

RACING DRIVER CRITICAL

A SOUTH Wales saloon car racing champion is critically ill in a hospital intensive care unit after his car broke into three pieces in a 130 mph crash.

Mr Barry Reece, aged 37, from Caerphilly, suffered multiple injuries when taking part in a practice session at the Castle Combe racing circuit near Chippenham on Saturday. Today at Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, his condition was said to be "critical."

The accident occurred when Mr Reece's car touched another on the fastest part of the circuit. His car smashed through a crash barrier and broke into three pieces.

Mr Reece, a father of two, lives on the Hendredenny Estate, Caerphilly, and had recently set up his own small engineering business in the town.

Mr Reece has a reputation as one of the fastest saloon car racing drivers in the country. Last year he won the British special saloon championship but was not so successful this year according to a friend and former racing colleague, Mr Robert Allender of Gaer Park Lane, Newport.

Mr Allender who was at Castle Combe, said the accident was "a freak."

He added: "He is a very well respected driver who has been racing since about 1966.

Reece conscious

EXCELLENT news arrived just after last week's *MN* had gone to print, that Barry Reece had regained consciousness in Bristol's Frenchay Hospital. He was subsequently able to communicate with his wife, Jeanette, and move without difficulty, although he is at present still in very great pain and restricted in his movements.

Jeanette has been very grateful for the countless cards and good wishes that have arrived since Barry was admitted following his accident at Castle Combe, and has

been bolstered by continual visits from Barry's brother Phillip and fellow racer Viv 'Buster' Wallace.

A small celebration has already taken place to mark the improvement in Barry's condition, and a bigger one is planned for his eventual return home.

Barry's employers, and sponsors, Isis have also been marvellous, loaning the Reece family a car, and continuing to pay his salary until such a time as he may be fit to resume work.

Reece 'comfortable'

CAERPHILLY racing driver Barry Reece, seriously injured in an accident at Castle Combe seven weeks ago, is described as comfortable at Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

This week he moves to Rookwood Hospital, Cardiff, where they have more extensive rehabilitation facilities.

The Reece family suffered a blow to morale recently when the Isis

transporter, which used to carry Reece's racing car to events, was broken into and five sleeping bags stolen.

To offset this the family received a sizable donation from the British Racing and Sports Car Club.

The Welsh Racing Drivers Association, of which Reece is chairman, are arranging a cash collection to help Reece buy items to help in his recovery.

Anyone who would like to make a donation should

send it to the secretary, 10 Gaer Park Lane, Newport.

At the Castle Combe awards presentation night in Bristol on Saturday, Dave Llewellyn of Bargoed received his runners-up award for the Formula Ford Challenge series. He also won the Castle Combe "driver of the year" award.

Phillip Reece attended to receive the Special GT class trophy on behalf of his brother Barry.

PIT LANE ... PI

Edited by Simon Arron and Martin Whitaker

Barry Reece: further progress

AFTER two weeks in the Nametz Ward at Cardiff Royal Infirmary, the condition of Caerphilly Special Saloon racer Barry Reece is described as comfortable, seven weeks after his accident at Castle Combe. He was due to be moved on Monday to a bed at the Rookwood Hospital on the other side of the city.

Jeanette Reece has been able to hold conversations with her husband, who can answer, albeit in a whisper. Reece is also able to stand with help and only his right ankle remains in plaster.

Barry has been able to talk of plans to build another car, but brother Phil does not give the idea much credence, although he is arranging for the team's engine (salvaged from the wreck of the Isis car) to receive a routine overhaul by Hartwell.

Barry's biggest obstacles to overcome, on the way to a complete recovery, seem to be a

lack of long term concentration and short term memory, although he is able to recognise most folk including some old school pals who called in recently.

A big blow to the Reece family's morale came recently when thieves broke into the Isis transporter and stole five of the team's sleeping bags, crawling over the wrecked car in the process. This disappointment was more than made up for when the BRSCC, courtesy of Howard Strawford, handed the family a sizeable donation from club funds.

Meanwhile, the WRDA, which elected Barry as chairman in July is arranging a cash collection to help buy some books and a new pair of glasses to help in Barry's convalescence. Anyone who would like to contribute should send donations to the secretary at 10, Gaer Park Lane, Newport Gwent.

Latest on Reece

BARRY REECE, the Caerphilly racing driver badly injured at Castle Combe racing circuit in September, is making "good progress" according to the staff of Ward 7 in Rookwood Hospital, Cardiff. Although he now weighs just eight stone, and has for the moment ceased talking, the staff are insistent that he will be able to walk and talk before he leaves, but it looks like being a long job.

However, Reece has already started walking between parallel bars with the help of the physiotherapy department, and he has been cleared to spend weekends at home, returning to the hospital at night. The next big operation will be to replace the "window" removed from his skull

during his stay at Frenchay Hospital.

Meanwhile, there has been no shortage of visitors from around the country. Special Saloon pilot Norman Lackford recently made an exploratory trek from the far side of London and plans to return with more friends later on.

Several appeals have sprung up to provide the Reece family with extra support, including one in Wales run by the WRDA and another one run by Peter Baldwin from his home. In the meantime, Isis Plant Hire is continuing to give magnificent support, and will pay Barry's salary until March 1984, when the situation will be reviewed.