

Daytona Manchester

F1 Championship 2011

Round 1(Monaco)

2011 has brought the start of the new F1 championship at Daytona Manchester, as the drivers arrived you could feel the tension in the air as the suspense grew waiting for the driver briefing to commence! Who was going to take maximum points in round 1?

Qualifying session 1 - (8mins)

All drivers hit the tarmac for Q1 with the mind set of making sure they got through to Q2, all drivers made the rookie mistake of bunching together in the first couple of minutes which was hampering their lap times at the beginning. Drivers soon realised that they needed to find the space and started to get their times down, Steve Gray set the pace hitting an impressive 26.934sec putting himself safely through to Q2. As chequered flag went out to mark the end of Q1 the 2 drivers that were knocked out and grid positions decided were John Taylor settling for P8 with a 31.978sec and Matty Ramsbottom placing in P7 with a 30.836sec missing out on Q2 by 0.518sec!

Qualifying session 2 – (5mins)

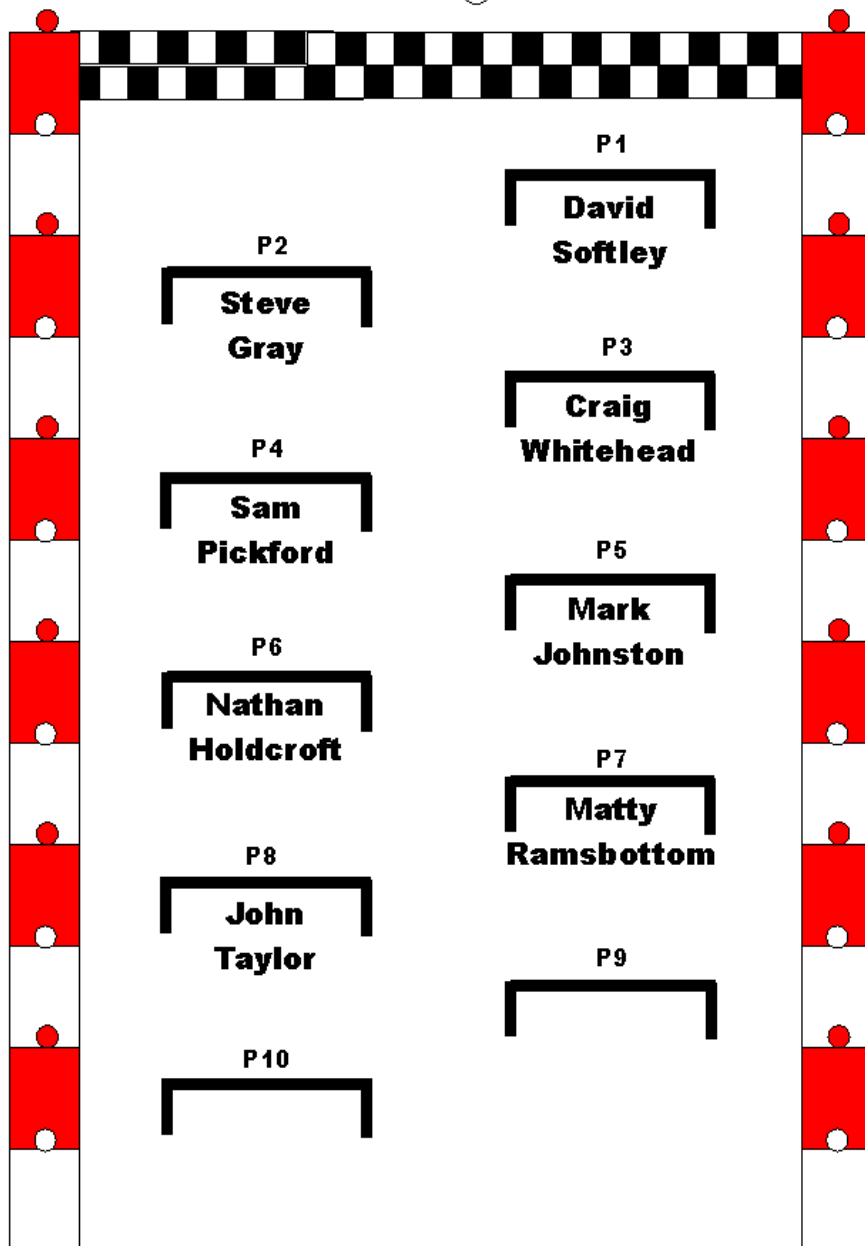
The green flag was waved to mark the start of Q2 with only 6 drivers on track they all wised up and found the space very early in the session knowing they had little time to get the job done and get through to Q3 to battle it out for pole position. David Softley set the pace early on with a 26.907sec but half way through the session Steve Gray pulled out 26.763 from no where. The battle was heating up as drivers were determined to get through to the next stage as Nathan Holdcroft settled for P6 with a 28.783sec and the battle for P4 and place in Q3 was close between Sam Pickford and Mark Johnston, with Sam just beating Mark to the post and chequered flag squeezing himself through to Q3 by beating mark's time by 0.384sec who ended up with a best lap time of 28.254sec.

