

National 250GP Rounds 10 & 11 – Pembrey Race report

Top 3—just 2 points the difference!

After 11 rounds of the ACU, Dunlop and Willis Developments supported 250 National Championship, the top 3 in the running for the title are separated by just 2 points meaning the series will once again go right down to the wire at the Thruxton Finale on October 15th.

The series headed for Pembrey for the second time this year for rounds 10 and 11, a venue normally popular with the riders with the exception of the reigning Champion—Andrew Sawford. The St Neots Motorcycles backed ace has had some poor luck at the home of Welsh Motorsport, coming to a head back in May where a viscous high side dented more than his challenge to retain the number 1 plate.

Astonishingly it was returning Andy Mechem from Guernsey who placed his RS Honda on pole position, clearly enjoying his first run out this year. 2nd on the grid was Daniel Jackson with a good start to his weekend, hoping to build on his 2nd place in the title hunt as they arrived at Pembrey. Melksham's Darrell Higgins was fresh back from his recent Castle Combe victory placing his Dennis Trollope Racing TZ in 3rd and title leader Ant Hodson put the DJG Construction / TSM Yamaha in 4th on the grid., but all was not well with the TZ and a later diagnosed failed ignition ensured the Yamaha would play no further part in the weekend. Sawford was cautiously back in 8th one place behind top NG cup qualifier Paul McCullagh. With 2 strong rides here, the Cup Championship would go back to Wiltshire with McCullagh!

Round 10 - Rain shakes it all up

As the lights went out for the start of round 10 the rain started, and to add to the drama, Hodson was on the floor at turn 2 having borrowed Phil Guillou's immaculate TZ Yamaha. Finding himself on the outside of a packed mid corner tussle meant he was out of it following a nudge from the right.



Soon afterwards the red flags came out because of a short sharp shower, enough for a rapid change to wets. With Hodson not taking the restart, with a broken master cylinder following his crash it was Higgins who took off in the wet conditions to lead from lights to flag. Sawford kept his cool and brought his TZ home in safe 2nd, 5 seconds adrift of the marauding Melksham veteran! Rounding out the podium was John Lewis on his Hicks Heating and Plumbing TZ with his best result of the championship so far, enjoying a very strong 2nd part to the season.

Colin Wilcock had a great ride to 4th on board his Welch Mill Spray & MOT Garage TZ and rounding out the top 5 was Sian Brooks on board the Spyre Ltd RS Honda, Sian survived a very high speed scare in the stopped part of the race at the fastest part of the circuit, so seeing the red flags flying must have been a welcome sight. 5th is Sian's best result of the year having moved up from the Cup last season. Dan Jackson had a dramatic departure from the race as his Team Sigie TZ shed a hose clip resulting in a crash exiting the hairpin. Pole man Mechem did not take the restart in the very tricky conditions.



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In the Cup, and with one hand on the title, Paul McCullagh refused to make light work of taking the title here as he crashed out of a Cup winning position and 5th on the road — on the last lap!

Chris Harrison took the top honors in the Cup on board the "Snagglepuss Racing" TZ with his first win of the year. The only other NG Cup finisher in a race of very high attrition was Gary Vines who recovered from an earlier mishap to take a very creditable podium slot, and put himself well in contention for the title with McCullagh out.

Round 11—Thriller of the year

With Higgins on a high from his previous day's victory, the other main winner was Andrew Sawford who, in taking 2nd position had a big points haul over his rivals Ant Hodson and Dan Jackson, neither of whom scored a point, which set the scene perfectly for the penultimate round of the year, and all 3 in with a shout!

Higgins' weekend came to an abrupt halt as he retired the DTR Yamaha to pit lane at the end of the warm up lap, diagnosis—plug cap fell off! Despite sitting out of the previous days wet race, pole sitter Andy Mechem lead the charge throughout lap 1. Jackson soon passed him on lap 2 and immediately set a blistering pace on the Team Sigie Yamaha to gap the field pulling clear by almost 7 seconds and counting by the close of lap 4. A real dog fight ensued behind as Mechem, Wilcock and fast starting Carl Hudson on his DWH Racing RS Honda swapped places lap after lap.

By mid race distance, Jackson's lead peaked at 10 seconds from Wilcock and Mechem, who in turn had gapped Hudson, and Lewis, who were by now joined by Sawford and Hodson, both finding their pace on the drying circuit and lap by lap making a difference to the title outcome!

With Jacksons lap times settling, and the chasing pack going faster, the lead was shrinking by a second each lap. The 10 second advantage became 9 seconds, with 9 laps to go etc..

Like a well worked handicap race, Jackson just took the win in the most thrilling race of the year so far, beating Mechem by just 0.23 of a second at the line. Mechem set the fastest lap of the race on lap 19 out of 20 in his incredible effort to catch Jackson.

Completing the podium was an absolutely delighted Colin Wilcock only 2 seconds down on Mechem. Ant Hodson held off Sawford for 4th and 5th and John Lewis completed his most successful weekend of the year in 6th. Carl Hudson dropped back to 7th and a rejuvenated Paul McCullagh re lit his title hopes in the NG Cup with 8th overall equating to the Cup win, but only by 2 x 100's of a second from Gary Vines who, in turn was only 2 seconds clear of 3rd in the Cup and 10th on the road Simon Hunt.

Dunlop Performance of the Day Award

The Dunlop Performance of the Day awards went the way of Gary Vines on Saturday, who despite crashing in the slippery conditions, took the restart and collected a superb 2nd in the Cup., and keeping his title hopes in tact as he sits within striking distance of McCullagh with 1 to go.

Sunday, Ant Hodson was awarded the complimentary rear tyre as he also kept his title hopes alive by coming from 9th position to 4th, on Phil Guillou's machine, despite crashing it the previous day, and an electrical problem with his own bike—making for a relaxing weekend away in South Wales!!

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ACU National
Championship
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Mechem 117 from Wilcock 22 and Hodson, all catching Jackson (out of picture)



The NG Cup podium, but the order changed! Here Hunt 78 heads Vines from McCullagh

Championships

Just look at the Championship charts below: Only 2 points separate the top 3 in the series,. In short—how they finish on the road—should be how they end up in the championship. But lets not assume! and the Cup Championship is also up for grabs.

Championship: **Sawford 172, Jackson 172, Hodson 171**, Higgins 105, Lewis 84, Grinling 83, Goddard 68, C Hudson 65, Guillou 55, Brooks 51,

NG Cup: **McCullagh 165, Vines 153**, Harrison 134, Keen 105, Barrett 87, Hunt 83, Cox 64, Metcalfe 61, D Hudson 57, Morris 43.

Next and Final Round Thruxton 15th October 2011

250GP News:

NG Road Racing are delighted to announce the 250GP ACU National Championship & NG Cup will continue for the 5th successive year in 2012. Dates and circuits are currently being negotiated and a full fixture list will be released as quickly as possible. We are currently discussing dates with all of the following: Brands Hatch, Cadwell Park, Pembrey, Castle Combe, Anglesey, Thruxton, Mallory Park, Oulton Park, Silverstone:

Don't forget to book your dinner dance tickets as soon as possible. It is at Hatherley Manor—GL2 9QA on 19th November. Booking forms are available from the Pembrey and Thruxton race program, or by emailing sbostock@ngroadracing.org

Official Championship photographer and media coverage: EDPphoto.co.uk | press@edpphoto.com

For up-to-date NGRRC results, lap times and race dates please visit www.ngroadracing.org

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