

Niven and Nelson star

INGLSTON hosted its fiftieth meeting on Sunday when, despite miserable weather and track conditions through the morning and early afternoon, Scottish Motor Racing Club found themselves with a much better day's sport than the starter's list — rather uninspiring for a national event — suggested before the action began. In this SMT Trophy meeting, the feature race was a two-part saloon thrash won handsomely by a back-from-the-wilderness Douglas Niven, while Brian Nelson took the similar two-part Libre event after a most entertaining forty laps.

FORMULA FORD — 15 laps

Colin MacLean from Easter Ross, going very well in Scottish events this season, was well beaten from pole position when the flag dropped, and Donald MacLeod's 69F streaked off ahead of Graham Cuthbert's similar car and Ingliston FF championship leader Jay Pollock's Crossle 20F. By lap four MacLean was three seconds clear and apparently well on his way to another win. Next time round, Cuthbert waved Pollock through before Lefthander and retired directly to the paddock. MacLean and Lawson, both in Hawkes, had ambitions about third place but although Lawson closed up from time to time in traffic, MacLean never lost the advantage.

Suddenly it became clear that MacLeod was having trouble lapping backmarkers, and at Caravan on lap 14 Pollock had closed right up when MacLeod was baulked. The Crossle darted through on the inside and got clear away to win by 2s. Doug Bassett's Nike, after some spins in practice, stalled on the grid, got away almost at the end, but romped through to fifth place and set fastest lap.

1, J. Pollock (Crossle 20F), 15m 20.4s (60.43 mph); 2, D. MacLeod (Lotus 69F); 3, C. MacLean (Hawke DL2B); 4, S. Lawson (Hawke DL2B). — Fastest lap: Bassett (Nike Mk 6), 59.4s (62.42 mph).

FORMULE LIBRE (part one) — 20 laps

If a humorist were trying to invent a name for a Scottish award in the haggis-and-Harry-Lauder tradition, he might well come up with something not unlike the Auchentoshan Trophy, which was put up for the main allcomers event by former racing and rallyman John Milne, chairman of a distillery firm producing Auchentoshan malt whisky. Some sports and GT machinery was mixed in with the single-seaters, and during a very rainy practice session Guy Edwards in the Barclays International Lola T290 tied for fastest time with John Pollock's Lotus 69F2.

In clouds of spray off the line, Brian Nelson's 2-litre Hart BDA engined Crossle and Pollock's Lotus-FVA played chicken towards the Esses; from the longer

outside line away from the start, Nelson made it first and never lost the lead. Edwards went well throughout in a lonely third place, although by lap three he was nearly six seconds down on Pollock, who was himself trailing Nelson by one and a half seconds. Johnny Blades and John Calvert in Atlantic Lotus and March respectively took up fourth and fifth places, followed by Bernie Hunter, running on three wets and an intermediate on another Lotus Formula Atlantic car. He spun at Lefthander and had to visit the pits to have the low-tension lead replaced.

Nelson was passing tail-enders as early as lap six, nudging one of them after the hairpin, and although Pollock got fairly close once or twice during all the traffic driving, the Crossle won the first part of the event by 5.3s. Calvert put in a big push over the last five laps, but was still two-fifths of a second behind Blades at the end.

1, B. Nelson (2.0 Crossle-Hart 22F), 18m 55.3s (65.02 mph); 2, J. Pollock (1.6 Lotus-FVA 69); 3, G. Edwards (2.0 Lola T290); 4, J. Blades (1.6 Lotus 69). — Fastest lap: Nelson, 55.0s (67.42 mph).

SPECIAL SALOONS (part one) — 15 laps

The Celtic Homes Escort-BDA has had a very up-and-down season, but after hearing from Frank Gardner, who drove it in its Alan Mann days, how it was supposed to be set up for racing, Douglas Niven and company had devoted a full month to rebuilding the car the way Frank said it ought to be. Changes include new suspension all round, lighter springs, higher-profile tyres and altered ride heights. In wet-road practice, though, fastest time was put up by Jimmy Veitch, going like a bomb this season now that he's back with FWD; with Niven second and Eric Smith's Cooper S third. Best of the one-litres was Andy Barton, now in his very special hybrid Cooper with 997cc Ford SCA aboard.

When the SMT Trophy race got under way, it was Niven who made a sparkling start from the middle of the front row, straight into the lead. Smith just beat Veitch off the line, but Jimmy got ahead at the first gear change and finished the lap right behind the Escort. For the first six laps, Niven never got more than eight

lengths ahead; often, there were only two lengths in it. Bill Dryden in the SMT Firenza, not at its best in these conditions, was originally fourth, but fell to Barton's charging one-litre out of the hairpin third time round.

