

Podiums and points for Rowbottom at Thruxton

Cataclean-backed Kidderminster racer Dan Rowbottom enjoyed another impressive weekend in his Renault UK Clio Cup campaign, with a third and a fourth place in the two races at the ultra-fast Thruxton circuit in Hampshire at the weekend.



Dan's weekend started well as his Team Pyro run car snatched third place on the grid for the opening race after a demon qualifying lap that put him just under a tenth of a second away from pole position. When the lights went out to start the nine-lap race, Dan made a blistering start from the inside of row two to squeeze up the inside of the pack diving into the opening corner. Dan moved into second place with a brave effort into the right-left-right sequence of corners at the Complex and then challenged race leader Max Coates as they charged into the Chicane to end the opening 2.3 mile lap.

Coates defended stolidly but Dan wasn't to be denied and made a brave dive up the inside at the Chicane to grab the lead to cheers from the packed spectator banks. Once in the lead, Dan started to edge away, benefiting from a fight behind that delayed the opposition, but by lap five, the Cataclean car was having to defend as Dan had the chasing pack right on his tail.

"I'm angry with myself," explained Dan. "I went too soon and hurt the tyres and that gave them the chance to catch me."

James Dorlin, with better traction from his Michelin tyres, snatched the lead on lap five and took the chasing Max Coates with him, meaning Dan had to defend rather than just attack again for the lead. Coates benefited from Dan running wide into the Chicane on lap six to use his momentum to grab second place, and although Dan bravely attacked again on the final lap, he just couldn't quite grab the place back. Third was his reward after a great drive, just 0.718s away from race winner Dorlin.

"The tow here, the slipstream effect, is unbelievable so once they caught me, there wasn't much I could do to keep them behind. The pace of the car is excellent so I am really happy with that and it is a lesson learnt about when to push and how hard. A podium is good and it is good points as well though."



For race two, Robo started ninth on the grid but made a stonking start to be fifth at the end of the first lap, with the race then neutralised by a safety car period after a crash on the opening tour. On the restart, Dan blasted past former Touring Car racer Mike Epps to bag fourth place and was soon closing on the leaders as they delayed each other by squabbling. However, another sizeable accident meant a second safety car period and with the length of time needed to clear the debris, the race was halted early meaning Dan never had a chance to fight for more places.

“It was OK really. I had a really good launch from ninth and I picked up places off the line and into the chicane. It was important to manage the tyres today because it’s so fast and abrasive and my tyres didn’t want to do many more laps so I am pleased with fourth and more points. The car is good and the pace is good so I am happy, but I really want a first win of the season next time out”

The results move Cataclean-backed Dan up to fourth in the Renault UK Clio Cup standings heading for the picturesque Oulton Park circuit in Cheshire for the next two races on June 9/10, with Sunday’s race action covered live and exclusive on ITV4.

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