



Post Race Newsletter

June 2021

Declan Lee Motorsport

Race 4-6 Silverstone Circuit June 19-20th 2021.

Pre event

With the problems encountered at Croft Circuit the team undertook engine testing at Silverstone. However, during the day, a skin rash meant Declan had to abandon the final session to head home. The testing had established that the current engine was down on power. Declan's physical condition worsened. 12 hours later Declan was taken by ambulance to hospital. Upon arrival Declan was immediately admitted. A preliminary and in the event correct diagnosis by the medical team, established that a rare but potentially very serious infections of the skin had developed. After 3 days treatment, Declan was discharged. At this point the driver was very weak and participation at the Silverstone event on 19th June was in doubt. The team pressed on with the installation of a new engine. The engine had to be run in and there was now insufficient time to do this on track. So, it was decided to prepare the car for public road use. The car was duly prepared and went through an MOT test. Then taxed and insured. The team knew they had to put a minimum of nine hours on the engine to provide maximum performance under the stresses of racing. Some road use prior to the drive to Silverstone plus a pre-event test day on Thursday provided the opportunity to get the engine run in sufficiently for the event. The driver meanwhile had recovered enough to drive the car. Then on Wednesday walked into a garage door and knocked himself out. Obviously under these circumstances it was not possible to proceed to the circuit or do any further driving. So, after 12 hours and a night's rest the driver felt he could safely drive the race car to the circuit. The new engine preparation was now further compromised by all of this, despite the driver getting up at 4.00 am to 'take the long road' to the circuit. The questions were would the engine or driver break down under the stress of competition with 40 equally matched cars with some of the best drivers in the country piloting them.

Practice & Qualification

The Thursday was hot and dry but focused on the engine preparation work. Friday practice was virtually a wash out with heavy rain. In these appalling conditions one session was deemed to be too risky and abandoned by the driver. The next two were littered with red flags and session interruption. The final one saw a driver collide with the race car, curiously on the start/finish straight. The damage was repairable and allowed the car to enter the qualification session on Saturday morning. The weather had relented, and the track was now dry. The key to this session was to take advantage of the early conditions on laps 1-4. The two best laps gave grid positions of 4th and 3rd respectively. This was a major improvement from last Septembers 24th and 23rd respectively.

Race Day Sunday 20th June

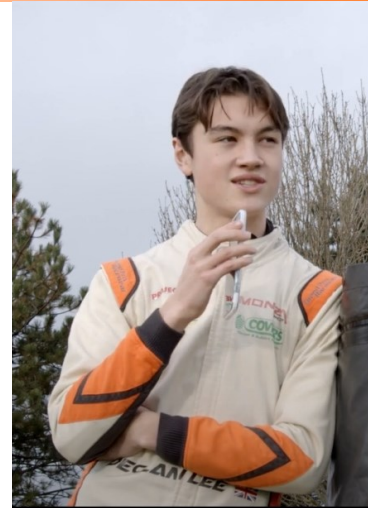
Race 1 brought greasy conditions in light drizzle rain, which the driver enjoys. The race was very close with less than 3 seconds separating the first 9 drivers for most of the race, in a field maximum of 40 cars. After dropping down a few places at the start Declan recovered to work his way back up to P4. A highlight was setting his first 'purple', setting the fastest lap in the race.

The starting positions for Race 2 are based on your second fastest qualifying lap. So, this was 3rd. Conditions had changed with heavy rain throughout the race. This presents challenges in the form of low visibility. This tended to 'stretch' the field until a Safety Car was deployed. By then Declan was running 7th. With only a few laps remaining the cars were now bunched together again but yellow flags were restricting opportunities to overtake. On the last corner on the last lap Declan got sufficient drive to pass two of the drivers in front of him on the finish line. So finished 5th.

The final race was a partially reversed Grid, leading Declan to start 2nd with intentions to follow the leader, Jack Harding. For the first 5 laps this went well running close behind the leader. However, behind Declan lurked Sam Smith (current Champion) and he pounced on Lap 6. With a compromised exit from Copse Corner, a further 4 cars were able to take advantage into Maggots Corner. Now 7th, Declan managed to recover 2 positions, but the driver began to tire, and a dog fight started around positions 8 – 4. Eventually the driver ran out 6th.

Overall an extremely impressive weekend. These were the best results since Karting in 2019. Coming back from the disappointment at Croft and then ill health, it was one of those occasions where determination was rewarded by the 'Racing Gods'. Although the chances of getting into the race weekend seemed very bleak whilst lying in bed with tubes sticking in the driver on Tuesday; to get on track by Saturday was an accomplishment. To then have career best results was wonderful.

It was only possible through the support of Wicks Engineering to deliver a new engine at very short notice; Hills Motorsport who had to fit it; the Driver's father arranging all the legal paperwork; the specialist MOT support to get the car on the road and the strangers on the side of the road (thank you Jim). Not least the superb medical support at the Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath. They prevented a serious situation becoming critical by early intervention and treatment. So well in fact that the driver was able to resume 48 hours after discharge. The driver slept on Sunday for 12 hours. The next round is in Wales for Races 7,8 & 9. This is at Anglesey circuit 9th-11th July.



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