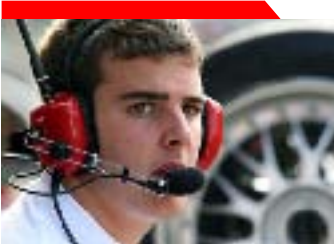


Avon Tyres British GT Championship

Race report: Brands Hatch, Kent 26 & 27 August 2006



'I had a brilliant stint on Sunday and it would have been fantastic to take the double win, but that's racing. We can't win the championship at Silverstone but we will be giving our all to try to clinch second.'

Bradley Ellis

Rounds 12 and 13

Ellis takes spoils on home soil

Croydon's Bradley Ellis sealed his third GTC class victory of the season when he and team mate Alex Mortimer seized the spoils in round 12 of the Avon Tyres British GT Championship at Brands Hatch on Saturday 26 August. But the dynamic duo didn't have it all their own way, the gearbox blew as Mortimer took the chequered flag on Saturday, forcing Team RPM to change to the spare, non-sequential, gearbox for round 13 on Sunday 27 August where they narrowly missed out on a second win but scored another podium finish.

The Team RPM pairing looked promising right from practice on Saturday morning, where Ellis and Mortimer ran quickest. Qualifying saw changeable conditions, with Ellis going out on a wet track, which dried towards the end of Mortimer's session. Problems with traffic, however, meant the pair only mustered fourth and eighth in class on the grid for the respective races.

The sun emerged for round 12 on Saturday afternoon and Ellis made a blinding start from 10th overall. Taking a place off the line and slicing past Tom Ferrier's Motorbase Performance Porsche into Paddock, Ellis was up to eighth and third in class by the end of lap one and up to seventh on lap two. Chasing down the two Trackspeed Porsches of Jonny Lang and Ryan Hooker, Ellis joined a thrilling three-way battle as they crossed the line for lap three, running bumper-to-bumper exiting Graham Hill bend. Ellis gained the advantage and passed Hooker up the inside of Surtees for second in class on lap three.

With Lang firmly in Ellis' sights, the south Londoner closed to within three tenths on lap five but dropped a few tenths the following lap. Back on the limit for lap seven and Ellis sliced the gap by two tenths and lined up to pass Lang for the GTC class lead at Hawthorn on lap eight.

Some lightening lap times helped Ellis pull out a comfortable lead from Lang before pitting to hand over to Mortimer. Despite exiting the pits ahead of Matt Allison at the wheel of the number five Trackspeed car, Mortimer was jumped by Phil Glew in the Motorbase Performance Porsche, Hooker and the Team Tiger Marcos, leaving him fourth in class.

Fast Facts – GTC class

Round 12

Grid position: 4th
Finish position: 1st
Car's fastest lap: 1'35.554

Round 13

Grid position: 8th
Finish position: 3rd
Car's fastest lap: 1'35.950

Results in class

15–17.04 2006 **Oulton Park**
Round 1: 4th | Round 2: 4th

21.05 2006 **Donington Park**
Round 3: 3rd

03–05.06 2006 **Pau, France**
Round 4: 5th | Round 5: 1st

24–25.06 2006 **Mondello Park**
Round 6: 2nd | Round 7: 9th

15–16.07 2006 **Snetterton**
Round 8: DNF | Round 9: DNF

12–13.08 2006 **Rockingham**
Round 10: DNF/9th | Round 11: 1st

Enquiries and information

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Mortimer immediately made up places, taking Glew into Paddock and Hooker into Hawthorn, finishing a fantastic opening lap second in class. With contact between the Team Tiger Marcos and Tom Kimber-Smith in the Panoz at the bottom of Graham Hill bend, Mortimer took the GTC class lead on lap 24.

The GTC battle continued to rage, with just over two seconds covering the top three cars on lap 26, but Mortimer began to experience gearbox problems. Despite nursing the car home, Mortimer managed to stave off the advances of Phil Keen in the Trackspeed Porsche in the closing stages. The gearbox gremlins were kept at bay until Mortimer took the chequered flag and the gearbox unceremoniously blew across the line.

Team RPM's mechanics worked tirelessly through the night to change to the spare 'H-pattern' gearbox, which presented its challenges, as Ellis had never raced with one before. Despite having no time to test the spare gearbox, Mortimer made a solid start from 15th on the grid overall on Sunday, dropping one place but managing to regain it by the end of lap one.

An incident on lap five brought the safety car out on track for two laps, but after a good re-start Mortimer was up to 14th overall and eighth in class. Up to 12th and sixth in class by lap nine, Mortimer passed Phiroze Bilimoria in the Vauxhall Monaro for overall position at Graham Hill bend, followed by the ailing Adam Wilcox in the JMH Ferrari for fifth in class.

Mortimer made steady progress through the field up to third in class with Matt Griffin retiring the sister Team RPM car on lap 11 and Chris Beighton going off at Westfield on lap 12, causing another safety car period. As the safety car went back out, the pit stop window opened, and the majority of the field piled into the pits whilst Mortimer went in one lap later.

Ellis rejoined the race third in class and ready for the green flag on lap 16. Clearly at ease despite the new gearbox, Ellis began to push and took Ferrier exiting Graham Hill bend for second in class, but Ferrier re-took the place at Westfield. The ensuing laps saw a five-car GTC battle for second place, which thrilled the Brands Hatch crowds, as Hooker led from Ferrier.

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Ellis closed on David Ashburn in the Trackspeed GT3 Porsche and Ferrier as the trio ran bumper-to-bumper for much of lap 21 but maintained position. Just after the 40-minute marker, an incident at Druids meant a third safety car period was required for two laps as Sam Blogg in the Lotus Sport Exige GT3 separated Ellis from Hooker and Ferrier.

With Hooker and Ferrier locked in battle, Ellis passed Blogg after the re-start on lap 29 and set his sights on the battle for the GTC lead. Racing nose to tail across the line to start lap 30, the trio stayed glued to one another throughout the lap, allowing Ellis to pull off an amazing move down the inside at Hawthorn on Ferrier.

Not content with second, Ellis continued his charge and masterfully slipped up the inside of Hooker at Druids for the lead. Despite a simply stunning drive from the Croydon teenager, another win was not meant to be. Ellis tried to pass the slower Barwell Motorsport Aston Martin up the inside at Druids but the move didn't pay off and Hooker, Ferrier and Hunter Abbott were quick to take advantage, demoting Ellis to fourth.

With only one lap left, Ellis was defenceless to fight back. Following the race, however, Mortimer and Ellis were promoted to third in class following judicial proceedings. Consequently, the results remain provisional.

'As a partnership, Alex and I were untouchable this weekend. We were often the quickest GTC car and we proved that with our third win of the season on Saturday,' said Ellis. 'It was such a shame for the gearbox to let go on the finish line but I have to thank everyone at Team RPM for their amazing efforts in getting the standard gearbox fitted in time for practice on Sunday.'

continued

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Rounds 12 and 13

The Avon Tyres British GT Championship heads to Silverstone in Northamptonshire for the final round of the series on 23 and 24 September.

PROVISIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

Avon Tyres British GT Championship, GTC Team Points – after 13 rounds

Pos	Team	Points
1	Trackspeed	101
2	Team RPM	77
3	Team Aero	49

PROVISIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

Avon Tyres British GT Championship, GTC Driver Points – after 13 rounds

Pos	Driver	Points
1	Matt Allison	80
2	Jonny Lang	80
3	Ryan Hooker	75
4	Bradley Ellis	64
5	Alex Mortimer	64

For full race results and photography visit www.britishgt.com

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