

# TOUGH MONKEYS

## **Buckmore Park Thunder 60 Round 7: 16/09/07**

Oh, the highs and lows of karting. Only a few hours previous to round 7 of the Thunder 60 championship I was on a high having claimed my first winner's trophy at Buckmore. Now I'm looking back at a distinctly average race that will go down as one best forgotten, for no real fault of my own.

I'd gone in to the race full of confidence and was in a great mood surrounded by all my mates at the club. Simon Rudd was off on holiday so it gave the rest of us mortals a chance of success. Even Hugo and Sam weren't racing tonight so three of the top six drivers were missing, so this was an excellent opportunity to pinch 4<sup>th</sup> in the championship and try to move closer to Steve Jnr and Andrew.

Sadly, this was going to prove to be a frustrating night. Following the briefing I discovered I had drawn kart 69 for the second month running, and was delighted by this given what a great machine it had proved last month, steering me to 3<sup>rd</sup>. We lightweights took to the circuit first for qualifying, and I brought 69 up to speed. It became quickly apparent though that the poor creature had suffered a hard month since last we met and was exhibiting a number of troublesome quirks. Wicked understeer, possibly the worst of any karts I've driven at Buckmore coupled with a sticking brake pedal which contributed to my first spin in many months on lap one of qualifying. My biggest mistake was that I chose not to pit in to replace it, and I would go on to regret this decision.

My troubles left me starting 14<sup>th</sup> on the grid and well off of the pace. I was just ahead of Adam on the grid, and in fairness even Steve Jnr wasn't far ahead in 9<sup>th</sup>. Andrew Mollison, who I would later be giving a lift back to his new University in Derby, had steered his kart brilliantly to a pole time of under 50 seconds and matched almost to the thousandth the time I set in the Tyro class earlier that day. My qualifying lap was an epic 0.8 seconds slower, and I knew I had problems.

The race got underway and I was immediately stuck in traffic and getting knocked about. Whatever places I made I also lost, and on a number of occasions was knocked off of the track. Most notably was on the run up to café when the kart I was passing just drove me straight up onto the concrete edging.

I made the decision to change my kart, basically sacrificing any chance of a decent finish, but I couldn't see any spare karts in the pit lane. I think Steve Snr had killed off half of the fleet in the Tyro race earlier so we were short of back up karts. So, I trundled on towards a lowly finish. I had pretty much given up after about ten minutes as for all my efforts I was going nowhere.

From about mid distance I came up behind Justin Dobson, one of the leading heavyweight runners. I was a little quicker than him, but not enough to get past him cleanly. I did take one lunge at him into Conways, but we came together and Justin was

sent wide. I acknowledged by balls up and waved him back through and decided that was it for the night. The nearest lightweight was no where to be seen and I wasn't really racing for position so I let him get on with it. Soon enough Grant Wright and Gerrard Hubbert joined the scrap and I was more than happy to sit behind then and watch a cracking duel take place.

I spent many minutes parked right behind Grant, never challenging for the position. On one occasion he got out of shape and waved me through. I gesticulated to him that I had no desire to go past and he soon realised what I was doing and he carried on his fight, occasionally pointing to his back bumper in an effort to get me to push him down the straights!

The race ended and I had finished a disappointing 13<sup>th</sup>, and will take this as a dropped round. I had missed a glorious opportunity to improve my standings in the championship, but I still went away happy with my work from earlier in the day. A massive congratulations to Andrew for finishing where he started and claiming his first solo victory at Buckmore. With Steve Jnr coming home in second it pretty much closed the door on sneaking onto the end of season podium, but 4<sup>th</sup> is only a point away and I have moved further away from 6<sup>th</sup>. I'll hope for better luck in final round in October, by which time the upgraded Thunder fleet should be available to us.