round off a good night of stock rod racing.



The 1300 Stock Cars were the final formula on show and it was their final outing of the 2016 National points campaign with Scottish Champion Callum Barclay and former Scottish and Points Champion Jason Secker both still in contention for the right to wear the silver roof with twenty points separating the duo.

Denny's Secker got his challenge off to the best possible start as he took an excellent win in heat one as he showed tremendous pace to slice his way through the field to take the win ahead of Fife duo Euan Mathieson and Barclay. Secker repeated his heat one exploits in heat two as he secured his second win of the night ahead of Jordan Cassie and Barclay. As the drivers headed into the final; sixteen points separated Barclay from Secker at the top of the points chart with sixteen points on offer to the winner – meaning that is Jason Secker could win the final with Barclay failing to score in the top ten then it would be an unprecedented tie!!! As it was, Secker and his bitter rival, outgoing points champion Zak Gilmour, decided to become reacquainted in the most unfortunate of ways which ended Secker's challenge for points as Barclay powered to victory in the final and the 2016 National Points title. Some unpleasant scenes followed that have no place at any family venue and no doubt the promotion will be dealing with those involved swiftly and decisively. Nevertheless, congratulations to Callum Barclay who takes the National points title back to Coaltown of Wemyss.

An entertaining session of action, albeit punctuated by stupidity on the part of a tiny minority. The next slice of stock car action at HRP Lochgelly Raceway comes next Saturday July 30th and features Caravan Carnage 2016 as HRP host their annual Caravan Destruction Derby – with a large number of cars booked in, there may well be two caravan races at the end of the evening. The rest of the programme is made up by the Superstox, 2.0 Hot Rods, Ministox and Ninja Karts – the action gets underway at 5:30pm on Saturday July 30th at HRP Lochgelly Raceway.