

Matt Griffin hopes that running his Volkswagen Lupo on alloy rather than steel wheels will enable him to end Dave Bennett's dominance of the BTRDA Rally First category on the Dukeries Rally on Saturday. Griffin, 18, has been hampered by two bent wheels on recent rounds of the series.



Hopkins finally got the better of his rival Bennett in Rally First

## Hopkins ends Bennett's run

It had been more than four months since a driver not answering to the name Dave Bennett won a round of the BTRDA Rally First series. He may still top the championship standings, but Bennett had to accept second best to Jason Hopkins, who excelled at the wheel of his Volkswagen Lupo.

Hopkins, who only returned from a holiday to Mexico on Friday afternoon, showed no signs of jetlag to bag his first maximum score of the season after Bennett lost 24 seconds when a spark plug lead became detached on stage one and dropped his Vauxhall Corsa onto three cylinders.

With Malcolm Hague's former navigator Dave Read installed in the co-driver's seat, a spin at a hairpin right on stage four was the only real mistake Hopkins made. Apart from a slight gear change glitch, his only other major concern occurred when the exhaust burned a hole in his car's fuel tank in the afternoon,

although it didn't cause any significant damage.

Matt Griffin thought he had made it a Lupo one-two after surviving a front-right puncture on stage seven but a one-minute penalty that was erroneously handed to Bennett was rescinded, dropping the student to third place in the final results.

Joe Evett battled back from a broken exhaust and a moment on stage eight when he tipped onto two wheels to take fourth in his Vauxhall Nova, which was still showing the scars from his roll on the Plains Rally.

Roy Gravestock's only delay occurred when he suffered a half-spin on stage two. He claimed fifth.

Rob Navin, who feared he would miss the event due to commitments running a TVR Grantura in the clashing Le Mans Legend race, edged out Julian Cardew for sixth by two seconds. A faulty wheel bearing and two spins on stage eight, caused by a slow puncture, delayed Cardew.

## Gritty Griffin in third at Dukeries



NOVICE rallyman Matt Griffin maintained his challenge for the Rally First Championship after finishing third in class on the Dukeries Rally, based in Nottingham.

Griffin, from Blackburn, and co-driver Joe Cruttenden had an excellent run in their Shropshire Rallyschool VW Lupo, only just missing out on second place.

"We had a much better start to this rally and we were competitive from the very first stage," said Griffin. "This was a big improvement compared to previous events where we have

usually been playing catch up after the first run!

"We had our now customary tyre failure towards the end, but it didn't have any effect on the result this time.

"We'd been initially classified second in class, after Dave Bennett incurred a one-minute time penalty. But Bennett later appealed and won, which demoted me down to third."

Griffin's next outing is back in Wales for the Quinton Rally on the July 4. Based in Llandoverly, the event uses the notoriously fast Epynt military range roads.

**DIRTY BUSINESS:** Matt Griffin at Dukeries  
Picture: [WWW.PRO-RALLY.CO.UK](http://WWW.PRO-RALLY.CO.UK)