



Cataclean-backed Kidderminster race ace Dan Rowbottom scooped his best result of the season in the Renault UK Clio Cup at Donington Park, Derbyshire, on Sunday.

After a third and a 10th in the season-opening races of the season at Brands Hatch, Dan arrived at the Midlands circuit eager for another podium finish and battled to fifth fastest time in the qualifying session on a greasy track surface thanks to relentless light rain.

From the third row of the grid, Dan made a rocketship start to dive up the inside of the pack ahead on the run to the first corner. With two wheels on the grass, Dan bravely stood his ground to squeeze through to third place at the third corner and then set off in pursuit of the leaders in the 14-lap race. Ahead of him, James Dorlin assumed the lead ahead of James Colburn whose car became ever wider to combat Dan's increasingly-determined efforts to find a way past. As the pair fought for second place, however, the race leader Dorlin escaped, meaning that the fierce fight for second became the centre of attention.

increasingly gung-ho in his use of the kerbs and was awarded a five-second penalty for abusing track limits, meaning that Dan would be promoted to second place on corrected times. However, Dan couldn't rely on that as he had Jack McCarthy breathing down his neck, ensuring that Dan had to defend resolutely to the chequered flag. The air ran side-by-side through the daunting Craner Curves on lap 16, but some inspired driving by Dan kept him ahead – just! The Cataclean Clio was wide enough to maintain Dan's place ahead of McCarthy and then he inherited second place, Dan's best result of the season, once Dorlin's penalty was applied.



“That was a great race to be in,” said Dan afterwards. “It’s not a win, but the car has felt mega all weekend and if I had been able to get ahead of Dorlin earlier then maybe I could have gone after the leader. I knew about the penalty so I was happy to take second place because the leader was too far away by that stage but I couldn’t relax because I had McCarthy right up behind me. That is our second podium finish in three races and our best of the season, so it is great to have the pace to be a regular front-runner.”



Dan started the second race from seventh on the grid and much was expected from a trademark demon start. However, on the final lap to the grid, Dan experienced a problem with his Team Pyro-run car. “It just felt like it had no turbo boost,” he explained. “I made a mega start – again – but then the car just lacked power, a bit like it had fuel surge out of right-hand corners.” Dan dropped to 11th, then 12th but battled back up to 11th place at the chequered flag, never giving up despite the recalcitrant Renault’s lack of pace.

“On the whole it has been a good weekend, because we have had our best result of the season and I felt that there was good pace in me and good pace in the car. We’ll have a look at what the problem was and come back fighting next time out.”

The result puts Cataclean-backed Dan sixth in the Renault UK Clio Cup standings heading for the ultra-fast Thruxton circuit in Hampshire for the next two races on May 19/20, with Sunday’s race action covered live and exclusive on ITV4.

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