Veitch tried as hard as he could to stay with the Escort on the slightly drying track, closing right up at Arena and Lefthander, but on lap seven Niven managed to get a second and a half ahead, and contact had been lost. The margin stayed much the same to the end.

1, A. Niven (2.0 Escort-BDA), 15m 56.8s (58.13 mph); 2, J. Veitch (1.3 Cooper S); 3, E. Smith (1.3 Cooper S); 4, A. Barton (1.0 Cooper-SCA). — Fastest lap over 1300cc: Niven, 62.2s (59.61 mph); 1300cc: Veitch, 62.8s (59.04 mph); 1000cc: Barton, 63.0 (58.86 mph).

MODSPORTS — 15 laps

The rather thin modsports field was padded out by some of the saloons which hadn't qualified for the SMT Trophy race, but this unprepossessing entry was enlivened by the fact that somebody was obviously selling kamikaze pills on the dummy grid. Two cars had push starts, Roddy Wyllie's beautifully turned-out but perpetually unlucky Dumfries Motor Company Triumph GT6 broke its diff in the middle of the pack, and in an indescribable four - cars - into - the - space - for - two escapade at the Esses on lap one, John Abasalom's Ginetta was shunted hard and head-on into the Armco, Neil Smith's Mini Clubman grunched to a halt behind it, while Bob

Hutchison's Sprite crawled into the infield to retire.

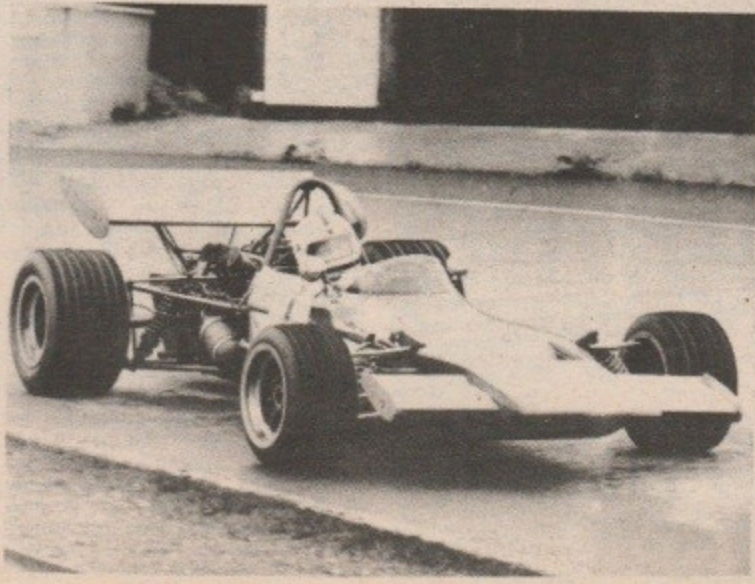
Miles Hopperton took the lead and eventually won by 15s. Ian Hall's Sprite was second at the end of the first lap, but spun and let John Fletcher through, until Fletcher's Elan did a 180-degree spin into the inside Armco in front of the main grandstand doing itself no good at all. Hall gyrated again at the Arena entrance on the seventh but dropped only one place, while Malcolm Nugent, who'd been minding his own business found himself in a comfortable second place.

1, M. Hopperton (1.3 Midget), 16m 26.6s (56.39 mph); 2, M. Nugent (1.8 Lotus Elan); 3, I. Hall (1.1 Sprite); 4, A. Souter (1.6 Lotus Elan). Fastest lap over 1150cc: Fletcher, 63.6s (58.30 mph); under 1150cc: Hall, 64.8s (57.22 mph).

FORMULE LIBRE (part two) — 20 laps

Having finished the first part of the Auchentoshan Trophy race 5.3s behind Brian Nelson, John Pollock bombed off into the lead to try to make up the deficit. Guy Edwards made a great start to slot the Barclays International Lola into second place towards the Esses, with Calvert behind and Nelson fourth.

Edward's second place didn't last the lap. Going into the hairpin impossibly fast, he spun on to the outside grass and connected with the barrier. Calvert, who was just behind, had no option but to come to a complete if momentary halt. Marshals signalled to Edwards to stay where he was, but he made himself 100 per cent unpopular by trying to get away again in the middle of the pack. Coming off wet grass on to dry track he spun round



WINNER of the second heat of the Libre race was John Pollock. However, he had to give best to Brian Nelson on aggregate.

again, still at the hairpin, and collected another car. Edwards restarted yet again, by now spraying bits of minced Lola on to the track, and did another full lap before inevitably retiring into the pits. Ill-advised, would you say?

