

ESMEE HAWKEY

Positive takeaways from Oulton Park weekend for Hawkey as opening half of season comes to a close



Esmee Hawkey rounded off the first half of the season with solid performances on her first Porsche Carrera Cup GB visit to the picturesque Cheshire circuit. Her GT Marques run Porsche Gen II 911 GT3 Cup machine looked the part and showed considerable pace in the first part of the weekend.

Hopes were high for qualifying but with the circuit conditions changing from the cooler Friday conditions, the pace was no longer in the car as others adapted to the track. The team tried a number of setup changes which improved the car, allowing Esmee to move up the timesheet but she was not quite able to drag the same speed out of the car as before. That said, she was happy with the overall performance and optimistic of making progress through the order in the race.

Battling back in race one, the Kent-based teenager clawed her way through the pack in Pro-Am to finish fifth at the flag. In race two she was challenging for a podium position when she made a late move for glory, only to receive damage trying to make the pass, ultimately leading to retirement.



"It's a tricky track, it's narrow and bumpy and we struggled a bit in free practice," said Esmee. "Every time we go out on track we learn and get better and better. The car improved to FP2, it felt really great and we found lots of time. We tried a new set-up for qualifying but it didn't quite work and tried another which found us seven tenths and put us P5 in Pro-Am so we were pretty happy with that.

"In race one I didn't have the best of starts and was on the back foot, but I cleared the Am drivers who'd got past me. I really enjoyed race two. I made it past Justin Sherwood for P5 in Pro-Am and [Seb] Perez had a spin, so we were up to P4.

"I wanted to get on the podium, so I went for a move on Rory [Collingborne]. He was blocking like mad, so it made it tough and I broke too late, locked up, and that was the end of the race. We touched just enough to break my wishbone. There are positives – we'd had a good race up to that point. I would have been happy with P4 but it's a racing driver's instinct to go for the move isn't it?

"I understand the car more each time out and working with Dino [Zamparelli] is helping me get the techniques to drive it quickly. Snetterton is next and we're improving every time we get in the car, so we'll have a positive mindset, I'll clear my head in the break, and we'll go from there."

Esmee will be back on track for rounds nine and ten of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at Snetterton in Norfolk on Friday July 27 for two free practice sessions before qualifying on Saturday at 14:30. Both of the weekend's races take place on Sunday July 29 at 09:15 and 15:05, with the latter live on ITV4 and ITV Hub.