

Dream start to new era for Rowbottom and Cataclean Racing

Cataclean backed race-ace Dan Rowbottom bounced back from a troubled start to his Renault UK Clio Cup season with a podium result at Croft, North Yorkshire at the weekend.



After a difficult start to the 2018 season, when Dan was driving for Team Pyro, a decision was made to move away from the team and operate a car independently. That meant that in the narrow two-week window between Oulton Park and Croft, Droitwich-based Dan had to buy a new car from Renault in France and get ready for a race weekend.

“We had some urgent discussions with Cataclean after Oulton Park and we felt that we could do a good job running the car on our own. We ordered a new car, which wasn’t ready until Monday of race week. I got a brief run on a track day at Donington on Wednesday and then we had to head for Croft so it was all a bit last minute,” explained Dan.

That didn’t faze him though, as the brand new Cataclean race car was fastest in the Friday test session, laying down a marker to the opposition. Dan qualified sixth in the qualifying session, Dan and his father learning about the nuances of the new tyre on which the Clios run this year.

“We did what we could but all the data on tyres from last year is redundant now, so we were playing catch up a bit. We are learning all the time.”

Dan made his customary excellent start to the opening 12-lap race, grabbing fifth place on the run to

they approached the Hairpin for the first time and he squeezed alongside his rival. As Dorlin braked late, he clipped Lee Pattison's third-placed car, which in turn spun and allowed RoBo up into third place. Dan stayed third to the end of the race, maintaining his place after a spirited defence against Dan Zelos. As he defended, Dan dropped away from the top two but was delighted with a podium result.



“I’m relieved!” Dan said after the race. “It has been a really tiring week trying to get everything ready but a podium is a great result. It was a bit frustrating the tyres went off a bit early in the race and hence I couldn’t stay with the leaders but that is part of our learning curve. I was a bit disappointed with qualifying but this is a great result so the season starts here.”

The drama wasn’t over for Dan as race officials looked at the incident with Dorlin and Pattison. Dan was deemed to have been the catalyst and given a penalty to drop him behind Pattison but Dan appealed the clerk of the course’s decision and was reinstated in third place but with a two-place grid drop for the second race.

That put Dan sixth on the grid and after yet another mega start, he was fourth by the first corner.

but never quite able to get close enough on a circuit not noted for the ease of overtaking.

“I was never quite close enough to make a move. It would have to have been a lunge but that would have put both of us in jeopardy so it wasn’t worth the risk.

“To come here and be quickest in testing and take a third and a fourth is a great reward for a lot of hard work and to repay the faith Cataclean have shown. It is an amazing turnaround so we will learn from this weekend and push on for more wins and see where that gets us at the end of the season. I think everyone is really pleased with what we have achieved as a three-man operation this weekend against the big teams!”

Dan is now fourth in the championship, despite missing one of the eight rounds held to date.

The next weekend of action within the Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship package is at Snetterton Norfolk, with the Sunday Renault UK Clio Cup race action shown live and exclusive on ITV4.

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