

# RENAULT SPORT



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## **HALE ON TOP AT SNETTERTON BUT CHAMPIONSHIP REMAINS WIDE OPEN**

- Double podium for Bristol teenager Mitchell Hale to retain championship lead.
- Delighted Joseph Reilly secures maiden win and further podium.
- Podiums for Alice Powell and Luke Wright during action-packed Snetterton weekend.

Fortec Motorsport's Mitchell Hale (Bristol) continued to impress in the 2010 Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship by securing his third win along with a further podium during rounds seven and eight of the series at Norfolk's Snetterton circuit on 31<sup>st</sup> July/1<sup>st</sup> August.

The 16-year-old made a welcome return to the podium after failing to finish in the top three during the previous two rounds at Croft with a lights-to-flag victory in round eight to add to his third place from Sunday's earlier round seven. The teenager, who also secured both fastest laps to earn an additional four points, continues his reign at the top of the drivers' standings but only by a margin of 16 points as the title race remains wide open with four rounds left and dropped scores still to come into play.

Hale's team-mate Joseph Reilly (North London) also collected his share of the silverware during the action-packed weekend by mirroring Hale's achievements beginning with his maiden win in round seven followed by a third place in round eight.

Hillspeed's Alice Powell (Chipping Norton) once again had another impressive showing with the 17-year-old enjoying a second and fourth place in rounds seven and eight respectively while it was the ever improving Luke Wright (Dorset) who picked up the remaining podium spot in his SWB Motorsport run car.

Rickmansworth racer James Birch secured both the class wins in the Privateer Cup.

### **Hale eases to victory...**

After failing to finish on the podium at North Yorkshire's Croft circuit, round eight saw Hale back in familiar territory as the pole sitter with team-mate Reilly for company on the front row. Wright sat lurking on row two as did Antel Motorsport's Kasper Krogh with a career best fourth. Powell and RPD Motorsport's Steven Durrant (Oxford), one of his best qualifying positions, sat on row three while Hillspeed's James Theodore (Telford) had to make do with an alien 11<sup>th</sup> spot after making the wrong tyre choice during the weekend's qualifying session.

As the lights went out for the start of the 14-lap race it was Hale who made the best start to lead the field into the right-handed Riches bend closely tailed by Wright and Krogh who had been able to get the jump on a slow starting Reilly. Theodore had also been able to make up ground as well as avoid a midfield incident at Sear which saw the retirements of SWB Motorsport's Andrew Jarman (Northampton) and Welch Motorsport's Kourosh Khani (London).

Theodore continued to make up places as the race progressed with Reilly also clawing back a place from Krogh at Riches to lie in third. Hale continued to dominate out front though with Wright sat waiting should the Clifton teenager make a mistake. Further down the order a five-car-train had developed in the midfield headed by Fortec Motorsport's Josh Webster (Suffolk) competing on his home track.

By the halfway stage Hale and Wright had now broken away from Reilly with the Hillspeed duo of Powell and Theodore also closing in on fourth-place Krogh. A few laps later Powell was able to go side-by-side with Krogh through Coram after a good run out of the Esses and eventually making the move stick in the run into Russell. Shortly after Theodore followed suit to drop the Danish driver into sixth.

As the race drew to a close there were still places changing in the midfield with Mtech's Jake Rattenbury (Glamorgan) running well in ninth and no doubt benefitting from having the experienced Dave Moore now in the Mtech squad.

The race belonged to Hale though who duly took the chequered flag together with the fastest lap of the race for his third win of the season. Wright finished second with Reilly, who had been able to close the gap, in third. Powell took fourth place with Theodore rounding off the

top five despite starting 11<sup>th</sup> on the grid. The championship's newest driver Russian Roman Beregech, 22, finished 13<sup>th</sup> in his Antel Motorsport run car while Birch, who had looked strong all weekend, secured the class win.

### **Reilly jubilant at maiden win...**

Sunday's earlier round seven, the first round after the summer interval, saw Theodore continue where he left off at Croft with another P1 spot with Reilly alongside him on the front row and Wright and Hale on row two.

Theodore waited eagerly for the red lights to go out on the start gantry but when they did it was Reilly and Wright who made the best starts with Reilly leading the field into the first corner closely followed by Theodore and Wright. The opening 1.952-mile lap also saw gains for Powell and Webster who were both able to get by Hale as the entire field safely completed the lap.

Hale was able to regain ground during the opening stages to move into fifth and join the unchanged four-car train ahead. That was all about to change though as on lap six Wright was able to slip by Theodore at the Russell chicane with the two nose-to-tail over the start/finish line. A determined Theodore though was keen to retake the place and moved to the inside line in the run up to Riches, as did Wright to defend the place. With neither driver wishing to yield the two made contact, narrowly missing the following car of Powell, and spinning off into the gravel. As the dust settled Reilly still emerged as race leader with Powell now in second and Hale benefitting to lie in third. Behind the top three Webster was now in fourth with Antel Motorsport's Matt Draper (London) in fifth and independent driver Birch running well in sixth.

As the race continued it wasn't just the top order where places were being swapped. Krogh was looking strong in ninth chasing eighth place Rattenbury while Malaysian Sazlan Sirajudin was up to 11<sup>th</sup> in his Triple Eight run car despite starting from the back of the field.

Meanwhile at the front the top three of Reilly, Powell and Hale were closing in on each other with little daylight separating them as the laps ticked by. Hale in particular was on a real charge setting faster and faster laps – four in a row in fact – before eventually taking the honours on lap 12 to earn two extra championship points. It wasn't enough though and the order remained unchanged as they crossed the line – less than a second between them all – handing a delighted Reilly his maiden victory. Webster finished fourth with Draper producing one of his best results to finish fifth with Birch in sixth and taking the Privateer Cup class win.

Commenting on his weekend Hale said: “It’s been a great weekend for us and I’m very happy to be leaving Snetterton with more championship points. Round seven was a really good race and I was pleased with my start and pace, and obviously benefitted from the first-corner incident. After a good start in round eight I just got my head down and concentrated on securing the fastest lap as well as the win to help stretch my lead over Alice.”

Team-mate Reilly commenting on his performance said: “It feels absolutely amazing to get that first win especially as Alice and Mitchell were closing in on me throughout round seven. I made the odd mistake in both races and my start let me down in round eight but in all it’s been a great weekend for me and for the team.”

Commenting on her second place in round seven Powell said: “I got a good start and managed to get ahead of Mitchell early on and was putting in consistent lap times. When Theodore and Wright came together I moved to the outside and only just managed to come out unscathed as Wright temporarily went airborne over me.”

Second place in round eight Luke Wright added: “This result certainly made up for what happened in round seven. I got a good start and had a good battle and was able to soak up the pressure from Reilly. We’ve made a few mistakes this weekend, especially in qualifying but we just have to put these behind us and concentrate on the next rounds at Rockingham.”

Rounds nine and 10 of the 2010 Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship take place at Rockingham Motor Speedway on 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> September.

**2010 Protyre Formula Renault BARC Championship provisional drivers’ standings – round 8:**

1 Mitchell Hale	GBR	Fortec Motorsport	222 pts
2 Alice Powell	GBR	Hillspeed	206 pts
3 Josh Webster	GBR	Fortec Motorsport	154 pts
4 Luke Wright	GBR	SWB Motorsport	146 pts
5 Joseph Reilly	GBR	Fortec Motorsport	145 pts
6 James Theodore	GBR	Hillspeed	133 pts

**Privateer Cup – round 8:**

1 James Birch                      GBR                      124 pts

**ENDS**

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