

# LIGHTNING ROD

Local racer Rod Birley could rack up an astonishing 250th win at Brands Hatch here on the Indy circuit this weekend's MSVR Ford All-Comers races, following an extraordinary career in which he's racked up more wins than any other British racing driver.

Much of Birley's success has come behind the wheel of blue oval badged machinery, with no fewer than 560 of his 656 career wins coming behind the wheel of an assortment of Ford machinery. Birley first raced a Ford Capri in the 1970s and he's been behind the wheel of an assortment of others since, including multiple Escorts, Sierras, an Anglia, a Puma, and a Fiesta.

Appropriately, if Birley does reach his Brands Hatch landmark this weekend, he will do so behind the wheel of the monstrous Ford Escort WRC with which he's become most commonly associated in recent years. The West Kingsdown native has won 345 races behind the wheel of that particular machine, the lion's share of which have been here at Brands Hatch.

Birley often cites Jim Clark wrestling a Ford Cortina Lotus around Brands Hatch as the moment he knew he wanted to go motor racing, so two

wins this weekend behind a Ford at the same venue to reach a milestone would be something of a dream result.

Birley said: "In 1974 I raced my first Ford, a Capri V6 in production saloons. Over the years nearly 90% of my success has come through driving Ford vehicles, with a large number here at Brands Hatch. The Kent circuit has always been my favourite track. Just last month I achieved my fastest lap time around the Grand Prix circuit in my Escort WRC Cosworth!"

It was only two years ago that Birley eclipsed cult hero Gerry Marshall's previous race win record of 625 race wins, and he's showing no signs of slowing down in his mid-'60s. Whether he wins this weekend or not, don't be surprised if we're soon writing about a 700th race win, or a 300th here at Brands Hatch...

## 560 WINS

Ford Anglia	28	Ford Escort Mk2	66
Ford Capri	8	Ford Escort Mk3	3
Ford Capri Mk1	10	Ford Escort V6	6
Ford Capri Mk2	12	Ford Escort WRC	345
Ford Escort	31	Ford Fiesta	1
Ford Escort Cosworth	4	Ford Puma	2
Ford Escort Group N	7	Ford Sierra Cosworth	1
Ford Escort Mk1	21	Ford Sierra V6	22