Qualifying session 3 – (5mins)

The pole position shoot out began straight away with the 4 remaining drivers getting pedal to the metal and going for broke to give themselves the glory of pole position for the start of the race, 1 minute into the session it became very clear that there was 2 battles going on track between David Softley and Steve Gray for pole position and Craig Whitehead and Sam Pickford for P3. As the timer clocked down and the chequered flag waved high David looked like he had pole position in the bag with a massive time of a 26.557sec, Steve was the only driver left on final flying lap as Craig

piped Sam to P3 with a 27.059sec. Steve's lines were perfect and it looked like he had the momentum to steal pole position from David as he approached the finish line but a poor error in judgment led to him easing off the accelerator on the last turn for too long costing him pole position by 0.033sec!

Starting Grid



The Race – 75 laps

The red lights go out and it's **GO GO GO!**

Steve Gray gets a terrible start off the line losing 1 place, leaving himself a lot of work to do from the word GO! Half a lap down he lost another place on the second hair pin from Craig Whitehead with a great inside line manoeuvre to take P3 from under Steve's nose, Leaving David to pull out a lead of 4seconds over Sam Pickford.

Into lap 7 David begins to approach back markers and the marshals arm themselves with the blue flags so nobody's race gets impeded.

From no where Craig loses control of his kart on the entrance of the bridge causing the yellow lights to come out and the marshals to get him back underway and he losses a place to Steve Grey who is on a mission to catch David.

The race started to settle in with Steve driving up to the back of Sam's kart but could find no way past as Sam drove very defensively, this was short lived when Matty Ramsbottom took a spin on lap 18 causing major disruption as Sam chooses to park next to Matty in the barriers allowing Steve to take P2 but manages to keep hold of P3 thanks to some good marshalling.

Lap 30 and fatigue has already started to kick in for David as Steve set the pace on track and started to reel David in lap by lap with gap coming down to 0.662sec.

On lap 35 John Taylor made small contact with the barrier system causing minor damage which forced the yellow lights out in the centre sector of the track whilst the marshals fixed very quickly to get the race back to racing conditions, I'm pretty sure at this point the drivers enjoyed the break in proceedings to relax their tired arms.

Lap 39 Steve goes for a non existing gap on the up ramp of the bridge tagging the rear quarter of David's kart putting him into a spin! Fair driving from Steve, as he acknowledged his mistake allowing David to take his place back and get away with a stern Bumping waning from the officials.

Lap 46 David leaves the door open on the first hair pin and Steve seizes the opportunity and sticks his kart in the gap causing David to slam the brakes on which allows Steve to pull away with a 1.606sec gap.

Lap 57 and as the front 2 are pulling away from everybody else lap by lap with the gap stretched to 2.234sec between Steve and David as the back pack seem settled into the groove with a lap gap between each driver, elsewhere on track is the battle between Sam in P3 and Craig in P4 with 1.324sec between them both but being a lap down on the lead pair and Mark Johnston in P5 a further 3 laps down. John Taylor retires from racing due to fatigue and can no longer continue so he pulls off into the pit lane to hit the showers.

10 laps to go David has now found his mojo and has hit the fastest time of the race with a 26.322sec and is reeling in Steve with the gap down to 0.997sec as Steve struggles for pace, the race is on!

6 laps remaining and the gap between the front 2 is now down to 0.526sec, there is nothing in it now as the pair approach more back markers and lap by lap the gap gets smaller between the two:

- 0.450sec - 5 laps left
- 0.265sec – 4 laps left
- 0.254sec – 3 laps left
- 0.392sec – 2 laps left

Last lap board goes out to both drivers as they hair across the start line with the gap down to 0.099sec, as both drivers negotiate the first hair pin with ease and there is back markers in the entrance to the second hairpin, Steve gets sucked into a backmarkers racing line leaving a gap that you could park a Double Decker bus this allowed David to sneak up the inside and pull away to take the chequered flag, the race win and maximum points in round 1 of the Daytona F1 championship.

Let's hope Round 2 (Silverstone) is just as exciting!

Race Results and Points

Position	Name	Total Points
1	David Softley	25
2	Steve Gray	23
3	Sam Pickford	21
4	Craig Whitehead	20
5	Mark Johnstone	19
6	Matty Ramsbottom	18
7	Nathan Holdcroft	17
8	John Taylor	16