Campbell Graham's Crossle 19F and Bernie Hunter's Lotus 69 Atlantic tangled at the hairpin a few laps later, and when the Lotus's nose was shunted off, the Crossle ran over it and eventually retired with a puncture. Hunter spun at Lefthander two laps later, stalled and couldn't restart. All this time, John Pollock was creating a five-second gap between himself and Nelson, who was obviously not at full stretch, while Jay Pollock was flinging his FF Crossle around with gay abandon in midfield. Calvert, who'd been ahead at the start until finding himself mixed-up with the Lola, was really tigering at the heels of Blades's Lotus which had got ahead during that first-lap melee. Although Blades was trailing part of his roll bar along the track, it didn't seem to make all that much difference to the Lotus's handling.

In the later stages, Nelson put on the pressure to catch Pollock and try to win both halves of the race as well as the whole thing on aggregate, and the Pollock/Nelson and Blades/Calvert battles really made for excellent racing. However, Nelson left it a lap or two too late. It was only on lap 19 that he got right behind along by Southstand towards the hairpin, perhaps rehearsing the pounce which he was hoping to make. The move didn't come off, and Nelson had to stay in second place, although the winner on aggregate by 4.1s. Calvert, who made fastest lap of the race in his tremendous chase after Blades, tried everything to get alongside the Lotus, but Blades couldn't be flustered and is not in any case the man to leave an unnecessary inch and a half on his inside.

1, J. Pollock (1.6 Lotus-FVA 69), 18m 32.4s (66.65 mph); 2, B. Nelson (2.0 Crossle-Hart 22F); 3, J. Blades (1.6 Lotus 69); 4, J. Calvert (1.6 March 722). — Fastest lap: Calvert, 53.6s (69.18 mph).

Aggregate: 1, Nelson, 37m 27.9s; 2, Pollock, 37m 32.0s; 3, Blades, 38m 40.6s; 4, Calvert, 38m 41.4s.

SPECIAL SALOONS (part two) — 15 laps

The story of the second part of the SMT Trophy race was that Douglas Niven led the whole way; but once again there was some excellent racing behind him. Jimmy Veitch actually moved first off the line, but a gear-changing problem dropped him back between the second-row pair. Niven and Smith came round in the first two places at the end of the lap, and when Veitch had to pull into the pits Niven had an almost unbeatable arithmetical advantage

in the aggregate times.

Bill Dryden had the SMT Firenza, now getting the power down on to a dry road, going really well from the second row of the grid but it took him until lap four to pass the incredible Andy Barton, who was in the process of obliterating not only his own 1000cc record, but the 1300cc record as well. By the end of lap seven Dryden had closed right on the Escort's tail coming into the Arena, and it was here that Niven suddenly felt the extra push of 2½ litres of Blydenstein power as well as his own 2 litres of BDA!

Round the back of the circuit the rear end of the Firenza began to get rather twitchy, and on lap eleven Dryden spun right round at the pits entrance, though he held it well and continued only one place down. When he had another spin in front of the grandstand next time round, he decided to pull off on to an exit road.

1, A. Niven (2.0 Escort-BDA), 14m 27.8s (64.05 mph); 2, A. Barton (1.0 Cooper-SCA); 3, E. Smith (1.3 Cooper S); 4, J. Fyda (1.0 Agra Imp). — Fastest lap over 1300cc: Niven, 56.2s (65.98 mph); 1300cc: Smith and E. Paterson (1.3 Colvend Mini), 58.0s (63.93 mph); 1000cc: Barton, 56.8s (65.28 mph), new class record. Aggregate: 1, Niven, 30m 24.6s; 2, Barton, 30m 38.6s; 3, Smith, 31m 01.0s; 4, Fyda, 31m 29.4s.

FORMULE LIBRE to 1500cc and FORMULA FORD — 15 laps

Last race of the afternoon looked a bit of a hotch-potch, with Formula Ford entries being accepted to make up the numbers on the day of the meeting. However, it had the great advantage that the capacity limit gave most of the Scottish single-seater drivers the chance of an outright win for a change.

Doug Bassett's Nike led away from the start, closely pursued by Douglas Thomson's Ecosse-Imp. However, Bassett, who may have been the victim of some oil spilled on the dummy grid by a non-starter in this race, lost it completely crossing the line at the end of lap one, went off into the barrier and took the Ecosse-Imp with him. Neither car was able to continue, John Barr's BT28 took over the lead and held it safely until lap eight, when Brian Harrison in the turbo-charged Vixen began to close up. Harrison actually snatched first place at the hairpin on lap 12, but hadn't a hope of getting round the corner as well, and spun down to fourth place.

R.F.

1, J. Barr (1.0 Brabham BT28), 14m 14.4s (65.10 mph); 2, E. Labinjoh (1.1 Fisher Spyder); 3, B. Harrison (1.4 Vixen-Imp VB5); 4, Clive Reeves (1.6 Mallock U2 Mark 9BFF). — Fastest lap: Harrison, 54.0s (68.67 mph).