

Armed Forces Race Challenge 2018 Championship

750
MOTORCYCLE



Rockingham 9 June 2018



It was normal service resumed as Sgt Chris Slator (RAF) brought the Podium Prep Truck to be the centre of the AFRC paddock for Rounds 5 and 6 at Rockingham.



Something is missing?

After four races of the AFRC 2018 Championship in three months, wear and tear was starting to show on the grid. Hardest hit for Rounds 5 and 6 would be team Navy. Engine damage sustained at Silverstone meant the Astra's of CPO Gareth Moss and Mne Adam Dewis would not be repaired in time for Round 5 at Rockingham. Also missing would be Lt Cdr Keith Atwood and POAET James Cantwell. Keith had the worst of luck as his tow car expired on the way to Rockingham leaving him and the car stranded, while James was detained elsewhere.

That meant there were no Team Navy competitors' for this event, although ex marine Mark Inman, now a veteran was there to fly the flag.



Mark Inman, flying the flag

Team Army weren't faring any better. During a practice session on the Friday, the BMW of Maj Farard Darver threw a main bearing, meaning he could not race on the Saturday. Chris Camp (Veteran) was still awaiting the new radiator for the Nissan Skyline and Sgt Blair Thomson still had the Peugeot 205 engine in bits.

Better news for team Army, WO1 Matty Taylor's BMW had spent most of the previous week on the rolling road. A remap of the ECU now gave a reliable setup, although power was slightly down. A race weekend should see if the previous problems have been sorted.



Matt's BMW back on track

WO2 Simon Skerton (Army) had got to the bottom of his Mini's problems. The electrical cut-off was receiving an over-voltage warning so was shutting the system down. A quick rewire sorted it.



Simon's Mini back to normal

SSgt John Mitchell (Army) had taken the Clio 182 for a 'heath check' only to find that for most of the time it had been running on three cylinders, the forth had a blocked injector. New injectors, a quick tune up and the Clio was right as rain.

There was an early start on Saturday morning with scrutineering from 07:30 and qualifying at 09:00. Scrutineering is always a tense time as although all the cars have been checked before, there is always the chance that something had previously been overlooked. This was the case for Chris Dancer (Veteran) Mk 1 Ford Escort. The scrutineer noted that the battery earth lead, wasn't identified by yellow markings and the rain light should be central to the rear of the car. Not major issues and soon fixed but it just show how complicated are the rules governing motorsport.



Mk 1 Ford Escort, windows and all.

The weather had been dry for days so even with the AFRC out first the track was in ideal conditions. Cpl Simon Barlow (RAF) only managed to get in four laps before the gear change linkage broke on the MG ZR. After qualifying the front row would be Mark Inman's VX220 on Pole, Sgt Will Asmore (Army) alongside him, third and forth places would be taken by Matt Taylor and Billy Fletcher (Veteran).



The grid line up for race 1.

Back in the paddock there was time to assess the damage to Simon's MG. There was no way that the gear linkage could be repaired, so it looked like his racing was done. Well it transpires that the rod system for changing gear on the MG is almost the same as on the Early Ford Fiesta and luckily SAC Dan Smith had a complete spare system all be it back at Wittering, some 20 miles away. Race 1 was a definite no, but race 2 was a possibility.

As the cars rolled out for race one Simon was on his way to collect the necessary parts to make up a replacement gear change linkage. From lights out Mark's VX220 got a flyer, as did Will's Honda and Billy in the Hornet. By Yentwood Billy had managed to nip the hornet in front of Will. L/Cpl Mark White (Army) had also managed to get in front of Matty's BMW.



Billy in front of Will.

Once Matty had the BMW settled he managed to re-pass Mark and chase after the top three of Mark Inman, Billy and Will. Mark White was suffering with overheating breaks and now had his mirrors full of the Caterham of Ed Fuller.



Caterham, what Caterham!

As Always Class C is a greatly contested race with Team RAF chasing top honours. The ever consist WO Ed McKean was closely followed by Sqn Ldr Darren Howe and Sgt Chris Slator. In Class C Team Army were having their own battle, Led by Simon Skerton in his mini. That was until Simon missed a gear letting LCpl Tom Sykes and Chris Dancer (Veteran) through. Simon then spent the rest of the race regaining lost places.



Ben hard at work

At the tail of the field racing is just as intense. SAC Dan Smith (RAF) started just in front of John Mitchell. Lap after lap Dan just managed to keep the Fiesta in front of the Celso. That was until the last lap were Dan made a small mistake, John didn't need a second chance, he nipped through to gain a place.

Also having mechanical issues was Sqn Ldr Simon Frowen. He also had to replace a CV joint as the rubber boot had split. Also one of the wheel bearing seemed a little loose, but investigations revealed that there was a little play, but within tolerances.



