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THE VOICE OF NATIONAL RACING

It's time for a confessional

Okay, I will admit it. You might want to sit down. It doesn't happen very often, so you might want to cut out and keep this column: I was totally wrong.

When the 750 Motor Club first came up with the idea of a championship for 14-17 year-olds in identical Citroën Saxos, I questioned the validity and the need for it. In the build-up to the opening race in May 2006, I wondered where yet another championship for drivers who should still be pounding around kart circuits would fit on the racing ladder and, indeed, whether it would be able to muster enough cars to make it worthwhile.

Whoops.

Last weekend's 750 Motor Club meeting at Brands Hatch had a record grid of 25 identical 1.6-litre machines and the racing on offer was fantastic.

It seems there really was a need for it and it has been a huge hit.

Not only was the field full, the level of driver ability was extremely high too – even if there were a few too many cases of panel bashing as the fights began to spill over.

Jake Farndon, Chrissy Palmer and Leyton Clarke's three-way fight for domination on Sunday was breathtaking with Clarke snatching the initiative late-on in the race after Palmer and the brave late-braking Farndon had got physical at Clearways halfway through.

But all the way down the top half of the grid, the racing was stunning and the little hatchbacks were being flung from the top of the precipice at Paddock Hill bend with impressive abandon. They are forgiving machines

which rely on momentum and reward smooth driving – although that does seem to be lost on some of the participants. All in all, the 750 Motor Club has got yet another hit on its hands. It was foolhardy of me ever to doubt that it would have.

So while numbers continue to flourish in the series, what is the future? Are we going to see Renault Clio Cup-style split grids to accommodate all the teenagers who want to give it a try?

Not according to organisers, who are seriously considering putting a cap on the amount of cars in the series. Too many would lead to the likelihood of more incidents, plus the spectre of non-qualifiers at some circuits. All the youngsters want to do is race, so to force the slower ones into a wasted trip would be criminal and the 750 MC is aware of this.

But demand should continue to rise. Last year's Saxmax champion, 17-year-old Liam McMillian, has moved up into the British Touring Car Championship-supporting Seat Cupra competition this season and currently lies eighth in the points.

That's not a bad reflection on the grounding that Saxmax gives drivers. If a product of the series is able to step straight into a 280bhp one-make racer and perform, then 750 MC's championship has underscored its strength.

“They are forgiving and reward smooth driving”



Impressive precipice speeds



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