

BTRDA Car Trials Championship

Gold Star Championship Final 2023.

The Final this year was hosted by Woolbridge Motor Club and held on the 7th October at their fabulous Woolminstone site near Crewkerne.

Three distinct overall leaders during the course of the event battle it out to the end! Read on...

Mark Hoppé was Clerk of the Course and had set up 8, often long and wide – very wide – unusual and demanding hills. One side effect of this was that because there was a lot at stake, most drivers insisted on examining every gate of every hill thereby making progress very slow, especially on the early rounds. This didn't matter though as there were only 11 entries on the day, even though a few more had qualified. Nick Pollitt was on his own in a Fiat 500 in Class A, then there were 5 in each of the other two classes. Class B contained Tim and Charlie Dovey (Clio), Simon Harris (Golf), Trevor Moffatt (Corsa) and Rupert North (Alto). Class D were I (Liege), John Charles (Liege), last year's Champion Kevin Roberts (Dutton), Ian Nute (Dutton) and Nigal Jones (Dutton).

With the Trials Championship scoring system being a combination of points accumulated in the 14 qualifying rounds together with double points and a bonus opportunity in the Final, there is a technical potential for any one of the qualifiers to win. However joint favourites going into the final I guess were Tim Dovey from Class B in his Clio and I from Class D in my Liege. Both of us were on maximum points at this stage. It was to be a serious battle over the four rounds totaling 32 hills.

In round 1, I managed an excellent score of 3, though Tim was also exceptional on 4. We were both comfortably ahead of our nearest rivals within the classes. With most hills receiving minor modifications for round 2, Tim and son Charlie again both had excellent scores but I had a mediocre score and let Kevin Roberts with an amazing score of just 6, get just in front of me. I believe that at this stage (lunch break), Mark did a quick calculation of the Index score and Tim Dovey in the Clio was a clear leader. However, reports were that the Clio was emitting worrying noises from the transmission. They weren't able to solve the problem during lunch so just had to carry on with fingers crossed. At this stage Nick was still leading Class A (well he would be, on his own). In FWD B, Simon, Trevor and Rupert had more than three times the penalties as the Doveys, and in RWD C, John, Nigal and Ian were all uncharacteristically off the pace.

After lunch and with the hills altered again, Kevin and I realised that if the Clio was impeded by the transmission problem, both he and I could be in the chase for the overall win. And so it was that although Charlie and Tim held onto their lead in round 3, the venerable Clio gave up the ghost and they had to take 12s on the last round of 8 hills. At the end of Round 3, after another exceptional round, Kevin in the Dutton now led overall.

But it wasn't over yet. In round 4, I saw the opportunity, delivered a brilliant round of just 10, to Kevin's disappointing round of 30, and in doing so pulled back to 1st Overall. 2nd Overall was Kevin and 3rd Simon in his Golf GTi.

Once all the points from the event were added up and factored into the Championship tables, Nigel Jones won the Bronze Star, Tim Dovey the Silver Star, and I won the Gold Star. I was very pleased. Embarrassingly, at the time, I did not realise that this was the 10th time I have done this. What a day for me and a great event for all. I'm sure Tim will be chasing the Gold Star again in 2024.

Thanks go to Mark and his team at Woolbridge Motor Club for organizing a fantastic trial.

Barrie Parker.