

Solway Autograss Ireland



Story by: Malcolm Brown

Solway goes to Ireland!

Solway's members trip over the water to Ireland proved to be a successful weekend. The meeting at Nutts Corner in Co. Antrim was the fourth round of the Irish Championship.

The track was relatively new to the Irish as it was only the third time they had raced on it, mainly due to the bad weather they have been having. Until a fortnight ago the track was under a foot of water, however it proved to be a fast track with good wide corners and gave the spectators some interesting spills and thrills throughout the weekend.

Racing commenced with the Class 1's, with a total of nine cars Arthur Cunningham in SL12 was amongst the first grid of cars to go out. First off the line, Arthur kept a good lead throughout the whole of the race, unfortunately one of the Irish boys rolled his car on the last bend but the race stood and Arthur won. The 2nd grid of cars saw Mark Hodgson in SL3 also first off the line and keeping a good half a lap lead ahead of the rest of the field.

The Ladies race saw all classes out together with a staggered start. Unfortunately their first race was stopped due to a Class 8 rolling on the top corner. The re-run saw Karen Hodgson in SL3 with a good early lead,

Lin Cunningham passed her on the inside on lap 3. Just coming out of the final bend and Lynn Curnow in her Class 8 Special passed Lin with just yards to the chequered flag. Karen came home in 4th after being crossed on the line by an Irish special and Claire Lewthwaite SL2 in her Mini-pickup had a good start until she had to pull off the track due to losing her exhaust.

Class 2 saw our Scottish member Stevie Mason with his SL30 Suzuki having a good start leaving the grid in 4th position and keeping a consistent line throughout the race until he lost his place when he overshot the corner and finished in 6th place.

Kevin Foster with his SL76 Class 6 Mini was lying in 5th place until he passed an Irish Nova. He kept 4th place until he spun on the last lap and came home in 5th.

Richard Lewthwaite with his SL2 Mini-pickup had a good race after leaving the start in 4th place, passing another pick-up in the 3rd lap and finished in 2nd after having lost his exhaust.

Class 7 with SL7 Mike Hadden and SL6 Gary Graham saw both men put up a good fight in a very fast race, Mike came home in 3rd and unfortunately Gary didn't finish. After 3 re-runs of the Class 8's, Mark Johnston had a bad

start but the final result saw him come home in 4th.

Second heats and Arthur was first of the grid leading all the way and raced home in 1st place. Mark was next out and straight into the lead, sadly for Mark he was just passed coming out of the last bend and into the home straight.

Ladies 2nd heat and again Karen was first off the line and kept in first position until Lin passed her coming into the last lap. Lynn in her Special caught Lin coming out of the last bend and headed home to the chequered flag.

Richards 2nd heat saw him hold 2nd place for two laps until he was passed leaving him with a 3rd place.

Stevie Mason's 2nd heat saw him finish in 4th position.

Class 7 heat 2 after a re-run saw Mike into 4th place on the 1st bend. He finished in 3rd and Gary finished in 5th.

Marks 2nd heat saw him finish in 5th place due to engine problems.

Kevin's 2nd heat saw him leave the grid in 3rd position and keep this pace until he caught a tyre forcing him into 4th place until the final lap when he got back to 3rd and finished with this result.

Day 2 and the sun was shining with the Mens Class 1's and Arthur and Mark were out together for a fast and furious race. Mark was first off the grid and held it until the 3rd lap when one of the Irish cars nudged him and allowed Arthur to get through into 1st position passed the chequered flag with Mark in 2nd. Ladies 3rd race saw Karen with an early lead until the last lap when Lynn passed her on the outside followed by the Irish special. Karen finished in 3rd and Lynn had to pull off due to a puncture.

Class 2 saw Stevie having to pull off in his Suzuki half way down the

first straight due to a thrust bearing, this sadly was the finish for the rest of Stevie's racing for the weekend.

Class 5 saw Richard last off the grid but caught up with 4th car in his 3rd lap and kept 3rd position to the end.

Class 7 with Mike and Gary, saw Mike 4th of the grid then dropped down to 5th and then pulled his way back up for an excellent 3rd position. Gary was 4th off the grid and kept this place until he had to pull off without a finish.

Class 6 with Kevin in his Mini had a bad start but was consistent throughout and finished in 5th.

Class 8 with a 5 car grid saw Mark last off the grid and unfortunate had to pull off towards the end of the last lap without a finish.

The day was getting hotter as we hit the finals which saw the Class 1's with a 9 car grid and Mark had an excellent start and kept a good half lap lead throughout with Arthur into 2nd after 1st lap then down into 3rd place. Class 1' Mark won his race with a good clear lead, Arthur finished in 4th after dropping a place.

Ladies final saw Lin first with an early lead until the last bend when she was passed by one of the Irish girls and Lynn also passed her on the approach to the chequered flag. Karen had been lying in 2nd place until she got a puncture which saw her finish in 5th.

Class 5 and Richards final saw him lying in 4th place all the way although it was a very close race.

Class 7 Gary was last off the grid and had clutch problems but managed a 5th place. Class 6 saw Kevin's final with him 3rd off the grid. He caught a tyre on the top bend of his 3rd lap forcing him to pull off.

Class 8 saw Mark 1st off the grid and into the first corner in 2nd place. He dropped a place in his 2nd lap and then down to 4th place and finally pulling off in his 3rd lap.