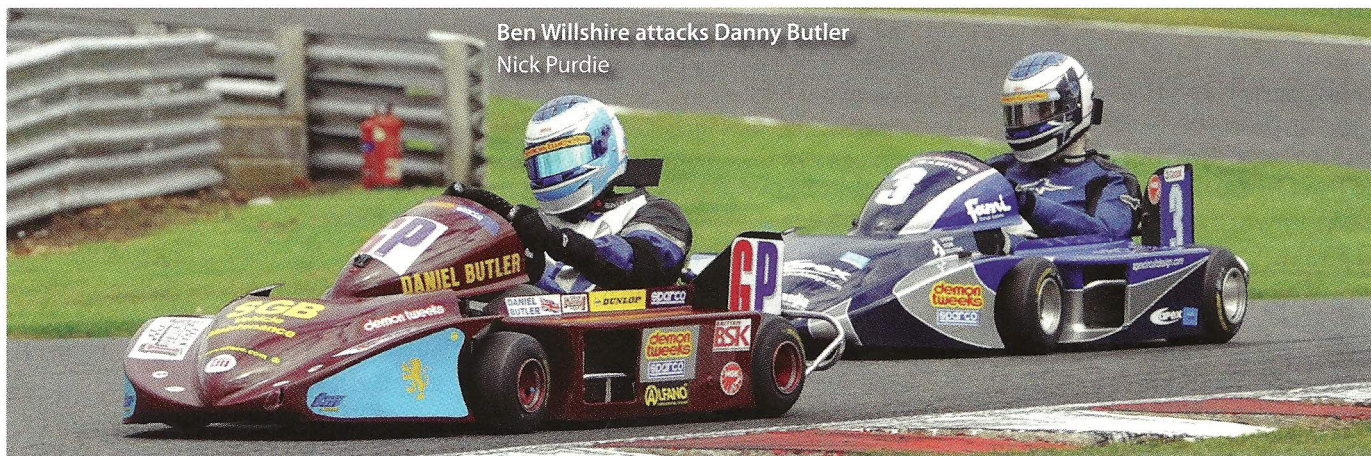




Double triumph for Willshire



Ben Willshire attacks Danny Butler
Nick Purdie

By Gary James

The 125s were competing for their O Plate and also contesting the last round of their national championship.

After timed practice, reigning National Champion Danny Butler topped the time sheets by 0.143s from his closest championship rival Ben Willshire with Danny Edwards 0.921s behind in 3rd.

The 125 drivers would start the races off the back of the 250 grid and there was some concern that they would get held up by some of the slower 250s, bearing in mind that Butler, Willshire and Edwards had qualified 13th, 14th and 15th overall out of a total mixed grid of 36 Superkarts.

When the lights changed Butler got the best start and led round the opening lap followed by Willshire and they had already opened a fair gap over Damian Sleep, Matt Isherwood and Edwards.

Over the next few laps Butler and Willshire pulled further away from the rest and ran nose to tail and sometimes side by side. Isherwood had settled into 3rd after Sleep retired with a bad misfire. Louise Colin was 4th but she only had the use of the rear brake. The fronts were snatching in practice so she wound back the bias to make the kart a bit more controllable.

At the front Butler was having trouble turning in due to a lack of front end grip and on the penultimate lap he overshot the Brittens chicane before Hilltop. This was the advantage that Willshire needed and he managed to open up a gap of 2.149s at the

flag to secure the BSA 125 Open National Championship. He was also a bit fortunate when the jubilee clip on the top hose broke and he lost all the water. Butler was a worthy 2nd after a great scrap while Colin got used to the braking on her Anderson to secure 3rd just ahead of Isherwood and Edwards.

With the championship won Willshire could go out in the second race and just enjoy it. From pole position he didn't make a particularly good start and it was Butler who took the lead from Colin. Traffic among the 250s was causing a problem and on lap 2 Sleep managed to get a good run and took the lead hounded by Colin, Butler, Isherwood, Willshire and Edwards. But on the next lap he was relegated to 3rd and it was Butler who regained the lead with Isherwood nibbling at his rear bumper. Edwards had got ahead of Willshire while Colin was dropping back with bodywork problems which would eventually lead to a trip to the pits and retirement.

At half distance Isherwood had taken over at the front, the ICC kart showing a good turn of speed. However, he had overgeared his engine and was relying on a tow from the others. Butler outraked him into the Knickerbrook chicane to regain the lead but next time around Edwards had hit the front. Butler was dropping back with a broken exhaust and eventually retired on the penultimate lap with a puncture.

While this was going on Willshire was gradually closing the gap after being held up in the opening stages. He got past Isherwood with a smart move into the Brittens chicane and then got past Edwards on the way up Clay Hill dragging Isherwood

with him. Into the last lap and it was still anyone's race.

Willshire led over Hilltop but Isherwood outraked him on the outside entering the Knickerbrook chicane. But Willshire was going for the double win and took the lead entering Druids for the final time. Isherwood couldn't do anything about it and rather than be in a position to challenge for the lead at the final corner, had to defend his 2nd from Edwards. The three of them flashed across the line separated by 0.146s and Willshire added the O Plate to the number 1 he had won earlier. The lead had changed on nearly every lap and the Oulton Park commentators had not seen racing like it, saying it was the best racing they had seen all season. ●

Results

Race 1

1 Ben Willshire	Anderson/SGM
2 Danny Butler	F1/TM
3 Louise Colin	Anderson/Pavesi
4 Matt Isherwood	Energy/Vortex
5 Danny Edwards	F1/TM
6 Lee Smith	Raider/Pavesi

Race 2

1 Ben Willshire	Anderson/SGM
2 Matt Isherwood	Energy/Vortex
3 Danny Edwards	F1/TM
4 Damian Sleep	F1/Pavesi
5 Lee Smith	Raider/Pavesi
6 Simon Rushforth	Spyda/Pavesi