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Fabulous Floersch dominates at Thruxton

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14 year-old lady racer Sophia Floersch dominated proceedings at Thruxton this weekend with a flawless display of driving. Sophia qualified second for the opening race and took the lead off the line and never looked back despite periods under the safety car. The HHC Motorsport driver provided us with a driving masterclass in race two by once again leading every lap to take a double win on the fastest circuit on the calendar. It was a disappointing weekend for Senna Proctor who could only manage one top-10 result from the two races. However, second year drivers Billy Monger and Dan Zelos will be pleased with their weekend after securing two top-5 finishes each. Rookie Stuart Middleton also impressed with two rookie cup podiums to his name in his first visit to the Hampshire based track.



Sophia Floersch dominated proceedings at Thruxton giving HHC Motorsport their first victories of the season.

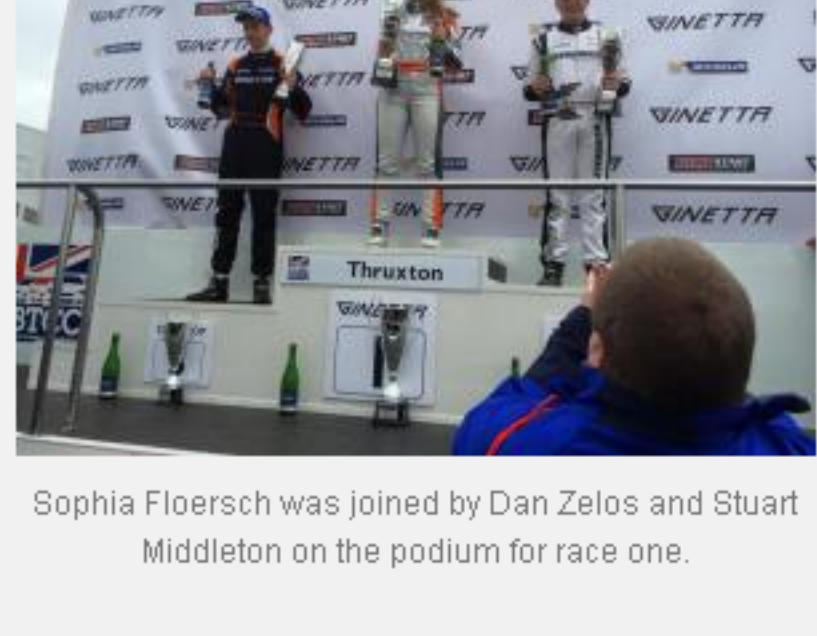
In a break from the usual Friday tradition, drivers did not have the opportunity to take part in the BTCC Support Series test day but enjoyed a test session earlier in the season ahead of the weekend at the Hampshire based track. Both JHR Developments and HHC Motorsport showed speed along with the TCR trio. All three leading teams were hoping to take this speed into the practice session on Saturday morning with many drivers using this session as a refresher after a couple of weeks out of the car. Times were extremely close throughout the session with Dan Zelos ending up first in his JHR Developments Ginetta G40. Impressive rookie Cameron Roberts was second ahead of Billy Monger and Sophia Floersch. Championship leader Senna Proctor ended up 11th but had some of the fastest individual sector times but he couldn't put these together for one complete lap.

Qualifying took place later in the day with over half the field believing they had a realistic chance of taking pole position. After topping the timing sheets in free practice, Dan Zelos took an early lead ahead of Senna Proctor with Dave Wooder also showing superb early pace. As the session progressed, times improved with Sophia Floersch setting an exceptional benchmark as the young German took provisional pole with less than half of the session remaining. This was beaten by Ginetta Scholarship winner Stuart Middleton who has experienced a difficult start to the season but produced a moment of magic to top the HHC Motorsport driver. Little changed in the dying seconds but TCR rookie Dave Wooder mounted a strong challenge as he came within four hundredths of a second of taking the honours but had to settle for a second row starting spot in third. This meant that Stuart Middleton claimed his first ever Kickstart Energy Ginetta Junior Championship series pole and was joined on the front by fellow rookie Sophia Floersch. Dave Wooder secured third with Patrik Matthiesen and Cameron Roberts completing the top-5. Championship favourites Dan Zelos and Senna Proctor lined up sixth and seventh respectively while Jamie Caroline's difficult start to the season continued as he finished the session in 12th position.



Stuart Middleton took his first ever Kickstart Energy Ginetta Junior Championship pole for race one.

