

THE STARTING GRID

Round 1

Photos: Bec Leadingham

2015 MG ROAD RACING CHAMPIONSHIP



2015 gets underway

The opening round of the 2015 Hobson Stores MG Road Racing Championship saw a visit to Mallala Motorsport Park in South Australia as part of the Masters of Mallala series in late March, to assist competitors a single day event that featured a packed program of qualifying and four races in a day included a twilight race and a feature race under lights at night.

South Australian locals in Rodney Gibb, Adrian Akhurst, Adam Cottam and Matthew Sims in MG TF Cup cars while invited British participants of Trevor Lindsay (Triumph GT6), Justin Elvin (Mini), Rod Carey (Triumph Spitfire) and Troy Ryan (Sprite) made up the local field. Over the off season we saw a few cars change hands, Bob Nordlinger sold his MG C Sebring V8 to Phil Chester who had entered Glen Wood at the helm for Mallala while Vince Gucciardo was a new recruit steering Wood's old MG TF Cup car in what would be his first ever race.

Qualifying saw Glen Wood take pole by an astonishing 3.4 seconds, a 1:14.78 lap time from Robin Bailey with Trevor Lindsay and Richard Milligan 3rd and 4th. The first Open 1 car was Adrian Akhurst from Phil Chester while Paul Vernal qualified 10th and fastest in Modern with John Stevenson fastest in Classic class. Unfortunately we lost Robin Bailey shortly after qualifying with engine issues he decided to park it and not risk further damage.



Glen Wood debuted the ex Nordlinger C V8 and took pole and 3x wins



#17 Adrian Akhurst, #71 Matthew Sims and #12 Vince Gucciardo all in MG TF Cup cars

The opening race saw Glen Wood clear out quickly, settling into a rhythm he was regularly 2-3 seconds a lap quicker than his next nearest rival and he would bring home a win in the short 5 lap race. Second was a tight battle with Trevor Lindsay and Richard Milligan, at times the two side by side and looking strong while Richard had a bit more straight line speed Lindsay used his experience of the circuit to take advantage where he needed, Lindsay coming home two seconds clear of Richard with Troy Ryan a lonely 4th ahead of Justin Elvin. Jim Robertson recovered from a poor qualifying to cut through those in the mid field for 6th place while Phil Chester managed to get a small gap from the pursuing pack to finish 7th.

The battle group behind swapped spots with Rodney Gibb, Paul Vernall, Vince Gucciardo and Adam Cottam battling through, Vernall ultimately getting Gibb while Gucciardo, Cottam and Sims all in Cup TF's came home 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th. John Stevenson had a lonely run, not quite fast enough to challenge the cars ahead he ran a lonely race for 13th while showing that the most fun is sometimes had at the rear Jim Dodd and Andrew Watson (ZR's) battled with David Mottram (B) for the last classified spots but were separated by 1.4 seconds over the line and at times were side by side around corners, Jim Dodd eventually getting the bragging rights from Mottram and Watson.

The second 8 lap race was another exciting adventure mid field, Troy Ryan had engine issues and was relegated to the side lines while Adrian Akhurst would be starting rear of grid after missing race 1, Glen Wood again showing a clean pair of heels to lead away and cruise to a 5 second win while Lindsay and Milligan resumed their battle. Milligan struggling to get around the nimble GT6 in the corners while he was learning the circuit, Lindsay once again crossing the line in second from Milligan in 3rd.

Jim Robertson running a relatively lonely race in 4th with Justin Elvin 5th, the Midget Special of Robertson proving a quick car for the weekend. Off the start Chester, Gibb, Gucciardo and Sims lead Vernall in the mid pack before Vernall cleared the later two, Chester got a move on to gap Gibb early as Vernall and Gibb battled hard swapping positions. Behind Sims got passed Gucciardo with Adam Cottam behind while Akhurst scythed through the three of them to be behind Gibb and quickly disposed of Gibb under brakes at the back straight. He caught Vernall on the last lap and made a pass into turn 1 to move to 7th place only to lock an inside brake into turn 3 and Vernall coming back past. The two ran side by side up the back straight with Akhurst unable to make a pass, Vernall coming across the line 7th, Akhurst 8th from Gibb, Sims, Gucciardo and Cottam for 9th to 12th places.

John Stevenson once again had a bit of a lonely run, 13th place while Mottram and Dodd picked up where they left off race 1 but this time Mottram finishing ahead while Watson brought up the rear of the field with some brake issues.



#10 Richard Milligan



#28 Paul Vernall in a lone ZR leads #12 Vince Gucciardo, #71 Matthew Sims and #81 Adam Cottam

The twilight race was another 8 lap race, Glen Wood did what we all expected by now and set off into the sunset, Richard Milligan was starting to look more settled and got ahead of Lindsay this time and crossed the line 2nd ahead of Lindsay in 3rd.

Jim Robertson was looking settled in 4th place once again but Akhurst decided he wanted to argue with that and after a strong start he was all over Robertson, At the end of 8 laps Robertson did finish 4th just a second and a half ahead of Akhurst while Elvin crossed the line 6th. Sims got a flying start to be up alongside Chester into turn 2 with Gucciardo, Cottam, Gibb and Vernall down to 12th off the start, the trio battling between each other while Vernall picked off Gibb, Cottam and then Gucciardo while Chester bridged the gap to Sims and got some breathing room. Gucciardo and Cottam started battling away and dropped off those in front. After 8 laps Chester lead Sims, Vernall, Gucciardo, Cottam and Gibb across the line with Stevenson in 13th once again. Mottram, Watson and Dodd battled away once again, Watson pushing to get to the front while Mottram once again came out on top ahead of Watson and Dodd.

The final race for the weekend under lights was a new experience for many, Glen Wood was a pre race casualty with an engine issue putting him to the sidelines. This left Lindsay and Milligan to battle at the front, Lindsay leading the way under the tricky night time conditions, Milligan having lap speed to match but the night environment helping Lindsay with his experience, Lindsay picking up the win from Milligan and Elvin 3rd. Akhurst got a great jump and mid race was 3rd before alternator issues kicked in which slowed his progress

dramatically, Robertson, Sims, Chester, Vernall, Gucciardo and Cottam were all in queue.



Robertson got ambushed on lap 2 by Sims, Chester, Vernall and Gucciardo and dropped four places while Cottam was behind, it didn't take him long to follow suit as Vernall got passed Chester and then Sims while Gucciardo pulled into pit lane leaving Cottam to follow Chester. A lap later Sims came to a halt while Vernall lead Chester and Cottam with Akhurst losing pace while Vernall caught Akhurst on the pack straight on the last lap, a pass coming onto the front straight got him to 4th ahead of Vernall with Chester and Cottam. John Stevenson picked off Robertson for 8th and Mottram and Dodd battled for 11th and 12th and Rodney Gibb limping home with minor gremlins, Mottram holding off Dodd across the line for 10th and 11th eventually.