



Race reports

A wonderful grid of cars assembled at the Brands Hatch Indy circuit for three races in the American Speedfest... 38 cars of which 34 were big V8-engined. We were blessed to be joined by 4 amazing cars from overseas, 4 from South Africa and 4 from Europe, who had been racing at Zandvoort last week; they were all first-timers at Brands, so they had modest grid positions. As the weekend progressed they would get quicker by leaps and bounds. The Chodosh brothers had repaired the black No.8 Corvette since their contretemps with the Silverstone pit wall last time out. Welcome returnees Simon Lane (red 165 Camaro) and Rikki Cann (that giant light blue No.19 Aston Martin V8) showed well, 9th and 12th.

Qualifying

35 cars made it through qualifying, some of them with driver changes. Qualifying was over by 09h30 with Peter Samuels and Simon Cripps (both in MGBs), Chris Williamson (Ford Falcon) and Chris Wilson (Dodge Dart) suffering from the early start or on track gremlins. No.99 Michael Saunders in his light green Ford Escort Mark I Mexico was over a second quicker than the rest, so the pattern of the weekend was set this early. 80 Mathew Smith (the multi-coloured TVR), 39 Cheng Lim & Phil James (red RAM SC Cobra replica), 2 Tim Davis (white TVR Tuscan). 22 Marcus Bicknell (yellow Ford Ascar) and 61 William Bryan (TVR Griffith 200) made up the first three rows for the grid of Race 1.

34 cars were allowed to start; as Geoff Hanson had engine troubles in his new Chevy Camaro, all 3 reserves, Graham Walden (41 TVR Tuscan) in 8th, the Carters (74 MGB GT V8) in 29th and Chris Wilson (34 Dodge Dart) in 34th were able to start race 1.

Race 1

Saturday at 14h30 under a blue sky, burning sun and 28°, Michael Saunders led us through for a rolling start in front of a sizeable crowd (45,000 people over the two days). The top runners got away in grid order, No 2 Tim Davis in the white TVR making his presence felt round Druids. Phil James in the red 39 RAM SC Cobra held him off for second. At the end of lap 4 the top ten order was 99, 39, 2, 80, 22, 61, 65, 41, 165 and 97. Marcus Bicknell (yellow 22 Ascar) had brake fade for a lap and was mobbed by several cars including teammate Andrew knight (black 97 Ascar), dropping to 9th.

No.99 Michael Saunders in his light green Ford Escort Mark I Mexico led the way with the red No.39 RAM SC Cobra of Phil James as they pulled a lead out from the pack. No.2 Tim Davis in the white TVR was 3rd till lap 7 and Matt Smith 4th who also faded slightly at the same time.

The Robinsons' No.9 Camaro and Peter Samuels' No.84 MGB GT were out in the first laps, with Tony Paxman (Mo.157 Escort) and Rikki Cann (No.19 Aston Martin) retiring later. No.129 Chris Wilson in his Dodge Dart did not quite make it to the end but was listed as a finisher with 14 laps completed.

Phil James had stayed within a second of the leader Michael Saunders until they started lapping back markers on lap 6 (No.37 Ken Angell in his BMW and No.191 our lady driver from South Africe Paige Lindenberg in her giant Ford Fairlane being the tailenders at that time). No.41 Graham Walden in his TVR took a spin but was back on track and racing. Simeon Chodosh in the No.8 Corvette and Charlie Holmes' No.76 Cobra had a good battle between them. No.88 Simon Cripps in his MGB Roadster was the car on the move, having qualified badly; he moved from 33rd at the start to 11th by lap 8 and 5th at the chequered flag (17 laps in 15 minutes and 22 seconds by the leader). Yes, No.99 Michael Saunders in his light green Ford Escort Mark I Mexico had won by 11 seconds over Phil James, Mat Smith and Tim Davis.

1	99	A	Michael SAUNDERS Ford Escort Mexico
2	39	A	LIM / JAMES RAM
3	80	B	Mathew SMITH TVR Chimaera
4	2	A	Tim DAVIS TVR Tuscan
5	88	C	Simon CRIPPS MGB Roadster
6	61	A	William BRYAN TVR Griffith
7	65		Jonathan DU TOIT Chevrolet
8	165	A	Simon LANE Chevrolet Camaro
9	23	B	Peter LINDENBERG Ford Shelby GT
10	22	A	Marcus BICKNELL Ford Fusion ASCAR V8 Mk3 9

Fastest lap was by Michael Saunders in 53.096 seconds with Phil James just 3 hundredths of a second behind. You can see lap charts and all the times at <https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=MSVR/2019/192251v8c.pdf>

We all sank dreamlessly into fettling our cars and rejoicing in the club's excellent BBQ until the small hours (well, actually, 8pm when the Champions League Final started in TV), all except the luckless Geoff Hanson who had given up on the Camaro and had driven to Bristol and back to pick up his faithful Datsun 240Z.

