

**Round 3**  
**Wakefield Park, 14-15 April**  
**Race Report**

Goulburn local Costa Toparis has won the third round of the AGI NSW Motor Race Championship. Mastering difficult conditions in the AGI Mygale EcoBoost F4, Toparis was untouchable in the Trophy Race leading from start to finish. It was not that way all weekend, and Toparis faced serious challenges from his teammates Nathan Gotch (Dallara F307 Renault) and Gianmarco Pradel (Mygale EcoBoost F4) on his way to a victory that elevates him to second in this year's championship.



*Costa Toparis was brilliant in tricky conditions.*

**Snapshot**

**Podium**



1. **Costa Toparis**
2. **Nathan Gotch**
3. **Gianmarco Pradel**

**Photos**



**Natsoft Results**



**Standings**



<b>Nathan Gotch</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Costa Toparis</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Doug Barry</b>	<b>134</b>

*Click icons for links*

## ***Pre-Race***

The weekend saw a full complement of 'Class B' F4 cars entered in the two divisions: 'young guns' and 'gentleman drivers', applying a very liberal definition of 'gentleman' in some cases. The two youngsters demonstrated the full potential of the cars in the previous round, and with the prospect of wet conditions again the F4 cars were expected to be highly competitive.

Of the F3 competitors trying to mount some sort of challenge to the Nathan Gotch, Rob Rowe (Dallara F310 Toyota) was returning after missing the previous round, and Ron Coath (Dallara F307 Mercedes) was returning with a newly rebuilt engine. Unfortunately Ron was unable to get any running-in time across the weekend and was a non-starter.

Greg Muddle was debuting his newly acquired Dallara F307 Opel Spiess, which allowed Rodney Baker to step up into last year's championship-winning car (the #41 Dallara F399 Opel Spiess).

Doug Barry was again expected to be a big threat in the 'Big Dog' – the Reynard 92D Formula Holden, again being the sole entrant from the Formula Holden ranks. Hopefully its not too much longer before he's joined by a couple more of these impressive cars.

Lawrence Katsidis (Sydney Photo Booths Dallara F304 Renault), Rob Sviderskas (Dallara F304 Opel Spiess), the in-form Glenn Lynch (Dallara F397 Fiat) and Shayne Morrow (Dallara F397 VW) completed an field of 15 cars.

The week preceding the race meeting was wet, Thursday bump-in was wetter, Friday was rain-free but the circuit remained seriously wet. So it was unsurprising on Saturday morning that we rolled out for our 4<sup>th</sup> wet qualifying in a row ahead of another wet weekend....

## ***Qualifying***

***1. Costa Toparis; 2. Gianmarco Pradel; 3. Nathan Gotch***

***Pole time: 1:05.080***

Saturday morning saw only light and intermittent showers, but with rivers across the track in several places and no prospect of drying conditions it was clear we were set for another wet weekend.

The two young guns were a cut above for most of the session, but it was Nathan Gotch who pulled out the best lap late in the session, getting down into the 1:03's. Ultimately he ran foul of the officials for passing under yellows, and a two-spot penalty was applied, handing pole to Toparis narrowly ahead of Pradel.

Rowe was best of the rest, the whole field circulating cautiously as they tried to work out conditions. It didn't make for great times, but we did manage to navigate the session without a red flag.

Tim Boyle was impressive, putting his Mygale F4 into 5<sup>th</sup> ahead of Rod Baker, who had good run in a not-quite-familiar car apart from a spin at Turn 2 – in front of the team boss in his new car – which almost made for an awkward team debrief!. Barry and Phil Morrow qualified 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively, ahead of Muddle who ran out of gears half way through the session. Mark Wilson completed the top 10.

## **Race 1**

**1. Gianmarco Pradel; 2. Costa Toparis; 3. Rodney Baker**

**Fastest Lap: Gotch 1:11.573**

More rain had fallen by the time the cars rolled out for Race 1 and a slow race was in prospect.

