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Renault Clio Cup

Championship Challengers Share Front Row At Snetterton

August 13, 2012 Richard Devine AirAsia Clio Cup, Jack Goff, Josh Files, Paul Rivett, Renault Clio Cup, Snetterton, Team Pyro

The front row for both Snetterton rounds of the 2012 AirAsia Clio Cup were to be filled by two of the main protagonists for this years title — Reigning and three-time Champion Paul Rivett, and current Championship leader Jack Goff. Neither would want to give an inch as the season passes the half way mark, and the scene was set for an enthralling battle.

For Goff, Friday's free practice sessions had seen him consistently quick on old tyres, leaving plenty of reason to be confident ahead of qualifying. In quick succession, Goff set a pair of consistent times towards the latter part of the session, setting himself up on pole for both of the weekends races.

"We've been quick all testing so it's a solid start to the weekend. I can't seem to lose Paul (Rivett); he's always there. I've got to get off the line well and keep my head down and try to break away from the pack as quick as I can. There are a lot of long straights here and they prove to be very effective," said Goff after the session.

"The car has been great from the first session, Team Pyro always give me a good car and fingers crossed I can stay top of the championship after this weekend."

Paul Rivett is no stranger to starting on the front row, and the reigning Champion had reason to be pleased as he looked towards closing the gap to Goff at the top of the standings. His fastest time was less than a tenth back on Goff, which over the course of the three mile lap doesn't equate to much distance on the track.



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Show Summary



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"Quite happy with that," said Rivett. "Front row is always good in qualifying so I'm really happy. The PER HIRE car has been absolutely great, Stancombe Vehicle Engineering have done a great job again on the car as they always do. To be sitting on the front row is great and it looks set to be anybody's race off the start."

"I made a little mistake on my fastest lap making a mistake on my downshift, but front row is still good enough."

TCR driver James Dixon enjoyed one of his more successful qualifying sessions of the season in claiming third, but Oulton Park double winner, Stefan Hodgetts, wouldn't be so pleased. The KX Academy backed driver could only manage a place on the third row for race one, although his second best time was good enough for third in race two. While an unlikely title challenger having entered the season so late on, Hodgetts is always a danger to the front men.

Another driver who would be a little disappointed coming out of qualifying, was local man Josh Files. The Team Pyro driver enjoyed his first Clio Cup podium at his home circuit last season, but qualifying this time around would leave him some work to do. Files could only manage seventh place on the grid for race one, despite being less than three tenths of a second off the pole position lap. Perhaps testament to the extremely competitive nature of the 2012 Championship.

"It was probably one of the most frustrating sessions of my life. I felt as though I was seriously quick and at one point we had pole," he said.

"I went quickest in the first and second sectors, but on the last corner I had a certain moving roadblock in my way. From where I start on the grid I can only hope and try for a spot on the podium, a win would be brilliant, but will be very hard to do, but then you never know."

The Clio Cup also would welcome a new face to the crowd at Snetterton. David Grady received a late call to drive the Team HARD car being run this weekend by the Finesse Motorsport team. Grady was not due to drive the Clio associated with BTCC driver Tony Gilham, but snapped up the chance when it was presented to him. Not at all phased by the occasion, Grady was competitive out of the box qualifying 17th for race one in front of several more experienced Clio racers.

"It was good, a bit of a shock," said Grady. "I was thrown in at the deep-end as I've never tried one of these Clio Cup cars so I didn't really know what to expect, but I've got no pressure for this weekend."

"It was a late deal, I got the call from Andy (Wilmot) late last night as he was due to drive the car, but for some reason can't, and asked me if I was up for the challenge and gave me some time to think about it, which didn't take very long as it's been a dream of mine to race in the Clio's. I haven't had the money in the past so I'm really pleased to be here this weekend."

"The car is very different from what I've been racing previously, but I'm getting the hang of it quickly. My aims this weekend are to finish and mix it in with the mid-field and try to pick up as many places as I can."

Photo Credit: Jakob Ebrey

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 May 9/10 | Thruxton
 June 6/7 | Oulton Park
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 August 8/9 | Snetterton
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 September 5/6 | Rockingham
 September 26/27 | Silverstone
 October 10/11 | Brands Hatch GP

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Richard Devine

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