

RENAULT SPORT



For immediate release: Sunday, 9th May 2010

Ref: FRB10-03

POWELL BECOMES SERIES FIRST FEMALE WINNER AS HALE STRETCHES TITLE LEAD

- Alice Powell becomes first female winner of Formula Renault race in UK.
- Double podium for Mitchell Hale to extend title lead by 25 points.
- Maiden podiums for Josh Webster and James Theodore at action-packed weekend.

Hillspeed's Alice Powell (Chipping Norton) made history at the weekend by becoming the first female driver to win a Formula Renault race in the UK during rounds three and four of the 2010 Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship at Silverstone National circuit on 8th/9th May.

The 17-year-old from Chipping Norton secured a lights-to-flag victory in round four to set a first for the one-make single-seater series along with a second place in round three to strengthen her title bid. Her results were mirrored by Fortec Motorsport's Mitchell Hale (Bristol) who also claimed a win and a second place to extend his lead in the drivers' standings by a margin of 25 points.

The weekend also saw maiden podiums (third) for Fortec Motorsport's Josh Webster (Suffolk) and Hillspeed's James Theodore (Telford) who finally came away with his first top-three finish after a luckless run during the opening rounds at Brands Hatch Indy circuit. Meanwhile the Privateer Cup honours once again went to Hertfordshire racer James Birch.

First for Alice and Formula Renault...

After an action-packed round three, the day's second race saw Powell line the start grid at the head of the field after an impressive performance during Saturday's wet qualifying session. The former Ginetta Junior racer should have been joined by Fortec Motorsport's Joseph Reilly (London) on the front row but a spin in round three meant the 18-year-old would not be racing. With Powell all alone on row one, row two consisted of Theodore and Hale while Welch Motorsport's Kourosh Khani (London) and Webster lined up on row three.

As the 16-lap race got underway it was pole-sitter Powell who made the best start followed by Theodore while Hale immediately dropped down the order after a very slow start by the 16-year-old. By the end of the opening 1.64-mile lap Powell had already carved out a sizeable cushion over Theodore with Khani in third and SWB Motorsport's Luke Wright (Dorset) in fourth after an impressive first lap.

A few laps later Powell was already enjoying a two second lead and blissfully unaware of the four-car-train which had developed behind her with Theodore and Khani taking turns to lead it. At the back of this lay Hale who had already made up places after his disastrous start before making yet more ground a lap later to lie in third and chasing the back of Theodore's Hillspeed run car.

Out in front, the lone car of Powell was now benefitting from almost a five second lead ahead of Theodore, Hale and Webster who had been able to shake off the threat of Khani. In the midfield, Triple Eight's Sazlan Sirajudin (MAL) was enjoying one of his best races in 10th and hot on the heels of Jack Piper's (Norwich) Welch Motorsport car ahead.

Powell meanwhile had no one in her mirrors unlike Theodore who now had a determined Hale catching him with the teenager also setting the fastest lap of the race with a 57.163s (103.21mph average).

As the laps ticked by Hale crept ever closer to Theodore and occasionally strayed off line over the pit straight to remind the 18-year-old of his whereabouts. On the penultimate lap the two were nose-to-tail with Hale choosing Brooklands to make his move and clinch Theodore's second place.

The chequered flag though belonged to Powell who duly crossed the line to take the win with a margin of more than seven seconds and enter the history books. Hale finished second ahead of a disgruntled Theodore who later commented that his tyres had begun to fade. Webster

secured fourth to round off a strong weekend for the 16-year-old with Khani also enjoying another good points haul in fifth. Birch finished just behind in sixth and the privateer winner.

Lights-to-flag for Hale...

Sunday's earlier round three saw Hale line the start grid as pole-sitter with Powell alongside him on the front row. Reilly and Khani made up row two as the field sat in anticipation for the start of the race.

As the red lights went out on the start gantry it was pole-sitter Hale who made the best start to lead into the right-handed Copse closely followed by Powell while Reilly was unable to hold onto his third position after a poor start. The opening lap saw all the field jostle for position with Khani in particular able to move up into third with Theodore also making up two places after a poor qualifying session saw him start from 10th on the grid.

By the end of the second lap Reilly had made up for his earlier slow start to move into fourth after finding a way past Wright who then lost another place to Khani the following lap. The pair continued to tussle the next lap with this time Wright getting the better of the 20-year-old.

In the midfield, Theodore was continuing to move up the field and was up to fifth by lap seven until the 18-year-old spun at the exit of Copse, also under waved yellow flags, to undo all his good work. Antel Motorsport's Kasper Krogh (Denmark) was also looking strong in the middle of the pack despite starting from 13th.

Out in front Hale was continuing to set the pace – setting the fastest lap of the race in the process – and despite a slight mistake at Brooklands which allowed Powell to close the gap, the teenager was looking on course for his second win of the season.

The battle behind though was far less certain with Reilly, who had briefly moved up into third, losing out to Wright and into the clutches of Khani. Things didn't improve for the North London racer on the next lap when he clipped the Astroturf at Copse causing him to spin and end not only his race but his weekend.

As the race entered the final stages Hale was now leading comfortably from Powell with a gap before third placed Wright with Khani in fourth and Webster, who had quietly been making his way through the field, in fifth.

A few laps later Hale exited Woodcote for the final time to take the chequered flag and his second win of the season with Powell securing second and Wright in third. Khani had been on course to take fourth but a late surge by Webster saw him finish fourth with Khani rounding off the top five. A post race investigation by the Clerk of the Course however saw Wright handed a time penalty for overtaking on a yellow flag dropping him to fifth place and handing Webster his maiden podium place with Khani promoted to fourth.

Commenting on her performance Powell said: "It's been a great weekend for us and I'm delighted with my first win in Formula Renault. I got a good start in round three and at one stage I was really close to Mitchell but I made a mistake at Brooklands which cost me and meant I was never close enough to challenge. Having a clear front row in round four was a real advantage as there was less pressure. I got another good start and just got my head down until my pit board indicated I had a six second lead meaning I could begin to ease off."

Commenting on his double podium championship leader Hale said: "Round three was a lot harder than it looked but apart from the odd mistake I was able to bring the car home safely for my second win. I got my start all wrong in round four and it's definitely something I need to practice before the next rounds at Croft. I managed to put it behind me though and just kept pushing and pretty soon found myself in a position to pass James which I did through Brooklands."

Rounds five and six of the 2010 Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship take place at North Yorkshire's Croft circuit on 3rd/4th July.

2010 Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship provisional drivers' standings – round 4:

1 Mitchell Hale	GBR	Fortec Motorsport	125 pts
2 Alice Powell	GBR	Hillspeed	100 pts
3 Kouros Khani	IRI	Welch Motorsport	69 pts
- Josh Webster	GBR	Fortec Motorsport	69 pts
5 James Birch	GBR	Driver	67 pts
6 Luke Wright	GBR	SWB Motorsport	64 pts

Privateer Cup – round 4:

1 James Birch GBR 67 pts

ENDS

Media contact: Tom Phillips at Grovewood PR, tel: 0203 179 1957 or 07812 206260
E-mail tom@grovewood.co.uk.

Copyright free images are available at www.jakobebrey.co.uk/renault

Full result times available at www.tsl-timing.com

For all the latest Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship visit the official Renault Sport UK website www.renaultsport.co.uk