

MOTORSPORT, RUGBY LEAGUE, RACING

Warriors are blown away by power of Storm

Rugby league

GLOS WARRIORS 7
LEICESTER STORM 42

GLoucestershire Warriors' season began in disappointing fashion with a 42-7 loss to Leicester Storm – but there was much to admire about the performance, writes Chris Wilson.

The Warriors defended their line with tenacity and commitment but lacked the cutting edge that the Storm showed as they ran in nine tries.

A new-look Warriors side were playing their first game of the season in the 3V Sport Midlands Rugby League Premier Division.

It took time to settle down as the Storm started strongly and took the lead on four minutes from a typical Simon Annis short-range try converted by Tom Knott but once they had found their feet, they kept possession well despite being penned in their own half for most of the first quarter.

Prop Mahmood Saad's barnstorming run from halfway brought the Storm's second try after 14 minutes but the Warriors hit back and hooker Matt Williams took advantage of confusion in the Storm defence to power over from 20 metres. Ash Lewis banged over the goal and the Warriors were in the game.

Lewis was causing chaos out wide with some strong running and the Balti Hut man of the match Mike Rowley took the ball up strongly, challenging the defenders every time.

However, it was the Storm who increased their lead before the break, Annis again going over from a couple of inches out. Knott's goal made it 16-6 at the break.

The Warriors handed the initiative to the Storm straight from the restart by dropping the kick off and the visitors needed no second invitation. Saad went over for his second try and from their next set, Knott slid over out wide.

The Warriors earned a penalty from the restart but could not break through and Alex McEwan slotted a drop goal.

But that only eased the pressure on the Storm and they rampaged back upfield and Josh McLaurin went over followed shortly afterwards by Adam Jones. Five minutes later, Annis grabbed his third score and the Storm were home.

The Warriors continued to apply pressure but the final score of the day came from the Storm, Greg Harris diving over in the corner.

Head Coach Steve Lee said he was upbeat after his side's first outing: "We completed our sets and defended hard on our own line but their offloads caused us problems and their halves created space out wide well."

WARRIORS: Z France, S Eastwood, A Lewis, S Cook, D Gahan, R Morris, A McEwan, B Brinkworth (Capt.), M Williams, M Rowley, K Lewis, C Hall, J Toft. Reps: P Beach, C Benjamin, T Askew, J e Moore, A Almond.

STORM: J Boothby, D Linacre, G Harris, S Castell, T Fletcher, B Stokes, A Jones, J Hull, S Annis (Capt.), M Saad, Liam Barnes, J McLaurin, T Knott. Reps: Dan Hay, T Watson, P Thomson, S Addison.

REFEREE: Stewart Orton (RLC Appointment).

Raining champion Wallace masters the Prescott climb

BY DON CRAIG

ATROCIOUS weather played a big part in proceedings at the Prescott Hill Climb as the Bugatti Owners Club hosted the first two rounds of the Avon Tyres MSA British Hill Climb Championship.

Scottish drivers Wallace Menzies and Lee Adams took a win each to make the long journeys back to Alloa and Peterhead respectively a little easier.

Constant rain and blustery wind throughout the morning qualifying runs made for extremely slippery track conditions and meant that good traction away from the start line was a crucial factor in setting a good time.

A number of drivers from the smaller engined classes were able to utilise their relative lack of power in the conditions to qualify for the first championship run off.

Alex Summers from Tenbury Wells in his 1000cc OMS CF Suzuki qualified sixth fastest in as time of 48.77 seconds.

Richard Spedding from Barnsley was fourth in his 1600 cc Force PC Mistral and Mike Manning from Carmarthen again upset the form book by qualifying his four wheel drive Ford Puma ninth quickest.

Reigning champion Ludlow's Scott Moran was slowest qualifier in his Gould GR 61X in a time of 48.34.

In the run-off, second fastest qualifier Aylesbury's Trevor Willis spun off exiting the fast Orchard Corner – damaging the underside of his OMS CF25 and not recording a time.

Moran set the quickest time of the day so far on 46.68, good enough for second place.

Summers followed closely on



ON THE WINNING TRACK: Wallace Menzies in his DJ Firestorm Cosworth at Prescott

47.81 to claim fourth place.

Second fastest qualifier, Scott's father Roger, took third on 46.70 but Alloa's Menzies confirmed his position of fastest qualifier on 47.27 and was the only driver to break 46 seconds with 45.79 for top spot.

Conditions had improved slightly by the time of the second championship run-off, the rain having stopped temporarily but returning for the later runners.

This accounted for the top four qualifiers reversing their positions in the run-off.

Top qualifier Menzies

improved from 45.54 to 44.26 to finish fourth, while Moran knocked more than two seconds off his qualifying time to end on 44.03 for third place.

Willis improved from 46.50 to 43.99 to claim runner-up spot and Adams topped the results improving by nearly three seconds to claim first place and fastest time of the day on 43.82.

Menzies was delighted with his second win at Prescott, his fourth in total, and said the standing water on various parts of the course made it a very tricky weekend.

Adams was delighted to

claim a win at one of his favourite hills and added that his team had worked hard all week to prepare the car for Prescott after his co-driver Jos Goodyear had crashed at an event a week earlier.

Martin Jones from Gotherington in his Lotus 51A was first in the Classic Racing Car class and Austin Weltman from Painswick in his Westfield Eleven Climax was first in the Bugatti Owners Club Classic Pre 72 Sports Car Handicap.

AVON TYRES MSA BRITISH HILL CLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS: 1= Scott Moran and Wallace Menzies 17; 3 Roger Moran 14



Mike Tilley chats to Toby Price in the paddock



SPRAY: Mike Manning in his four-wheel-drive Ford Puma



Steve Garner in his Westfield Sei VX



GRIP: John Bradburn in his Gould GR55 Cosworth HB

Jonjo gives safety at Grand National his backing

JONJO O'Neill has given Grand National organisers a vote of confidence over the safety of the course at Aintree.

It follows the death of his Cheltenham Gold Cup winner Synchronised following a fall in the race last month, in which one of his other horses, runner-up Sunnyhillyboy, required

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surgery for a leg injury.

"They have done a great job in changing a lot of the jumps and made them a lot easier," he told the BBC's *Countryfile* programme.

"They'll look into it again and, hopefully, if they can make

more improvements they will do because everybody in the game wants the race to be properly organised and they're doing everything they possibly can."

O'Neill said when Synchronised unseated AP McCoy before the race it showed the nine-year-old was feeling well.

"That was just the horse's well-being," he said. "He was full of himself and he was a great little character. He ducked from the line and that just showed you how bright and alert he was."

"He ducked to one side and AP went the other way. That was typical of his character."



Jonjo O'Neill