

Mark Hoppé unbeaten in August Grass slalom



## Mark Hoppé clinches 2024 Autotest Championship

Friday Night Motorsport

Words and photos: GEOFF PICKETT

Just eight seconds determined the outcome of the second grass autotest of Woolbridge Motor Club's summer season with 2023 champion Mark Hoppé winning the event which was staged close to the Clay Pigeon Kart Raceway and the George Albert Hotel just off of the A37 Dorchester to Yeovil road, and as a result, retained his autotest crown. The July event attracted a mere nine drivers and unfortunately, one month later, the response was again disappointing with just thirteen takers despite efforts to publicise and spread the word. Is the Friday evening slot not popular? Are evening events difficult for potential drivers? Or is it simply there is no appetite for grass autotest/slaloms despite the non-damaging format which encourages the use of standard roadgoing vehicles? Feedback would be great.



Evie drives while Tim checks the route



Gary Morris tackles the Straight-line slalom

At the wheel of his diminutive 993 cc engined Suzuki Alto, Hoppé from Sherborne, set the early pace by securing the fastest time on the first of five tests to open-up a lead of just over one second on Weymouth's Andy Webb who was to maintain second place overall throughout the event in his 1500 cc Toyota Yaris and claim a win in the over 1400 cc division. In fact, Hoppé replicated his form on the remaining four tests to complete the competition undefeated.



July autotest winner Chris Briant (passenger above) trailed Andy Webb (driving) by just one and a half seconds prior to last test penalties.



Dave Mears was denied class win



Team work from Will Baker and Fred Mackey

It was the Yaris which got closest to the dominant Hoppé on the second test but with Chris Briant at the wheel. The Bridport driving instructor, who took the overall win at the previous autotest, was unsuccessful in regaining, at least, some of the two seconds lost on the first test with the eventual winner eking out his advantage by a further 1.6 seconds. Briant continued to give chase along with Webb and would have finished third overall a mere 1.5 seconds in arrears of his co-pilot if not for a critical thirty second penalty for taking an incorrect route on the last test of the day and consequently fell to fourth place.



Class win for Volkswagen Polo pilot Alfie Mears

Benefitting from Briant's penalty was Volkswagen Polo driver Alfie Mears who performed consistently throughout the event to claim third place with a total time of 363.8 seconds finishing eight and a half seconds ahead of the penalised driver and claiming the win in the up to 1400 cc category ahead of his father Dave who finished ten and a half seconds in arrears following a thirty second penalty on the first test for not adhering to the correct route and lost the class accolades as a result.

Clay Pigeon Grass Autotest		16th August 2024		Test					Grand Total	Class Pos'n	Overall Pos'n		
Class	No.	Driver	Club	Car	cc	1	2	3				4	5
A	1	Gary Morris	WMC	Corsa	1389	79.6	71.1	75.6	76.1	77.4	<b>379.8</b>	3	6
A	2	Will Baker	WMC	Corsa	1200	94.0	74.9	<u>97.2</u>	79.0	77.6	<b>422.7</b>	6	11
A	3	Dave Mears	WMC	Mini	1293	<u>96.0</u>	67.4	69.5	70.4	70.9	<b>374.2</b>	2	5
A	4	Mark Hoppe	WMC	Alto	993	66.0	63.4	67.2	67.5	68.7	<b>332.8</b>	-	1
A	5	Alfie Mears	WMC	Mini	1293	72.6	69.6	72.6	74.8	74.2	<b>363.8</b>	1	3
A	5	Fred Mackey	WMC	Corsa	1200	<u>96.0</u>	74.8	82.4	81.4	77.3	<b>411.9</b>	5	9
A	6	Brendon Hampshire	WMC	Volvo	1400	80.3	78.2	84.3	83.8	83.8	<b>410.4</b>	4	8
B	7	Charlie Dovey	WMC	Lotus Elan	1558	<u>97.1</u>	73.9	71.2	88.6	82.2	<b>413.0</b>	4	10
B	8	Evie Dovey	WMC	Toyota MR2	1800	82.6	82.0	<u>99.7</u>	81.5	89.9	<b>435.7</b>	6	13
B	9	Andy Webb	WMC	Yaris	1500	67.1	65.9	69.9	68.7	69.2	<b>340.8</b>	1	2
B	10	Chris Briant	WMC	Yaris	1500	68.2	65.0	69.7	70.2	<u>99.2</u>	<b>372.3</b>	2	4
B	11	Loop Lang	WMC	Lotus Elan	1558	87.2	79.5	91.9	80.1	84.3	<b>423.0</b>	5	12
B	12	Tim Dovey	WMC	Toyota MR2	1800	74.7	73.0	85.5	77.4	96.6	<b>407.2</b>	3	7

Times in *italics* = cone penalty 5 seconds per cone

Times underlined = wrong test or maximum penalty, fastest time plus 30 seconds



Geoff Lang lays down the power

Woolbridge MC Autotest Championship 2024				
Driver	July 12th	Aug 16th	Total	
Mark Hoppé	6.80	6.60	13.40	
Andy Webb	4.60	6.50	11.10	
Chris Briant	5.70	5.40	11.10	
Dave Mears	3.50	4.40	7.90	
Gary Morris	4.00	3.30	7.30	
Alfia Mears	1.30	5.50	6.80	
Tim Dovey		3.30	3.30	
Brendan Hampshire	1.00	2.20	3.20	
Will Lawrence	2.40		2.40	
Charlie Dovey		2.20	2.20	
Peter Ramsden	1.20		1.20	
Geoff Lang		1.10	1.10	
Fred Mackey		1.10	1.10	
Ashley Ramsden	1.10		1.10	
Evie Dovey		1.00	1.00	
Will Baker		1.00	1.00	

CAR TRIALS SEASON STARTS

Sept 22nd