Pradel was quickest away when the lights went out, and led from Gotch and Toparis in the early stages. The tricky conditions caught out Gotch on lap 4, running off the circuit and having to recover with a trip through the pits. This ultimately brought him out a lap down on the two lead cars and effectively out of the running.



*Toparis in 3<sup>rd</sup> at the start of Race 1, the rest of the field 'enjoying' the conditions.*

Behind the leaders, Rowe had failed to launch, so Barry had 4<sup>th</sup> place ahead of Phil Morrow and Baker, the three of settling in for what would be a close, race-long three-way battle. They led Boyle, who had started out of position due to a spin on the warm-up lap, Katsidis, Muddle and Shayne Morrow.

Rowe was working hard to recover places, climbing back from 11<sup>th</sup> on the opening lap to eventually work his way past Shayne Morrow, Muddle and Katsidis. Morrow also took the opportunity to pass Muddle, before the safety car was deployed when Wilson spun coming out of the fish-hook and beached his car on the inside ripple strip.

When racing resumed Pradel had a distinct advantage as there were several lapped cars in the queue between him and his rival Toparis, and this allowed him to settle into a rhythm with a margin that he was able to manage all the way to the flag.

Barry had Morrow and Baker in close pursuit, and the three of them put on a skilful display in the conditions. The two chasing cars were unaware Barry had been given a penalty for starting from Boyle's grid position, and were both eagerly looking for passing opportunities. Morrow was able to make his move on the penultimate lap, and looked to be cruising to a 1-2-3 Formula 4 race result until he ran wide at the right-hander leading onto the back straight on the final lap. The 'off' baulked Barry, which gave Baker the opportunity to make a move under brakes into the last corner to claim a first podium with FRCA.

Boyle and Rowe also picked up places from Morrow, the three filling places 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> and being the last cars to finish on the lead lap.

Shayne Morrow completed a solid mistake-free race to claim 8<sup>th</sup> ahead of Gotch, Katsidis, Muddle and a fast-finishing Rob Sviderskas, who had improved from the morning with borrowed tyres.

## **Race 2**

**1. Nathan Gotch; 2. Costa Toparis; 3. Gianmarco Pradel**

**Fastest Lap: Pradel 1:11.454**

Sunday morning saw less rain, but any hopes of a drying line were dashed with showers returning just before we rolled out.

Toparis turned the tables and had the better of Pradel in the early exchanges as the two young drivers quickly drove away from the rest of the field.

Boydle was the fastest away of the rest, getting the jump from Barry with Baker conceding some ground in the early exchanges. The big mover was Gotch who had to make his way back from the unfamiliar territory of 9<sup>th</sup>, but made quick work of it to find himself recovered to 3<sup>rd</sup> by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> lap.



***Muddle's rain light works.  
You know you're struggling for positives when that's the weekend's highlight!***

Rowe was in 7<sup>th</sup>, Sviderskas to move to 8<sup>th</sup>, Shayne Morrow and Muddle ahead of the rest of the field, Phill Morrow falling to the back of the pack. Conditions were tricky, and both Boydle and Katsidis having spins and a safety car deployed.

This was advantageous for Gotch in closing the gap to Toparis and Pradel, and after the restart the entertaining scrap, Toparis holding the lead for most of the way but under intense pressure from Gotch. The leaders had to navigate lapped traffic, including a spinning Shayne Morrow, and eventually Gotch found a way past Toparis and was able to hold off a last late lunge on the final corner to take the win.

Behind the AGI cars, after the demise of Boydle the restart saw Baker pass Barry, the big car taking longer to get heat back into brakes, tyres, etc, and especially so in these conditions. Baker opened up a gap over Barry and Rowe, with Rowe pressing but unable to find a gap to pass.

Muddle had passed Shayne Morrow on the restart but had a more difficult time disposing of Sviderskas, and then was unable to make much impression on the gap to Rowe, but had progressed up to 7<sup>th</sup> and was starting to feel more comfortable in the car.

Sviderskas held 8<sup>th</sup> ahead of the recovering Boyle, with Wilson holding off Phil Morrow in the F4 battle ahead of Lynch and Shayne Morrow who had a couple of late race excursions.

