

June 2017 - Thruxton

RAIN STARTS PLAY AT THRUXTON

Over the weekend of 3rd 4th June TEAM OLIVER RACING attended the Thruxton race circuit, the high-speed Hampshire venue that hosted the third round of the British Truck Race Championship. Stuart, Michael and the team were set and fully expecting to have an all action weekend, among the twenty-eight-truck entry.

On the Saturday morning with the sun shining bright all the teams had the opportunity to go out on track in the two test sessions to setup the trucks for the early afternoon qualifying session. In the qualifying session Stuart managed to set a blistering time and secured a front row position in second place on the grid for the first race, with a lap time of 1:38.398, an average speed of 86.19 mph. Michael, with the newly acquired and unproven engine in his trusty Scania, managed to secure a respectable ninth place on the grid for the first truck race of the weekend.

Race One of the weekend got underway on the Saturday afternoon, at the time on a dry track but with very black clouds looming on the horizon, the race was only two laps in when the clouds burst and then fun began. With all the trucks setup for racing in dry conditions the drivers had the challenge of keeping them all heading in the correct direction at up to 100 mph. Stuart was in his element and very quickly used his wealth of experience to get to and stay out at the front of the field and take the win in what was very challenging conditions. Michael who was in the thick of the midfield action managed to hold on and cross the finish line in eighth place.

Race Two on the Sunday now with the reverse grid format in play Stuart started from the back row of the grid and Michael from the middle. The sun was out and the track conditions were good. In line with the characteristics of the fast-flowing high-speed circuit, for a good part of each lap the trucks are all running at the maximum 100 mph limit, minimising the overtaking opportunities to only a few places around the track like the tight club chicane and the twisty complex. By mid-race Stuart had managed to move up positions and was racing in the middle of the field close to Michael, both were working hard to progress further up the rankings and after a gruelling few closing laps Stuart achieved a well-deserved third place, unfortunately Michael was pushed wide and off track into a spin (not by Stuart) making a quick recovery Michael then crossed the finish line in tenth place.

Race Three Stuart started one row forward of the back of the grid and Michael started on the second row. On the rolling formation lap the rain came again this was just what Stuart wanted, as soon as the lights went out Michael was away like a flash and very determined to better his previous race finish, Stuart also went past a number of trucks without delay and things were looking good, on entry to the first right turn into the complex at Campbell on lap one, Stuart was confronted with a truck out of control coming across the grass, Stuart made a quick change of speed to avoid contact, unfortunately behind the first out of control truck was another, he was not so lucky as the second truck made heavy contact with the front of Stuart's VOLVO resulting in the bonnet and front bumper being ripped off. Stuart quickly recovered and re-joined the race with what was a very heavily damaged truck. Not to be put off he gave chase and was soon picking trucks off one by one in what was very slippery conditions, by the chequered flag Stuart had recovered to finish in fifth place, Michael had once again found himself being pushed into a unplanned spin, then fortunately recovering to finish the race in ninth place.

Race four, the final truck race of the weekend Stuart started on the third row from the back of the grid and Michael from the second row from the front, both as always were determined to leave Thruxton with a good haul of championship points. The circuit had dried up and all was looking good, when the lights went out Michael made a great start and quickly moved to the front and in doing so managed to hold on to the lead for a number of laps, until the armada of charging fellow competitors decided to see how strong his rear bumper was, unfortunately dropping him down the field and subsequently to cross the finish line in fifth place. Stuart managed to avoid any contact and worked hard to move up the field, crossing the finish line in second place. Shortly following the race finish Stuart was informed by officials his race performance was all in vain as his truck had for an unknown reasons recorded an overspeed infringement thus taking his second-place podium position away.

The team is now preparing the trucks for a European double where they head off to Nogaro in the South of France to participate in a none championship French truck race event, then they go direct to the Nürburgring for the weekend following, 1st 2nd July to participate in four BTRC races at the ADAC Truck Grand Prix.