Race 2

Sunday morning was bright but with the promise of a cooler front arriving and possible rain by tea time.

We were rolling at 11 o'clock with Saunders chased by Cheng Lim (having taken over the red Cobra) while No.80 Mathew Smith (the multi-coloured TVR) and No.2 Tim Davis (white TVR Tuscan) were neck and neck into Druids hairpin. No.81 Robin Gray's Pontiac Trans Am had ended up against the right hand barrier at the exit of Druids so the safety car was out for 3 laps while they recovered the car.

No.99 Michael Saunders in his light green Ford Escort Mark I Mexico proceeded to pull away, leading Cheng Lim by 5 second three laps later. No.88 Simon Cripps in his MGB Roadster was back where he belonged this time and was battling for 3rd with Mo.80 Mat Smith in the colourful TVR. The No.8 black Corvette with Adam Chodosh at the wheel (lap 8) and No. 84 Peter Samuels in his MGB GT both had spins and continued. Cheng, Mat and Simon battled to the end, as did No.165 Simon Lane (red Chevrolet Camaro) with No.22 Marcus Bicknell (yellow Ascar) for 5th. Du Toit, Campagne, Cann and Knight finished in a gaggle to make up the top ten.

There were 7 non-finishers this time... Izaaks, Williamson, Carter, Gray, Adriaans, Stewart and Jon Ellison who had suffered a coming-together with Marcus Bicknell at Druids on lap 7 (racing incident decreed the Clerk of the Course).

Race 2 results

1	99	A	Michael SAUNDERS	Ford Escort Mexico
2	88	C	Simon CRIPPS	MGB Roadster
3	80	B	Mathew SMITH	TVR Chimaera
4	39	A	Cheng LIM	RAM SC
5	165	A	Simon LANE	Chevrolet Camaro
6	22	A	Marcus BICKNELL	Ford Fusion ASCAR V8 Mk3
7	65		Jonathan DU TOIT	Chevrolet Nova
8	110	B	Michael CAMPAGNE	Corvette
9	19	A	Rikki CANN	Aston Martin V8
10	97	A	Andrew KNIGHT	Pontiac ASCAR

Fastest lap was the winner No.99 Michael Saunders (Ford Escort Mark I Mexico) in 53.162, second fastest being Marcus Bicknell in the yellow Joey Logano liveried Ascar, having made some set-up changes to his new mount, in 54.080 seconds.

Race 3

By late afternoon the clouds had come over and our micro rain forecasting apps were all showing a possibility of a downpour. It did not come, the front drifting away to the north and east.

Although Bernie had told the drivers that the top ten finishers in Race 2 would be reversed on the Race 3 grid, when the 28 cars got to the assembly area the officials had it down as top five reversed. They were not to be persuaded otherwise so Andrew Knight was denied his first pole position start! Instead, Simon Lane had the honour, with Cheng Lim alongside him. Cripps, Smith, Bicknell, Saunders made up the 2nd and 3rd rows.

As the red lights went out on the rolling start at 17h15, with all drivers two abreast and driving with care and courtesy, it was the inside lane of cars, the right hand side of the track, who got bunched up. No.88 Simon Cripps in his light blue MGB Roadster and No.22 Marcus Bicknell in the yellow Ascar found the way open in the left hand lane and stormed round Paddock Hill Bend in quick line astern. At the end of lap 1 Cripps and Bicknell were holding off 99 (Saunders) 165 (Lane) 39 (Lim) 80 (Smith) 110 (Campagne) 65 (Jonathan Du Toit) 97 (Knight) and 19 (Cann).

There was no stopping No.99 Michael Saunders (Ford Escort Mark I Mexico). He overtook No.22 Marcus Bicknell on lap 2 and took the lead over No.88 Simon Cripps on lap 4. Marcus Bicknell was running 54 second laps but with the passage of the race Saunders, Cripps and Davis all got into the 53s.

On lap 4 the No.57 Chevrolet Bel Air of Mark Du Toit (yes there were two Du Toits) dumped a line of oil on the pit straight and parked off to the left. Marcus Bicknell was among those who hit this oil at 90 mph accelerating and jack-knifed left and right trying to avoid contact with the pit wall. A lap later, maybe because of the stress caused in these violent swerves, Marcus's steering track rod on the left side broke in two and the car was thrown off at Clearways, stopping a metre before the Armco. He parked at Graham Hill bend behind the new marshal's post and retired on lap 7.

On lap 11 Cheng Lim spun on the start finish straight, not on the same oil that the No.57 Chevrolet Bel Air of Mark Du Toit had left on lap 4, but due to a wheel hub failure. The safety car was deployed; a few laps later, the race was red-flagged and ended without any further on-track action.

So No.99 Michael Saunders (Ford Escort Mark I Mexico) completed his clean sweep of all three race wins, No.88 Simon Cripps (MGB Roadster) was 2nd and No.2 Tim Davis (TVR Tuscan) was 3rd.

