



Between the lines

MN's Deputy Racing Editor Glenn Freeman witnessed Legends and was mightily impressed

Photo: LAT

At MN's flat out at 50 festival last weekend the Legends championship provided the most on-track excitement by a long way.

When I heard they were on the bill for the event I immediately put my name down to cover them. I'd never seen them up close before, but I'd seen plenty of the racing on TV in the past and I knew they were going to be the best races of the meeting.

Those who spent the whole weekend at Brands were treated to eight Legends races in total – almost half of the entire schedule for the two days – and they were all thrilling. The drivers deserve a lot of credit, as aside from bump-drafting down the straights, contact was minimal. There was still plenty of close racing and great battles throughout the pack. I lost count of how many times I saw cars going into Paddock Hill bend three abreast, yet there were only a couple of offs all weekend.

Sometimes the championship isn't taken seriously. The cars are often described as 'funny looking', as they have 5/8 scale bodies of 1930s American hot rods, but underneath the skin they are proper racing cars. To stand next to one is a strange feeling, as they do look like they have been shrunk in the wash, but this gives them more room on track, making overtaking easier.

The format for a race meeting is this: each driver gets two heats and a final. The grid for the first heat is decided by ballot, and then reversed for the second heat to keep things fair. To keep things just as exciting for the final, those who have performed best in the heats start at the back. The races are short and sweet too – the heats were only eight laps around the Brands Indy circuit, and the final



Legendary: Bumper-to-bumper action. You can't get much better

was only 10, so the top drivers have very little time to get through the field, but invariably the cream does rise to the top. It was only when I had a look through the results sheets at the end of the weekend that I realised two drivers scooped seven of the eight races. In a lot of champi-

the spoils. It's difficult to achieve that, but Legends has got it spot on. Add to that the enthusiastic circuit commentary of Richard Neil, and you have everything you could want to keep you entertained at a circuit.

The championship has only been running since the mid-90s, but I caught the bug back in its early days thanks to regular TV coverage. In recent years the races have also appeared on the

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onships, that would tell you that the races had been somewhat processionary, and very similar, but with Legends this is never the case.

When similar formats are discussed for other championships looking to spice up the show, these ideas are considered "artificial", and it is said that this is not what the sport is about. I think that the sport is about hard but fair wheel-to-wheel combat on the track, and the best driver taking

TOCA support package, but this year there aren't any big meetings, and there's no TV exposure. This is a real shame, because there are very few series' that can offer the excitement Legends does. Apparently work is being done for next year to get the championship on a more high profile bill.

As MN's British Formula Three reporter, I'd love to see them become part of the F3/GT programme for 2006.