

Kumho/BMW Championship 2011 Words and photography by Derek Binsted

Whittaker rules the roost at Silverstone

Garrie Whittaker had a successful opening weekend to the Kumho-BMW Championship, winning both races and Class A honours in his rapid M3 Evo



Well known Club member Neil McDonald carried the Club's sponsorship logo's (gratis!!) with pride on his 318iS at Silverstone.



but all of this meant that Whittaker was once again pulling away from the chasing pack behind him. Whittaker was looking for the lap record but couldn't quite get it. Another race win for Whittaker who won by nearly 30 seconds from Wells with Crisp in 3rd place. Class B was won by Smith ahead of Laws and Card again. Hudson took the Class C win from Miller. Bellamy, Skitt and Fielding were the top 3 cars in Class D.

As the cars moved off to race the new Snetterton Park layout in 2 weeks time there are the 3 cars of Whittaker, Smith and Bellamy all leading the championship on 30 points. Full reports from the Snetterton and Castle Combe rounds will be in June's Straight Six.

Silverstone – Round 1

The opening 2 rounds of the 2011 Kumho BMW Championship took place at Silverstone over the weekend of 2nd & 3rd April. The championship also welcomed on board a new sponsor for the season in the name of Supagard, the paintwork protection specialist company. This was the 1st of 10 meetings around the country including a visit to Cadwell Park & Castle Combe.

Some cars were not ready for Silverstone including that of defending champion Des Thresh, but it was good to see some of the regulars who have supported the racing over the last few seasons including Garrie Whittaker, Stuart Laws, Roger Card and Colin Whitmore.

Qualifying – In total 26 cars took to the track on Saturday morning for the 15 minute qualifying session. The weather was dull and grey but the track was dry. When the session had finished it was business as usual at the top of the leader board, with Garrie Whittaker (E36 M3 Evo) taking pole ahead of David Kempton (E36 M3 Evo) with Colin Wells a promising 3rd in his 'snazzy' Z4M Coupe. Fastest Class B car was that of Stuart Laws (E36 M3), closely followed by Mark Smith in his E30 M3. Fastest in Class C was Simon Hudson in an E30 325i, whilst fastest in Class D was Paul Bellamy (E36 318iS), ahead of Darren Fielding in his E36 318Ti Compact.

Race 1 – Sunday morning saw a nice bright sunny day at Silverstone for the start of the first race. Twenty-six cars made it to the grid and as the lights went out Whittaker made a blistering start – by the time the cars negotiated Becketts for the first time there was daylight between himself and the chasing pack led by Kempton. Laws had a big spin and ended on the grass through Becketts and Bellamy also had a coming together which pushed him towards the back of the field as the cars headed out on the 1st lap of the 20 minute race. After a few laps the cars settled down but Whittaker was by this time way out in the lead.

After only a handful of laps Whittaker came up behind the slower cars at the back of the race and had to start passing them. Bellamy was also making up a lot of places down in Class D. John Jones had a big off at Luffield and put his E36 318iS into the wall on the outside of the gravel. David Kempton had slowly been pulling Whittaker back in as he negotiated the back markers, then a flying lap which broke the lap record helped him to pass Whittaker. No sooner had he made it into the lead he got taken out with a coming together with Laws and his race was finished. Whittaker then cruised to the chequered flag to take the 1st race of the championship ahead of Wells and Graham Heard. Class B was won by Smith in 5th overall ahead of Rodger Card (E30 M3) and Laws. Hudson won class C from Miller. In Class D a fighting Bellamy took the honours ahead of Karl Skitt's E36 318Ti Compact with Fielding in 3rd.

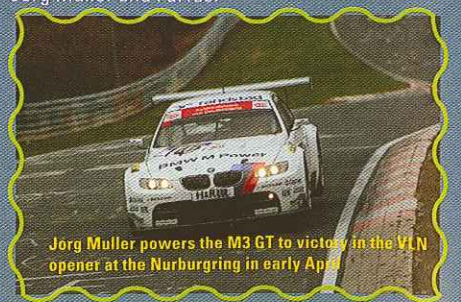
Race 2 – The cars came out late in the afternoon for race 2 for another 20 minutes of racing. Whittaker made another amazing start as he led the pack around Becketts for the first time. Kempton had also made a flying start, moving from the back of the pack to seventh place but amazingly he was then hit by Laws for the second race in succession which broke the steering arm on Kempton's car and he took no further part in the race.

Crisp was also making up a lot of places

One-two for BMW Motorsport at the Nürburgring

The first race appearance at the Nürburgring-Nordschleife on 2nd April 2011 turned out to be a great success for Team BMW Motorsport. The no. 42 BMW M3 GT with Jörg Müller, Augusto Farfus and Uwe Alzen at the wheel crossed the line as the winner in the first round of the VLN Endurance Championship. The second BMW M3 GT, driven by Andy Priaulx, Dirk Müller and Dirk Werner took the chequered flag in second, 51 seconds behind the sister car after four hours of running.

With sunny conditions and temperatures around 20 degrees Celsius, the VLN fans experienced a gripping race, which saw the front-runners racing closely together for most of the time. Having started from first (no. 43) and second (no. 42) on the grid, the two BMW M3 GT cars were involved in exciting duels and managed to complete the race without any technical problems, whereas some of their major rivals dropped back due to several incidents. The lead had changed several times, before final-stint drivers Jörg Müller and Dirk Müller were able to score the one-two result. For Alzen this is his tenth overall victory in the VLN, while it is a first for Jörg Müller and Farfus.



Jörg Müller powers the M3 GT to victory in the VLN opener at the Nurburgring in early April

RACE CALENDAR 2011

Round	Date	Venue
3	01/05/2011	CASTLE COMBE x 1 Race
4	14-15/05/2011	BRANDS HATCH x 2 Races
5	8-29/05/2011	CROFT x 2 Races
6	12/06/2011	CADWELL PARK x 2 Races
7	2-03/07/2011	ROCKINGHAM x 2 Races
8	20/08/2011	OULTON Park x 2 Races
9	10-11/09/2011	PEMBREY x 3 Races
10	01/10/2011	DONINGTON x 1 Race