Dan holding off John, just.

Dan wouldn't be the only one having last lap problems. Having passed Will on the first lap Billy had to fend off Will's Honda all race, until on the last lap Billy made an un-characteristic mistake letting Will through to take 2nd in the Race, but well out in front though and a well deserved first win in the AFRC was Mark Inman in his VX220.



Simon and team make adjustments.

Back in the paddock work was well underway to get the cars ready for race 2. Ben had discovered that both front CV joints needed replacing. Simon was back from Wittering and with the help of other competitors he was able to modify and fit a modified linkage. In fact it was better than the original.

For the rest of Team RAF it was kick the tyres, wash the windscreen and we are ready to go, which was lucky as Chris Slator had organized a Hog Roast for lunch, well done Chris.

With all repairs to his Fiesta done Ben Gundry set off for a test drive, unfortunately upon moving the car horrible noises were coming from the differential, either as a result of the CV joint failure or the cause, the diff was also damaged and Bens racing for the day was over. This was especially disappointing as one of the army sponsors Nankang Tyres had arrange an AFRC BAMA only race at the end of the day.

The line up for Race 2 was similar to race 1. Mark in the VX220 made a poor start from pole dropping to fifth, so Will inherited the lead, closely followed by Billy, Matty and Ed. If Mark was going to take a double win he had a lot to do.



Mark with lots to do.

In race 2 the battle between John and Dan restarted. With John starting alongside Dan, he got a better start and managed get a second gap which he maintained to the end.

Simon Frowen spun the Fiesta, putting him at the back of the race. In the first couple of laps he made good progress, unfortunately an over optimistic passing attempt going into Deene resulted in contact with LCpl Tom Sykes's (Army) BMW, Simon's car was beached and the race had to be red flagged.

From a poor start Mark Inman made constant gains, one place per lap and by the time the red flag was shown, he had regained first place, so completing his first double win. Again at the top of Class C it would be an RAF lockout Ed McKean, Darren Howe and Chris Slator.



ED McKean, Class C double winner.

For the third race of the day, the BAMA only race, it was the first race for Team Army to race on their own, although Sqn Ldr Darren Berris (RAF) was invited as a guest entry to allow him some extra seat time for his race the next day. Following the demise of Ben's Fiesta the grid would have been smaller, but for the kind gesture of Sgt Chris Slator (RAF). Chris lent Ben his Peugeot 306 for the race. When the lights went out Darren's Westfield V8 went from last to first before Deene, where he stayed for the remainder of the race. In the proper race, further back it would be Will Ashmore Honda Civic, Matty Taylor BMW and Mark White Honda Civic Type R.



BAMA only race.

The AFRC is now on a summer recess, but will be back for the final round at Donington Park 1st September. See you there.

After Race 6 the Championship positions are:

	Name	Car	Points
1	Chris Slator	Peugeot 306 Rallye	69
2	Mark White	Honda Civic Type R	69
3	Darren Howe	VW Golf	68

After Race 6 the Team Championship positions are:

	Team
1	Veterans
2	Army
3	RAF
4	RN/RM

After Race 6 the Novice Championship positions are:

	Name	Car	Points
2	John Mitchell	Renault Clio 182	28
77	James Cantwell	Peugeot 206	23
67	Tom Sykes	BMW 330CI	20

For Rockingham it would be Will Ashmore who would be awarded 'Nankang Army Driver'. With Will also winning two 2nds in the AFRC and the AFRC BAMA only race, he's going to need a bigger cabinet.

Full results can be found at:

Race Results:

[750mc RAFMSA Rockingham Results](#)

Performance Index Results:

[AFRC Rockingham Results](#)

Armed Forces Race Challenge 2018 Championship



Army



Maj
Farard Darver



WO1
Matty Taylor



WO2
Simon Skerton



SSgt
John Mitchell



Sgt
Will Ashmore



Sgt
Blair Thomson



LCpl
Ben Gundry



LCpl
Mark White



LCpl
Thomas Sykes

Navy/Royal Marines



Cdr
Richard Scott



Lt Cdr
Keith Attword



CPO
Gareth Moss



POAET
James Cantwell



Mne
Adam Dewis

Royal Air Force



Sqn Ldr
Darren Berris



Sqn Ldr
Darren Howe



Flt Lt
Si Frowen



WO
Ed McKean



Sgt
Chris Slator



Cpl
Simon Barlow



SAC
Daniel Smith

Armed Forces Race Challenge 2018 Championship



Veterans



Dom Benfell



Chris Camp



Chris Dancer



Billy Fletcher



Mark Inman



Andy Jones



Mike Nash



Paul Vice



Paul Waterhouse

Guests



Steven Cunniffe/
Mark Jones



Ed Fuller



Stan Palmer



Paul Roddison



Andrew Stacey