For the first time this season both Kickstart Energy Ginetta Junior Championship races were run on Sunday with drivers having to be conscious to protect their cars for race two which took place later that day. From the front row of the grid it was Sophia Floersch who made a superb start and let Middleton as the drivers headed down into the opening chicane. Patrik Matthiesen had made his way into third with experienced drivers Dan Zelos and Senna Proctor also entering the top-5. At the end of lap two the safety car was brought out after a heavy impact between Lewis Brown and Seb Perez caused debris to litter the track with both drivers forced to retire. A three lap safety car period enabled drivers and fan to catch their breath after a frantic start to the race. Sophia Floersch controlled the restart beautifully and opened up almost seven tenths of a second back to Middleton in second as the racing got back underway. On lap seven, contact was made between Dave Wooder and Patrik Matthiesen as the TCR driver attempted to grab fourth away from the Dane. Spins for both drivers dropped them down the order with Jamie Caroline moving into fourth and Billy Monger fifth. The penultimate lap saw a retirement for Alex Day; meanwhile Dan Zelos made his way past Middleton and was hunting down Sophia. With the slipstream effect playing a huge part at Thruxton, Zelos was gained on Floersch through the high speed section but the young German driver held off a late charge to take her first ever win in the Ginetta Junior Championship, becoming one of the youngest ever winners in the series at just 14 years and 5 months old. Zelos was pleased with second ahead of second best rookie Stuart Middleton. Jamie Caroline and Billy Monger held on to take vital top-5 finishes after a difficult qualifying session on Saturday.



Sophia Floersch was joined by Dan Zelos and Stuart Middleton on the podium for race one.

With a first win already in the books for Sophia, she was confident of repeating that feat during race two as she started from pole position. Once again making a brilliant start, the ever popular driver held off Zelos and a fast starting Stuart Middleton to lead the opening lap as the safety car was deployed for an incident involving Patrik Matthiesen and Jonny Hadfield in which both drivers sadly retired after challenging weekends. When the race got back underway, Zelos made a fine restart and was challenging Sophia throughout the lap but his progress was thwarted by another safety car, this time brought out by Esme Hawkey who has experienced a difficult start to the season. Sophia controlled her third restart of the day expertly and held the lead ahead of a hungry chasing pack including three race winners inside the top-5. On lap six, Stuart Middleton was shuffled back to fifth after a good move from Jamie Caroline moved the Pirtek backed driver within touching distance of Monger. The following lap saw the top-5 drivers running nose to tail; meanwhile Seb Perez was on a charge after starting from the back of the grid, the JHR Developments racer had moved his way into 12th. Lap eight saw a change in second position as Dan Zelos was passed by Billy Monger with Caroline and Middleton also following the Charlwood based racer through. This allowed Monger to use the slipstream effect to close in on Floersch on the final lap but despite a slight moment coming through Church, Sophia held on with a highly impressive defensive display to take back to back wins in the Kickstart Energy Ginetta Junior Championship and become the first rookie to achieve this in a number of years. The jubilant scenes in the paddock were incredible with Sophia close to tears after the best weekend of her racing career. Monger secured second place in race two with Caroline a close third after a late challenge at the final corner. Middleton held off Zelos for fourth with the JHR Developments driver taking his fourth top-5 finish of the season. Kyle Hornby completed the rookie podium in sixth with another impressive driver for R&J Motorsport.



Race two was arguably the most exciting of the year so far with Sophia joined by Billy Monger and Jamie Caroline on the podium.

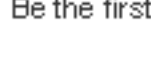
The Kickstart Energy Ginetta Junior Championship once again delivered some of the best racing you're likely to see ever see, this time at Thruxton. Sophia Floersch was a revelation and a true breath of fresh air with her determined driving and bubbly personality with many drivers predicting much success for Sophia in the future including motorsport journalist Jennie Gow and former BTCC driver Rob Huff. With these impressive performances, Floersch has moved up to fourth in the championship, just one point behind third place driver Dan Zelos. Despite a poor weekend at Thruxton, Senna Proctor holds his championship lead ahead of Billy Monger. However, this weekend belongs to Sophia Floersch who has showed the world her talent and maturity behind the wheel, a star is born.

Ginetta Junior Championship standings after Thruxton:

- 1st – Senna Proctor 148
- 2nd – Billy Monger 130
- 3rd – Dan Zelos 120
- 4th – Sophia Floersch 119
- 5th – Jamie Caroline 112
- 6th – Jonny Hadfield 108
- 7th – Patrik Matthiesen 103
- 8th – Stuart Middleton 92
- 9th – Lewis Brown 84
- 10th – Will Tregurtha 83
- 11th – Kyle Hornby 75
- 12th – Matt Chapman 57
- 13th – Will Stacey 49
- 14th – Geri Nicosia 47
- 15th – Cameron Roberts 43

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