



Essex Regional Heat

Franc N. Stein on
the podium.

Both cars now
qualified for the
national final.



7am on a Saturday morning can mean only one thing... a Greenpower race! This heat saw the Philip Morant School travelling to our local race at Ford's Technical Centre and Test Track in Basildon, Essex. The team were 11 strong and the focus was all on Franc as Fireblade was being rested due to its recent qualification at Rockingham. Prior to the race the team had been looking at the competition and believed that 5th place should be the target, as two other cars had already qualified and were likely to finish in the top 3.

The team arrived at the track on time and un-loaded the mini bus quickly. This meant they were first into scrutineering; lucky as the Ford scrutineers are meticulous and work was needed on Franc to get our pass sticker. Once this was done, they were first out into practice, which shows how organised the team were. However, just as they were



pushing Franc to the starting grid for Pole Position disaster struck! The rear left wheel had a puncture. Nate and Josh were on hand to get the wheel off and replace it but in this time they had dropped to 15th on the starting grid.

So the team started in 15th place but got away cleanly and after the by the sixth lap had got up into 7th place. The top 3 were Aon, Jewson and Deep Purple from Bexley. This meant the team needed to move up 2 places to gain automatic qualification. We kept on swapping positions with Plume, as we were much faster on the hairpin but they had a faster car on the straight. We were also only 30 seconds behind the Grammar school in 5th and 1 minute behind Superglide from Stanway who was in 4th place. These positions stayed roughly the same for the first hour, with the cars lapping very close to each other. After this hour had passed we had managed to secure 6th place and were pulling away from Plume.

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What is Greenpower?

Greenpower is a national electric car racing project for schools and colleges around the UK. Each team must build an electric vehicle around a standardised 250 Watt 24 volt electric motor and a set of 4 12 volt lead/acid batteries. A strict set of regulations ensures safe and close racing. Cars are designed and built within the schools with the help of teachers, co-opted outside engineers, parents and sponsoring companies. They then compete in a number of Greenpower run marathon and sprint events throughout the country, using well known motor racing circuits. This year schools are also competing against corporate teams including Renishaw and Bentley.

Our Cars

Last year's car; Franc N. Stein is joined this year by the brand new "Fireblade". Both cars have been built in school entirely by teachers and students.

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The recovery trucks were very busy on this track, as the uneven surface and tight hairpin was taking its toll on the cars. On the hour we changed drivers and managed to retain our 6th place. We were still chasing down the Grammar School who were in 5th place now. Then an hour and a half in the Grammar School took the hairpin too fast and rolled their car. It was damaged quite badly, but this meant that we went up into 5th place! Then Aon crashed into the back of a car and was out for a long time, this meant we now had to finish in 4th place to qualify. With 10 minutes to go



before the half way point we were hit with not one but two punctures, front and rear. This took 10 minutes to fix including a driver change followed by a quick battery change in under a minute. However, in that time we had dropped down to 10th place. As

we went back out we were thinking that we were going to have to drive hard to catch up.

The next hour was going to be good for us! We managed to get to only 4 laps behind the 2nd position car. At the 3 hour mark other cars made driver changes and had battery changes, this meant we managed to catch up into 5th place. We were still 2 laps behind the 2nd place car and a lap behind 3rd and 4th. Over the next half hour we had managed to gain a place, through a drop out; this time Stanway's Superglide had problems. We had over taken another car and were now sitting in 3rd, which meant automatic qualification. However, we needed to keep our wits about us as the 4th place care was only 1 minute behind and 5th place was 2 minutes behind and closing.

Going into the last 30 minutes we could see that we were on the same lap as the 2nd place car.

Again though, more bad news for us, we had lost a nut on one of our battery clamps and this had to be replaced. With 20 minutes to go we had dropped to 4th place. We

were able to overtake 3rd and were now 2 laps behind 2nd again. It was going to be nail biting, as the top 3 were fighting to keep their positions. Especially as the new 4th was just 50 seconds behind us. Going into the last 10 minutes we gained 2 laps back, to put us on the same lap as the 2nd place car! Luckily for us the 2nd place car needed to go into the pits for an overheated motor. This meant that as they came out of the pits, we were on the same lap as them. We were still getting round the track in 3 minutes and 30 seconds, and they had dropped a lot of speed. This meant it was going to be down to the last lap. As the cars came round the corner onto the final straight we could see 2nd and Franc was just behind with 100 meters before the hair pin. Franc glided around into second as the team shouted and cheered the car home to clinch 2nd place. This has to be described as one of the closest finishes as there was only 10 seconds between us and the car that came third.

This means that both Franc and Fireblade have gained automatic qualification to Goodwood Final and it would seem, for now, that Franc has out done Fireblade - on placing at least, but Fireblade still holds the upper hand on distance!



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Sponsorship. The Greenpower team welcomes support from business - help with parts, manufacturing, materials or funding. In recognition, sponsors logos can be carried on the car and team racewear. Please contact Mr. Stuart McCain at the school or email sponsorship@pmgreenpower.org.uk