

Rockingham in Northamptonshire would be the venue for the 4th and final round of the AFRC Championship 2017. Current leader, Paul Waterhouse (RAFMSA) would try and extend his lead to claim the title, although there were technically at least 5 drivers who had a chance of taking the title.

Every competitor of the AFRC would try and be at this, the final round. Max Coates was there to deliver a 'Maxter Class' which was up to date as a couple of weeks previously he had gained a win and a third place in the Cleo Cup.



'Maxter Class'

Capt Mark Saunders (Army) would be joined again by Jeff Windsor. Jeff had previously raced a Ford Puma, this time he had brought his Andy Rouse replica touring car to make Team 51 an all Ford Sierra Cosworth line-up. Sgt Dom Benfell (RAF) had the Lotus Esprit back on track, hopefully back to full power after a

disappointing run out with the Aston Martin owners club. Sgt Will Ashmore (Army) had been busy in the garage and had finally got to the root cause of his high end miss-fire. Also the car was now sporting a new livery after its rather scruffy appearance at Cadwell Park. Others too had been busy; Cpl Dan Tedstone (Army) had the Honda Civic back to full fitness. The BMW of Maj Farard Darver (Army) had also need some serious attention after his actions at Cadwell, the propshaft had decided to break free from its mountings causing major vibrations.

For this event a team from Mission Motorsport (MM) headed by Maj (Retd) James Cameron would be racing. The aim of MM is to aid in the recovery and rehabilitation of those affected by military operations by providing opportunities through Motorsport. James would be driving his Porsche 911, while four MM drivers would share two Mazda MX-5s.



Will Ashmore's new look Honda

Unfortunately some competitors would be unable to attend. After their excellent attendance at Cadwell Park in the previous round the Royal Navy, due to service commitments would be fielding a lighter team. The RAF would also have regular members missing; Sqn Ldr Darren Berris had to be elsewhere. Darren had taken the flag at all of the previous races this year, so there would be a new 'On the Road' winner for this event. Also taking a sabbatical would be SSgt Chris Wood (Army), although he would be there supporting the team.

This would be the last event under the control of Sgt Chris Slator (RAF). Chris has worked tirelessly over the past couple of years to get the AFRC to championship status and the paddock reflected this with all teams regal in their respective service colours.



The AFRC Paddock

On the day the weather was going to be difficult to predict ranging from bright sun to thunderstorms with hail in a matter of minutes. Luckily the practice session would be concluded in the dry and the rain wouldn't come until the cars were returning to the paddock. Practice would be as far as some got. Dom's Lotus was OK on the run back to the paddock but on re-starting there was zero oil pressure and a rumbling from the engine; that would be his day done. Also having problems was Jeff. The Sierra Cosworth was having fuel pump issue but this he could sort in time for the race.

Brakes would be an issue; both Sqn Ldr Darren Howe (RAF) and Sgt Daz Smee (Army) would be changing brake pads before the race.



Dom's Lotus Esprit

By lunchtime there had been some heavy showers in dispersed with bright sunshine and as the cars were being prepared, again the clouds were starting to build and at one point it looked like the heavens would open, but only a few drops of rain fell in the entire race. The race would be a 45 minute race with a 60 second wheels stopped pit stop. Each stint would gain a Performance Index (PI) result, enabling drives to gain a PI score even if they fail to complete the full distance. Additional this allows a two driver team to enter either with two cars (eg Team 51) or one car and two drivers (eg Team 14). After their hectic time at Cadwell Park Team 14 of Sgt



Double driver Team 14

Andy Holborn and Flt Lt Chris Vosper (both RAF) would bring out the faithful Mazda MX-5 as the Megablade was still licking its wounds.

Class I (Invitation)

This class allows those cars which cannot be classed in any of the other classes of the AFRC.



Team 51

For this event only Team 51 were entered in this category. Mark Saunders would start the race and hand over to Jeff when the pit window opened. For Mark the highlights were the massive power slides and getting graded (Fingers being held up in the air) by the marshals at Deene. He got a full Ten and a standing ovation for a large sliding moment behind Dan! After the handover Jeff only managed a couple of laps before the 3rd gear let go and he had to retire.

Class A (up to 260 whp/ton)

Chris Camp (Veteran) made a good start in his Nissan Skyline GTR and pitted on schedule. On returning to the race the car start to understeer and by Lap 12 his race was run. Back in the paddock it looked like a puncture but further investigations revealed that some of the spilt rim bolts had loosened allowing the tyre to deflate.

It would be another DNF for Farad Darver's BMW E46 M3 after an incident with another car on the penultimate lap.

On the road Class A would end 1st the Tegiwa BMW E46 M3, 2nd Andy Ebdon and 3rd WO1 Matty Taylor (Army).

