

Palmer on course for GP2 title

Motor Sport

Dave Smith – Sports Editor

Jolyon Palmer remains on course to emulate Lewis Hamilton and become GP2 champion, after taking second place in front of his home fans at Silverstone in Saturday's feature race. Palmer's sixth podium finish of the season so far has allowed him to extend his championship lead over Felipe Nasr to 45 points.

Jolyon started from second position on the prime tyres, and was able to hold his position into the first corner, despite having to start from the damp side of the grid. He lost track position to Mitch Evans into the second corner, but quickly got back on line to maintain third place. When Felipe Nasr launched an attack in the latter half of the opening lap; Palmer was able to stay ahead with some late braking into Stowe corner and a staunch defence into Club corner.

Fastest times in the opening two sectors of the next lap allowed Jolyon to draw clear of Nasr and apply pressure on second-placed Evans. By the end of the following lap Jolyon was only three tenths of a second behind the Kiwi, before pulling



off an opportunist move to reclaim second at the start of lap four.

Putting in a string of fastest laps, Jolyon closed the gap to race leader Raffaele Marciello to just 0.7s by lap nine. Marciello pitted at the end of lap 10, freeing Jolyon to set the pace at the front. While leading the race he set more personal best times, on the fourteenth and eighteenth laps.

Jolyon pitted from the lead at the end of lap 19, with the French DAMS squad acting quickly to change to the softer option tyres. At the end of the next lap Evans emerged from the pits just ahead, but Jolyon at-

tacked immediately with late braking into Brooklands and then again with an attempt around the outside at the following corner. Evans was able to hold his position, and Jolyon eventually crossed the finishing-line less than five seconds behind Evans and more than 20 seconds ahead of the chasing pack.

Jolyon commented, "To be honest, I'm gutted not to win, because I really thought that was in the bag. But I'm pleased, with DAMS we did a good job, maybe we should have won the race but in the end I'm happy with second."