



Race Report

Donington Park: April 30th 2005

Drivers: Paul Dobbing.
Tim Hartland.
Chris Fellows.
Massimo Vignali

Pit Crew: Pete Shaw.
Dave Robinson.
Jon Fellows.

Sponsors:

Weather: Dry and Overcast, becoming sunny.

Track: Dry

This was the second Race of the 2005 Uniroyal Fun Cup series and was the British event of the Euro rounds. It had attracted a grid of 23 cars, with a few of these new to the series this year. The Track at Donington had been resurfaced at the beginning of last year and seemed to have polished up nicely, the race was held on the National circuit which cuts out the Melbourne loop. We arrived on Thursday night to ensure that we secured our allotted Garage for race day while attending the Test Day held on the Friday. A warmer night was spent at the circuit in Paul's Camper than the last meeting at Snetterton, while being rocked to sleep by the passing aircraft taking off from the East Midlands Airport.

Testing

Friday was spent setting up the car prior to the 2-hour test session that evening. Drivers who had been testing their Uniroyal cars all day had said that the circuit was nowhere near as grippy as it had been on last years newly laid tarmac and so it proved to be. All the drivers were complaining about understeer so Pete and Dave made a couple of changes to the car, but it didn't seem to improve things that much. Good thing was, all the other teams were similarly moaning. It looked as though it would be a case of the old 'slow in fast out' school of racing to get a good lap time. This is great in qualifying, but murder in the race as the Gran Turismo boys come sliding up the inside of you at every corner, in some vain hope of Schumacher glory. Point 1; You ain't no Schuey. Point 2; I hope you like gravel lads.

Qualifying

Saturday arrived and rain at the start of qualifying only conspired to make the circuit more slippery than Rosie coming clean on his set up. Paul did his customary 3 laps, then in to get the Silver Fox out on the track after a six-month absence. And fox he proved to be, as that absence didn't stop Chris setting times quicker than Paul on old rubber. Has he lost weight or has the rest revitalised him? Thanks go, to twin brother Jon, for the enlightening fact that if Chris now stood sideways and stuck out his tongue, he'd look like a zip. How quick would he be after having a rest as well? Tim was up next and the rain started to ease, promising a drying track later maybe? Tim improved on Chris's time by 1.5s. What could the Italian stallion achieve? Off Massimo went, chasing the holy grail of an ever drying line. Hopes were high as we jumped from 14th to 7th quickest, then as the chequered flag appeared, hopes dashed as we fell to 10th. Still, we beat 3 Euro teams, and they are

supposed to know what they are doing. All were pleased with the car, which behaved beautifully, little more than a spanner check required before the race.

The Race

Paul started the race from the sixth row in 12th place and didn't get the usual sparkle into his start, almost getting involved in a lovers tiff at the first corner. This prompted race briefing echoes of 'It's not all won on the first corner guys.' Care to guess who was jilted? Paul emerged from all of this unscathed but down in 15th place, but by lap 13, was back up to 7th. We fully expected to lose about 20-30s per pit stop, as we knew we had a smaller refuel vent valve, but could do little about it. Having practised our driver changes furiously prior to the race, (almost to the point of it becoming an Olympic sport), the only aim we had was one of damage limitation. Imagine our great surprise when we emerged from the dust of the first pit stop still in 7th place, having spent 27 seconds longer than the leader in the pits. Tim set off in pursuit of a 1:29s lap time, his ultimate goal this weekend, but he was unlikely to achieve it at the start of the stint with a fresh fuel load. He did get us up to 6th by the time the safety car came out on lap 64 to recover the Honeywell team car. They had attempted a double stint without refuelling and ran out 1 lap before the next pit stop. In, refuelled and out, this time not suffering from too badly from slow refuelling, Massimo emerged in what appeared to be 7th but it is now too difficult to follow the positions from the lap charts, but the ever changing circuit MST system, puts us still in 7th. We won't argue. Massimo returns at the allotted refuel window, scrambling from the car in a sweaty Latino rage and spitting feathers, the car showing signs of coming second in a stag-rutting contest. 'He tried to have me off the track, bloody idiot'. Ok Massimo, get a drink and have ten. Chris out next putting in some consistent lap times down to his quickest of 1:29:9s and holding on to 7th, having a ding dong with some King Kong in a Ssangyong, in the lead and lapping us, but as we know to our cost racing can be cruel, so we'll see you later Mr Kong. Into the pits once more, and after losing only 15 seconds on the lead car, Tim goes out after a full debrief on his last outing, hungry to find those extra tenths that will earn him his 1.29s lap time. His determination does him no favours to start with, his line and speed all wrong into Redgate, time ebbing away all the way through Hollywood, rewarding Tim with slap in the face lap times in the 1:31's. Then, a glimmer of hope as he actually manages to trim off that speed into Redgate and the car goes where he wants it to. He puts in a low 1:30s. Mmmm, there's hope yet. He misses it a couple of times then hits the jackpot. Tim crosses the line having done a 1:29:951s. Tim punches the air with both arms. You'd think he just won the lottery. But there's no luck involved, just bloody hard work on his part. No sooner has he cracked it, he hits traffic, then the safety car emerges after Cuisine D'France, with a not so fresh car after being Liberarchied on the first lap, continue their season of scenery excursions, and end up in the gravel. At least they'll get on the telly. There's a rumour that next year they'll be sponsored by National Coaches, or Graham Norton. After the safety car returns to it's kennel, Tim gets stuck in traffic and narrowly avoids disaster after making contact with a slower car. He pulls off a couple of overtaking manoeuvres to complement his quick lap, when it's time for fuel, and the renewed Massimo to take the car for the last session. Keep it together Massimo, we're still 7th. If we finish here we'll be very happy, this would be the best we could hope for with our slow refuelling problems, our only hope is if others hit problems and Massimo can capitalise on them. Enter stage left, Sangyong into the pits for an unscheduled pit stop. Then repeat the exercise with another, putting them by the end 18 laps down. It may be dead mans shoes, but we move up to 6th. We're now too far behind SSJ in 5th to catch them, and so far ahead of Uniroyal in 7th as not to worry, that Massimo can relax and enjoy the last part of the race. Wait a minute, Uniroyal are a European team. They don't hang

about, so that puts the moral up a notch. It goes up another notch, as on emptying tanks Massimo posts the fastest lap for 109 at 1:29:477, a fabulous lap, less than a second slower than the fastest lap of the race. A thought crosses our minds, either he's very quick, or we are running on fumes. It doesn't matter as the car runs on will power from family and friends on the pit wall and finishes in 6th. A fantastic result that flatters the car's true performance; Well-done lads (and lasses). The other good news was that the fastest lap of the race was Team Honeywell with 1:28:500, this meant that the lap record that we set last year of 1.27.442 was not beaten, so Whirlybird hold it for another year!!

Luck favours the prepared Team!

Lastly, a quick word to our sponsors - **Where the hell are you?**

[Race Statistics](#)

| <u>Fastest Lap Times</u> | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Paul | Chris | Tim | Massimo |
| Qualifying | 1:45:188 | 1:44:461 | 1:42:756 | 1:41:465 |
| Race | 1:29:777 | 1:29:995 | 1:29:951 | 1:29:477 |
| <u>Laps Raced</u> | | | | |
| | 38 | 34 | 56 | 61 |

The next race is at Oulton Park on the Island Circuit on June 11th, 2005 and will be a 4hr race, we all hope to see you there.

PAUL DOBBING
WHIRLYBIRD AUTOSPORT.