### **Race 3**

**1. Costa Toparis; 2. Nathan Gotch; 3. Gianmarco Pradel**

**Fastest Lap: Toparis 1:05.541**

A stalled car on the line saw an immediate deployment of the safety car while Muddle was dragged off the track with gear-selection issues (or perhaps more accurately user issues with gear-selection). In the brief moments of racing before the safety car was deployed the big winner was Rob Sviderskas, who managed to jump from 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. Rowe also had issues but unlike Muddle was mobile, he visited the pits and resumed a couple of laps down.

When racing eventually resumed it was the three AGI cars again putting on the entertainment out front, Toparis leading Gotch and Pradel, all three on edge in the conditions and demonstrating fantastic car control. Baker had again settled into 4<sup>th</sup> and was pulling away from Barry and Sviderskas.

Behind Sviderskas, Boyle was pressing hard and closing the gap, but he was in turn being pursued by Mark Wilson and Phil Morrow, the three F4s all closely matched putting on a good dice.

Morrow found his way past Wilson and was closing on Boyle before an off dropped him several positions.



***Rob Sviderskas was able to capitalise on fast starts, consistent driving and borrowed tyres (thanks Loz).***

Toparis had opened a small break on Gotch by mid-race. Another safety car seemingly opened an opportunity for Gotch and Pradel, however lapped traffic in the queue worked to Toparis' advantage and he was able to make the most of late-race conditions to bring home a comfortable win.

Baker finished a consistent weekend as best of the non-AGI cars by coming home in fourth, ahead of Barry, and Rob Sviderskas showing impressive wet-weather form and consistency to finish in sixth.

Mark Wilson was able to capitalise on a Tim Boyle error to come home in 7<sup>th</sup>, having made consistent improvement over the weekend. Shayne Morrow was 9<sup>th</sup> ahead of Phil Morrow, who held off a late



challenge from Glenn Lynch, who struggle all weekend with tyres but was feisty when there was the merest sniff of a place to be gained, as he always is.

A great result for AGI – three drivers sharing race wins and fastest lap times between them, and Nathan Gotch extending his lead in the championship.

We have a 12 week gap to our next round at Sydney Motorsport Park, plenty of time everyone to regroup and prepare for what promises to be an exciting (and unusually dry!) weekend of racing.



*A good weekend from Gotch sees him consolidate his championship lead.*

***Next Round – Sydney Motorsport Park on 6 & 7 August***

## Short Bursts

**Wet wet wet ...** The big wet means a number of drivers have some big decisions to make before next meeting. Lynch is unlikely to be able to go around on that set of Coopers tyres again, I've heard that they have been heritage listed. Whatever visual deception Rob Rowe has used to convince us that his wets actually have grooves has been exposed as a scam, at best those 'grooves' must be painted on. It was a stellar effort to pretend he had a set of wets for so long, but 'all things must pass'. And Rob Sviderskas is not going to be able to keep borrowing tyres if he uses them to blast everyone off the line. Let's hope its dry next time around or we'll be at least three cars down, or three wallets will need to be opened.

**AGI on a roll...** 12 race wins on the trot, we have to go back to April 2021 to find another winner, with Graeme Holmes victorious that day. Oddly enough the AGI run coincides with the wet weather... I respect Adam's super-powers as a team manager but even he can't be organising that, can he? We're looking for someone else to step up, the report writer has limited skill and will soon run out of superlatives to describe the same set of AGI drivers standing on the podium.

**Blast from the Past...** The first wet race in the FRCA era was the final round at Wakefield Park in 2011. Our championship winner that year, Glenn Lynch, sat that race out – probably because his wets (that same set of Coopers) were too old and hard – but he wasn't alone, there were a few early departures on what was a miserable day. Rob 'Rainman' Sviderskas was in the running that day as well, bringing home his Reynard in 4<sup>th</sup>, but it was Rod Brincat on a rare visit to Goulburn who took the honours in his Rennmax, sealing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the inaugural championship.