Class B (Up to 200 whp/ton)

With the BMWs locking out the front row, Will Ashmore in his Honda started 3rd, but by the end of lap 1 he was leading only to be overtaken by the Tegiwa BMW on lap 3 and Will spent the rest of the race chasing the BMW to finish 2nd overall. The Honda hadn't missed a beat so hopefully that high end miss-fire has been cured for good.

Daz Smee would be another driver who was to have a DNF. Within sight of the finish he sheared a drive shaft on the Honda Integra and was unable to finish. Also having problems was James Cameron (MM) when the brakes failed on the Porsche.

On the road Class B would end 1st in class Sgt Will Ashmore (Army), 2nd L/Cpl Mark White (Army) and 3rd Sqn Ldr Darren Howe (RAF).

Class C (Up to 140 whp/ton)

LCpl Ben Gundry (Army) has had a consistent years racing finishing all 3 of the previous rounds, unfortunately on lap 14 the gearbox packed up and he was forced to retire.

The 'RN Endurance' Peugeot 206 was again a two driver team, this time Cdr Richard Scott



Rich and Keith fight for top RN honours

and POAET James Cantwell would be sharing the duties. Richard posted the faster time so took the start just ahead of another Navy Driver, Lt Cdr Keith Attwood in his Mini R50. Keith had won the 'AFRC Novice Championship' for 2017 as he had an unassailable lead coming into the round at Rockingham.

At the start WO Ed Mckean (RAF), took the lead in Class C, again closely followed by Cpl Mark Inman (RM) in his Vauxhall VX220. Paul Waterhouse was

in a dice with guest driver Andrew Pretorius in his Mazda MX-5.

On the road Class C would end 1st Ed McKean, 2nd Mark Inman and 3rd Andrew Pretorius.



Ed on his way to another Class C win

Rockingham Results

The Performance Index (PI) awarded by the consistency of the drivers is what matters to the championship and the points awarded for Rockingham ISSC were; Paul Waterhouse taking the overall win on PI. Despite his puncture Chris Camp managed his best time in the first stint to take 2nd place and Chris Slator maintain his consistency to finish 3rd.

Overall Championship Results

The results for the team championship were:

- 1st Veterans
- 2nd RAF
- 3rd RN/RM
- 4th Army

AFRC Novice Championship



Keith Attwood AFRC Novice Champion 2017

AFRC Championship



Paul Waterhouse AFRC Champion 2017

Handicap Race

That wasn't all the racing for Rockingham. Chris in consultation with 750MC had been able to arrange a 'Race to the Flag' handicap race. Calculated from the previous race, drivers would set off (Slowest first). If the handicappers have got their calculations correct at the end of the race 31 cars would cross the line at the same time! As it was SAC Dan Smith (RAF) in his Ford Fiesta was first across the line followed closely by Ed Fuller Tiger Super 6, Andy Ebdon Caterham Seven 310R and the rest of the pack. This was Dan's first ever win hope it's the first of many.













First to the flag, Dan Smith

Well that concludes the AFRC Championship for 2017 but many of the drivers have one more outing for this year the 2017 Birkett Relay Race. This year's event is scheduled for the 28th October on Silverstone's Historic GP Circuit, and will once again be supported by Grove and Dean Motorsport Insurance.











See you there.

<http://www.armedforcesracechallenge.net/results/>










Army

Maj Farard Darver	Capt Mark Saunders	WO1 Matty Taylor	SSgt Chris Wood	Sgt Will Ashmore
				
Sgt Ro Barrett	Sgt Daz Smee	Cpl Daniel Tedstone	LCpl Ben Gundry	LCpl Mark White
				







Navy/Royal Marines

Cdr Richard Scott	Lt Cdr Keith Attword	CPO Steve Hutchings	CPO Gareth Moss	POET(WE) Sean Graham
				
POAET Stuart Balls	POAET James Cantwell	Cpl Mark Inman	Mne Adam Dewis	Lewis Pemble
				

Royal Air Force

Sqn Ldr Darren Berris	Sqn Ldr Darren Howe	Flt Lt Si Frowen	WO ED McKean	Chf Tech Scott Lawson
				
Sgt Dom Benfell	Sgt Andy Holborn	Cpl Simon Barlow	SAC Daniel Smith	
				

Veterans

Chris Camp	Andy Ebdon	Richard Evans	Billy Fletcher	Paul Waterhouse
				
Andy Yeomans				
				

Guests

Ed Fuller	Ray Honeybone	Sam Moody	Andrew Pretorius	Paul Roddison
				
Ian Smythe	Richard Smith	Andrew Stacey	Simon Wing	Jeff Windsor
				