

MOTORSPORT

Southwater race ace Will claims a stunning GP4 victory at Brands Hatch

BRDC FORMULA 4

By Richard Randle

A stunning drive from pole position to victory in Round Five of the BRDC Formula 4 Winter Championship at Brands Hatch helped Will Palmer secure fifth in the final standings of his first campaign in single seaters last weekend (November 23 and 24).

The 16-year-old from Southwater enjoyed a very competitive weekend, with the victory in Saturday's opening encounter adding to the podium finish he secured at Snetterton two weeks ago.

After a good showing in Friday testing Palmer went into the first race day confident of challenging for pole. Conditions for qualifying were very different to the day before with overnight rain making the track slightly damp.

With all drivers opting for slick tyres, Palmer was consistently the quickest as the track improved, and when a red flag caused an early end to the session the teenager had put in a lap time a tenth of a second faster for pole for the first race in only his sec-



Home comforts. Will Palmer in action at Brands Hatch, and right, delighting in victory on the podium after a stunning drive

ond weekend in F4.

And continuing that form into Race One, Palmer led from the start despite a safety car allowing rival Graham to close the gap and again challenge him for the lead.

A series of very quick and consistent laps gave Palmer his first single seater victory by 1.5 seconds from eventual champion Graham.

After setting the third fastest lap in race one, Will started Saturday's second race from that position, but a poor geta-

way meant he fell to sixth off the line, and with overtaking notoriously difficult around Brands Hatch that's where he finished.

A tough Sunday qualifying again in difficult conditions saw him start the first race eighth, and in a frustrating race Palmer damaged his front wing on the opening lap and had to settle for a tenth place finish.

Race two was a very different affair though. A very aggressive first few corners saw

Palmer move into seventh place after passing a car at each of the first three corners. He then saw an opportunity to pass Graham at Clearways and seized it to take sixth place.

Will then reeled in Norwegian driver Falco Wauer with a series of quick laps before lunging past him at Paddock with just over ten laps to go. He then chased after Hillspeed's



Jake Cook, who had managed to build a gap while those behind him fought over position, finishing within a second of him in fifth place, which secured Palmer fifth place overall in the BRDC Formula 4 Winter Series.

"I'm really pleased with the way I've adapted to single seaters, and it was amazing to take my first ever single seater pole and win," Palmer enthused. "To do it at what is effectively my home circuit, Brands Hatch, was even more special."