Race 3 results

1	99	A	Michael SAUNDERS	Ford Escort Mexico
2	88	C	Simon CRIPPS	MGB Roadster
3	2	A	Tim DAVIS	TVR Tuscan
4	165	A	Simon LANE	Chevrolet Camaro
5	80	B	Mathew SMITH	TVR Chimaera
6	110	B	Michael CAMPAGNE	Corvette
7	65		Jonathan DU TOIT	Chevrolet Nova
8	19	A	Rikki CANN	Aston Martin V8
9	95	A	Dave STEWART	TVR Griffith
10	157	B	Tony PAXMAN	Ford Escort Mk1

... followed by Charlie Holmes (GD Cobra), Guy Samuels (MGB GT V8), Barry Holmes (MGB GT V8). Andrew Knight (Pontiac Ascar), Simeon Chodosh (Corvette), Mark Bowd (Ford GT40) and Chris Wilson (Dodge Dart). 5 other cars failed to finish and 6 were disqualified for yellow flag and safety car infringements.

The winners and the awards

As Bernie was still working with the Clerk of the Course on the safety car overtaking issues, Marcus Bicknell announced the various winners and Andy Lambert made the presentations...

Race 1 winners were the same as Race 2 winners:

Class A	Michael Saunders (Ford Escort Mark I Mexico)
Class B	Mat Smith (TVR Chimaera)
Class C	Guy Samuels (MGB V8)

Race 3 (the grand final which should have been 18 minutes long) winners:

Class A	1 st	Michael Saunders (Ford Escort Mark I Mexico)
	2 nd	Simon Cripps
	3 rd	Tim Davis
Class B	1 st	Mat Smith (TVR Chimaera)
	2 nd	Michael Campagne (No.110 Corvette)
	3 rd	Jonathan du Toit
Class C	1 st	Guy Samuels (MGB V8)
	2 nd	Barry Holmes (No.77 MGB GT V8)
	3 rd	Max Boodie (No.91 Ford Mustang)

Best Overseas Driver of the weekend: Michael Campagne (No.110 Corvette) got a trophy and Joey Logano No.22 cap and T-shirt from Marcus.

Driver of the Meeting: Charlie Holmes (No.76 Gardner Douglas Cobra) ("best improvement; a driver who had never raced at Brands before and who improved during the weekend from 59 seconds to 55 seconds and who wears the biggest smile) got a trophy.

Bernie's Sports Racing & V8s warmly thank all the overseas drivers for coming and racing with us!!

Report noted by Cass Lambert age 11 and written up by Marcus Bicknell from the official results sheets at

<https://www.tsl-timing.com/file/?f=MSVR/2019/192251v8c.pdf>

Do please write to us with any further details of your spins, incidents or break-downs and we will be happy to re-issue and correct the final version when it goes on the web site. Email marcus@bicknell.com please

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19	Rikki Cann	Aston Martin V8	
37	Ken Angell	BMW 328i E36	
57	Mark du Toit	Chevrolet Bel Air	
165	Simon Lane	Chevrolet Camaro	
9	Barry Robinson	Chevrolet Camaro V8	
8	Simeon/Adam Chodosh	Chevrolet Corvette	
65	Jonathan du Toit	Chevrolet Nova	
491	Geoff Hanson	Chevrolet Camaro	
157	Tony Paxman	Ford Escort MK1	
23	Peter Lindeberg	Ford Shelby GT	
191	Paige Lindenberg	Ford Fairline	
69	Dan Williamson	Ford Falcon Sprint	
28	Michael Campagne	Ford Galaxie	
1	Mark Bowd	Ford GT40	
99	Michael Saunders	Ford MK 1 Escort Mexico	
91	Max Boodie	Ford Mustang	
616	Armand Adriaans	Ford Mustang	
22	Marcus Bicknell	Ford Fusion ASCAR	
76	Charles Holmes	Gardner Douglas Cobra	
29	Guy Samuels	MGB GT V8	
84	Peter Samuels.	MGB GT V8	
77	Barry Holmes	MGB GT V8	
68	Simon Cripps	MGB Roadster	light blue
74	Peter Carter/Carter	MGB GT V8	
43	Jasper Izaaks	Plymouth Fury	
97	Andrew Knight	Pontiac ASCAR	
81	Robin Gray	Pontiac Trans Am	
39	Cheng Lim	RAM SC Cobra	
80	Mathew Smith	TVR Chimaera	
196	Jon Ellison	TVR Griffin 200	
95	Dave Stewart	TVR Griffith	
61	William Bryan	TVR Griffith 200	
2	Tim Davis	TVR Tuscan	
41	Graham Walden	TVR Tuscan Challenge RV8	
129	Chris Wilson	Dodge Dart	
	Andrew Riley	MGB V8	
	Keith Vaughan Williams	TVR Chimaera	