



● The tale of woe goes on for Tim Davies at Silverstone, but he still managed to finish in 12th place

Unlucky Tim still battling

WHEN YOU are in your mid 30s and are still waiting for your big break and you attract nicknames like "Mad" and "Desperate," when your first race of the season ends at the roadside and you keep blowing your best engines, you might wonder what it is all about.

What would be your motivation if you went to the start line after a week like Tim Davies?

Surely the Lampeter racer, recently chosen to debut the new Swallow Formula 3 with the Bob Salisbury team, could be forgiven for thinking that the Shell Oils British Grand Prix was another cruel test of character after an unhappy time at Donington Park the previous week.

At Donington, after missing a good deal of midweek testing after an accident and an engine blow up, the new Swallow would not start and missed the first practice session and then died during the race.

Retirements could have given Davies a point, but as he explained "The battery lead broke, it was one of those things which should never happen, but it did."

At Silverstone on the Friday, armed with one of Swallow's best engines, Tim was obviously looking forward to a good run in the first practice session, but after only five laps the engine boiled and blew up, (the third unit in two weeks).

Davies trailed to the pits, but with the rear tyres covered in water, oil and glycol, he spun and had the further in-

dignity of being pushed to the pits to retire from the session.

"We've got two radiators on the car, but I didn't get much of a warning before it went, it's a shame it was a really good engine, but that is our third failure in two weeks," said Davies. Now all we have left is the engine from Niclas Schonstroms' car. He didn't want it because he didn't think it was any good."

An overnight installation by Bob Salisbury and the crew began to signal a change in fortune, but a trial start up had Salisbury grabbing for the fire extinguisher as the electrics started to burn!

It usually gets worse before it gets better and Saturday was no exception. Davies and Salisbury had agreed that if the temperature dial went up Davies would park the Swallow, but after 12 laps the coil failed and rendered the point academic.

Schonstrom turned out to be a good judge of an engine for when it was running the VW was 300 rpm down and 20th place on the grid was the starting point for Sunday's race.

So there you are 20th place with a car that hasn't gone further than 12 laps when you have driven it, running with a cast off engine in the most competitive race of the year. How much motivation would you have?

Davies pulled up eight places on the first lap and holding 12th place at the end, a position far in excess of the potential shown by the practice times. Analysis of the race times showed that Davies could not better his practice times but finished in front of eight faster men.

"I drove round the outside in all the corners on the first lap," said Davies. "It's dangerous because you tend to get

taken off if anybody has an accident, but this time it worked.

"I had to try for the mechanics, they have had a rotten time and they have worked hard. Tim Stakes, who put up the money, and Dave, the designer, both can't have felt happy, so I owed it to them to try.

"Actually if we had felt able to risk a better engine I could have done better as we didn't have any power on the straights but with all the blow ups we couldn't risk a better unit."

No doubt those who saw the Swallow barrelling around the outside of them would have thought "Mad" but then again if you put the money up to build a racing car would you want to see someone going through the motions with your investment?

What next? "Well we've got to wait to see what happens next on the Swallow front, but I am trying to find another £5,000 for the Birmingham Super Prix.

"In the meantime I'm going home to do some farming. I've had enough of chasing sponsors who turn out to be shadows. I mean I've got a new helmet from Brian Holmes at Autowindscreeens, cost £500.

"I've been lucky that they have stuck by me, but I need to find some more like that to really get off the ground. It's all about money in the end and I don't have enough. You can't make money at this game only spend it."

In the meantime Davies remains as a driver ready to give his all, no longer a spring chicken he brings experience and know-how to the job. Qualities that only come with time.

"I know the nicknames, Mad Taff, Desperate Davies and I don't care for them," said Davies.