

Park Life

Ireland's Mondello Park is a wonderfully challenging circuit, so who better to guide us around it than the reigning outright lap record holder, Nigel Greensall

Having enjoyed driving in the EuroBoss F1 series during the opening weekend of the Mondello Park International circuit in April 1998, it was a great pleasure to go back recently and race alongside Editor Hayman in the single-make Fun Cup. Competing at Mondello Park is a wonderful experience, the staff at the track always very welcoming, friendly and helpful; it adds to the fun of a weekend in Ireland! Mondello is a challenging circuit no matter what you're racing in; I currently hold the outright lap record in a Formula 1 Tyrrell powered by a 650bhp Judd V10, so it was interesting comparing that experience with piloting a 130bhp Fun Cup around the circuit. The Tyrrell nipped around in 1.28.7, while the best we managed in the Beetle lookalike was 2.04.5, putting the F1 car 35 seconds ahead per lap of the 2.4-mile circuit. Yet lap times only tell part of the story... The Tyrrell's dominance is easily explained, of course. Not only has it got a considerable power advantage, it also runs slick rubber and huge downforce – we used the equivalent of Monaco settings on the Tyrrell's wings. The Fun Cup car, on the other hand, has no downforce and treaded tyres, but in places shows a turn of speed that may surprise you. Straight-line honours – unsurprisingly – belong to the Tyrrell, the F1 car cracking 165mph over the start line

compared with 85mph for the Fun Cup. However, the braking point at the end, just past the small crest as you go under the bridge, is the same in both cars, although in the Tyrrell you'd be rather busy at this point!

The big surprise is that at the apex of the first hairpin both cars post the same minimum speed of 35mph. On the exit here I was able to use the full width of the track in the Fun Cup and still have time to bring the car back across to the right before turning left in to turn two; in the F1 car it was quicker to make a tight exit on the hairpin to be in position ready for the entry to turn two. Turn two is an adverse camber left-hander that in the Fun Cup is full throttle on a clear lap – in the Tyrrell I'd shift up from first gear at the hairpin to fourth gear before turning left on 80 per cent throttle, reaching full throttle just at the exit kerb. The next straight has the Fun Cup reaching 87mph and the Tyrrell up to 167mph. Turn three is then the braking zone for turn four; you need great patience under braking for turn four to make sure of getting the apex, as it's very easy to run wide and then have a slow exit. The straight down in to turn five curves to the right and I look for the tree on the outside to find the line for braking. I also take an early turn in to the left-hander to be on the cleanest and most grippy part of the track. Next is the downhill approach to the fast right-hander, turn



six. The difficulty here is using the full width of the track on the entry to the corner, which is very important to gain maximum speed for the uphill exit. Both cars reach maximum speed on the next straight, the Fun Cup 92mph, the F1 Tyrrell 171mph. Braking downhill into turn seven is a good place for overtaking: it is also easy to brake too much for the turn! Try to use full width of the track on the exit of turn seven to open the entry to turn eight, a process helped by the uphill exit. The esses at turns nine and 10 have very flat kerbing, so I use as much of the apex as possible to 'straight line' both corners – this can help with overtaking as you approach turn 11, the left-hand hairpin. I then take a long apex at turn 11, holding the car tight to the apex for half of the corner. The approach to turn 12, a fast left, is an area requiring great care; I find it easy to go too wide on corner entry and then be on the kerb before turning in to the corner, which creates a certain amount of excitement in the cockpit... The final corner of the lap is a tight hairpin and therefore another great place for overtaking. And it's also an ideal spot for the driver to perform an impressive powerslide in front of the pit lane audience on the main straight! ■



Lap Records as at 17th July 2010

National Circuit 5.95 km

Class	Time	Date	Driver
Outright Lap Record	05:12	18 May 1997	Nigel Greensall - Tyrrell-Judd Ford0365
Colt Car	1:06.71	4 June 1997	Mark Robinson
Full Power	1:02.474	28 December 2009	R. Greg Thomas - Fiat Punto 1400e
Full Power (4000)	1:04.509	23 April 2010	T. O'Brien - Fiat Fiat 1.9TD-4000 + 10000
Formula	02:07	24 December 2009	Tom O'Brien - Jurgens J1
Formula Superclass	02:09	8 May 2010	John Whelan - Ford Focus
Formula Ultra	01:28.7	28 December 2009	21 - Spire Motors - Ford F1000
Formula 1000	1:02.511	8 June 2010	0000 - 0000 - 0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	0000	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	8 May 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	26 April 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	8 June 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	26 April 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	08 August 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	7 June 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	26 April 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	08 August 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	7 June 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	26 April 2010	0000
Formula 1000 (1000)	01:06	08 August 2010	0000