**Club Pointscore...** Rob Sviderskas scored heavily with his 6<sup>th</sup> place finish and consistent improvement over the weekend and is now right up there. Nathan Gotch had a big points haul with his drive from 9<sup>th</sup> to victory in Race 2 and leads the Club pointscore (see table at the end of this report).

## Top Tens

QUALIFYING			Lap	Gap
1	Nathan Gotch	Dallara F307	01:03.954	
2	Costa Toparis	Mygale F4	01:05.081	+1.127
3	Gianmarco Pradel	Mygale F4	01:05.378	+1.424
4	Robert Rowe	Dallara F310	01:12.454	+8.500
5	Tim Boyle	Mygale F4	01:12.697	+8.743
6	Rodney Baker	Dallara F301	01:13.972	+10.018
7	Douglas Barry	Reynard 92D	01:14.257	+10.303
8	Philip Morrow	Mygale F4	01:15.045	+11.091
9	Greg Muddle	Dallara F399	01:15.801	+11.847
10	Mark Wilson	Mygale F4	01:19.682	+15.728

RACE 1 – 12 LAPS			Gap
1	Gianmarco Pradel	Mygale F4	
2	Costa Toparis	Mygale F4	+7.124
3	Rodney Baker	Dallara F301	+39.068
4	Tim Boyle	Mygale F4	+41.494
5	Philip Morrow	Mygale F4	+43.506
6	Douglas Barry	Reynard 92D	+45.627

7	Robert Rowe	Dallara F310	+47.899
8	Shayne Morrow	Dallara F397	- 1 lap
9	Nathan Gotch	Dallara F307	- 1 lap
10	Lawrence Katsidis	Dallara F304	- 1 lap



**RACE 2 – 12 LAPS****Gap**

1	Nathan Gotch	Dallara F307	
2	Costa Toparis	Mygale F4	+1.477
3	Gianmarco Pradel	Mygale F4	+2.537
4	Rodney Baker	Dallara F301	+1.527
5	Douglas Barry	Reynard 92D	+13.042
6	Robert Rowe	Dallara F310	+15.842
7	Greg Muddle	Dallara F399	- 1 lap
8	Robert Sviderskas	Dallara F304	- 1 lap
9	Tim Boyle	Mygale F4	- 1 lap
10	Mark Wilson	Mygale F4	- 1 lap

**RACE 3 – 14 LAPS****Gap**

1	Costa Toparis	Mygale F4	
2	Nathan Gotch	Dallara F307	+7.497
3	Gianmarco Pradel	Mygale F4	+5.429
4	Rodney Baker	Dallara F301	- 1 lap
5	Douglas Barry	Reynard 92D	- 1 lap
6	Robert Sviderskas	Dallara F304	- 1 lap
7	Mark Wilson	Mygale F4	- 1 lap
8	Tim Boyle	Mygale F4	- 1 lap
9	Shayne Morrow	Dallara F397	- 1 lap
10	Philip Morrow	Mygale F4	- 1 lap

**CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS**

1	Nathan Gotch	Dallara F307	235
2	Costa Toparis	Mygale F4	155
3	Doug Barry	Reynard 92D	134
4	Greg Muddle	Dallara F399 / Dallara F307	114
5	Gianmarco Pradel	Mygale F4	112
6	Rodney Baker	Dallara F301	100
7	Lawrence Katsidis	Dallara F304	88
8	Phil Morrow	Mygale F4	73
9	Adam Gotch	Mygale F4	72
10	Glenn Lynch	Dallara F397	64

**FRCA CLUB POINTSORE**

1	Nathan Gotch	Dallara F307	42
2	Rodney Baker	Dallara F301	28
3	Rob Sviderskas	Dallara F304	28
4	Glenn Lynch	Dallara F397	25
5	Doug Barry	Reynard 92D	25
6	Shayne Morrow	Dallara F397	21
7	Lawrence Katsidis	Dallara F304	20
8	Phil Morrow	Mygale F4	20
9	Costa Toparis	Mygale F4	20
10	Mark Wilson	Mygale F4	20