

Alex Lloyd Superfund Euro F3000 Championship Donington Park – August 29th 2004

Only one thing spoiled the clean sweep - Alex didn't win.

In summary:

Saturday Free Practice:

Fastest lap – Alex Lloyd (+0.560 secs)

Saturday Qualifying:

Pole – Alex Lloyd (+0.400 secs)

Sunday Warm Up:

Fastest lap – Alex Lloyd (+0.668 secs)

Race:

Fastest lap – Alex Lloyd

Superfund "Man of the Race" – Alex Lloyd



Having finally cured the mechanical problems which crippled his first two races, Alex utterly dominated the meeting, proving untouchable in every session.

But, as the race was about to start, unbelievably, mechanical problems hit once again. As the cars moved onto the circuit towards the grid, the driveshaft on Alex's car broke. He was able to crawl round and back to the pits, and although the John Village Automotive team worked feverishly to replace it, they were unable to do so before the pitlane closed. Alex would be able to race, but he would have to start from the pitlane – right at the back of the field.

The lights turned to green and the pack streamed away. When they had all safely negotiated the first corner, Alex was released. On cold tyres, he began his charge.

"All I was interested in was the win" he explained after the race. "I wasn't going to settle for anything other than that."

"When I got round the first corner, I saw the leader [Jonny Reid, his team mate] in the distance, climbing up towards McLeans, and I calculated that I would have to lap over 5/10ths a lap faster than anyone else for the full race distance in order to catch him, so I knew I had to take risks. These cars are so equally matched, I knew that I needed to be the difference"

Starting on cold tyres, Alex set fastest lap after fastest lap – (subsequently, the data showed him lapping an incredible 2 seconds a lap quicker than the leaders) soon eating his way through the backmarkers, taking every half chance decisively and accurately.

"Alex Lloyd is absolutely on fire!" screamed the commentator, as Alex scythed ruthlessly past Matthias Lauda, son of the famous multiple F1 World Champion, Niki, at Redgate corner.



As the leaders continued to circulate, the TV cameras were glued to the mercurial teenager, and his incredible charge to win the race.

After 10 laps, having started from 15th and last place, he was up to 7th and challenging to take 6th away from Christiano Tuka Rocha.

Coming down the Craner Curves, he thought about a move round the outside ("I was there when Senna did it in the wet in the opening lap of the 1993 F1 GP" he said later) but in dry conditions, the move wasn't possible. "The lack of downforce washed me wide, but I got back on his tail. He was very slow through the Old Hairpin, and I had to jink to the outside of him on the exit to avoid hitting him. There was a possibility of trying to get round him on the outside"

He didn't back off, but the bold move didn't pay off. His outside wheel just touched the still-damp grass, and the car slithered off the track, Alex dipping the clutch immediately. The car spun gently, but if the rear wheels on these high performance cars turn backwards, even with the clutch depressed, the engine will stall. And if the engine stalls, the car cannot be restarted. The fairytale ending was not to be.

The race was stopped half way through by a sudden downpour. It was restarted on wet tyres, and although Norbert Siedler won on the track, Alex's team mate won the race on aggregate.

Alex was distraught. He got fastest lap. He won Man of the Race. He went to congratulate his team mate, and to congratulate the team on their win. He went to the hospitality suite and thanked his guests for their support. He watched the Podium Ceremony, the trophies awarded by his guest, the Isle of Man Minister for Tourism and Leisure, the Hon. David Cretney MHK.

Alex is clearly a rare talent, but is struggling for the budget to keep going, and knew he really needed to win this race to be able to continue.

Motorsport is about fire and passion, emotion and excitement. But it is also about luck. There are times when you can look back and see defining moments in life for a driver, and looking at Alex, handling so professionally his qualifying success and subsequent bitter disappointment, you couldn't help but think that this might just be one of those pivotal times for Alex Lloyd.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES:

Superfund Euro F3000 series – engine Zytec, 3 litre V8, 460 HP, chassis Lola, tyres Avon
Team: John Village Automotive, Chesterfield, UK

Superfund web site: www.superfund-euro3000.com

Alex's web site: www.alex-lloyd.com

TV coverage: live on Motors TV in UK (with highlights throughout the following week) and throughout Europe and South America and qualifying and the races are also web-broadcast live on Superfund's web site. See Superfund web site for details.

Next rounds:

Dijon	12 th September 2004
Zolder	19 th September 2004
Cagliari	31 st October 2004
Dubai	28 th November 2004

