

Cabbie shows the way in the safe driving stakes

London taxi driver beats off the competition to become Green Flag's safe driving champion .

Who would you feel safest driving beside? Would it be a taxi driver, a new driver, an experienced driver, or someone who drives racing cars for a living? This is what Green Flag Motoring Assistance aimed to find out in an event staged to promote its involvement in this year's Road Safety Week (September 22-28).

([PRWEB](#)) September 12, 2003 -- In a unique safe driver challenge, five people, who use their vehicles for different reasons, were put through a series of tests under the watchful eyes of instructors from the Drive and Survive Centre in Oxfordshire. Competing were a London taxi driver, an inexperienced driver, a coach driver, a mum and a racing driver.

It was London cabby, Clifford Powell (43) from Hornchurch in Essex, who emerged as driver of the day, performing well against the rest in a set of tests of skills and safety.

A taxi driver of 26 years, Mr Powell said: "I was not expected to win - I think the favourite was the racing driver. But I really enjoyed the day and learnt something about improving my driving. "Driving a cab in London needs a particular skill. It's all stopping and starting. There's no need for high speed and as everyone knows, we have the congestion to cope with.

Instructors assessed each driver's exposure to risk by establishing their attitudes to road safety and the environment in which they typically drive. The assessment also provided a pointer as to how a driver was likely to behave or respond in a risk situation.

Each driver's ability to react to emergencies and hazards was also put to the test. At speeds of 50mph and above, competitors had to brake suddenly on command, and in doing so, attempt to evade a hazard, which represented a child stepping out on to the road, and then come to a safe stop.

A skid car, mounted on a cradle, was used to simulate all types of road and grip conditions and focused on driver's skid avoidance, recognition and recovery. Emergency braking techniques were also tested along with each driver's understanding of vehicle dynamics and the limits of road grip.

The results showed that the inexperienced driver, 20-year-old business student Dan Marr, needed further skills training to develop better awareness of his driving environment, with particular focus on avoiding collisions, parking and low speed manoeuvrability.

He said: "It was really interesting learning from the instructors on how to brake in the right places. On one exercise, I drove through the hazards, so I still have a lot to learn."

Scoring highest in the individual risk assessment was 39-year-old coach driver Jim Mather, but even he was likely to benefit from training on manoeuvring his vehicle and safer parking.

Green Flag British Touring Car Championship driver, Dan Eaves's skills came to the fore in the skid car test, but his scores showed that he needed to improve his on-road awareness and attitude to safety.

The Team Halfords driver said: "The skid control and braking ability is very much part of motor racing, so other drivers may not have so much experience at these disciplines. They do more road mileage than me, so I expected them to do better in some activities. I thought I was a safe driver, but the driver challenge showed areas I could improve."

The most experienced driver, 52-year-old Patricia Abbott, put many of the professional drivers to shame, coming second in the driver risk assessment. However, she came unstuck coping with skids and braking suddenly to avoid hazards.

"The skid car was great fun. After the training from the instructors, I would feel much more comfortable about coping if the car started to slide," she said.

Commenting on the results, Green Flag spokesperson Nigel Charlesworth said: "The results show that most people would benefit from improving their driving skills. By choosing a range of social and occupational drivers, we hope others can identify with them and spot areas they can improve on to ultimately lower their exposure to risk."

Brake policy officer, Ben Heatley added: "The younger driver did come out the worst in the individual driver risk assessment which is to be expected as he has the least experience. All the drivers admitted that there were a lot of areas they could improve on, with even the racing driver acknowledging there were improvements to be made in his town driving and parking skills. So the message going into Road Safety Week is that no one can be complacent on the road."

Road Safety Week events take place across the country from September 22. Brake, the road safety charity that coordinates the week provides free action packs to enable more than 10,000 schools and 1,000 businesses to take part. To find out more, call Brake on 01484 559 909 or visit www.brake.org.uk. Green Flag Motoring Assistance provides roadside rescue and recovery to almost 5m customers and has been a sponsor of Road Safety Week for the past three years.

Notes to editors

The participants in Green Flag's Safe Driver Challenge were:

1. London Taxi driver, Clifford Powell (43) from Hornchurch in Essex.
2. Mother and experienced driver, Patricia Abbott (52) a housewife from Littleover near Derby.
3. Coach driver James Mather (39) from Reading, Berkshire.
4. Reigning Green Flag British Touring Car Championship Independents Cup Champion Dan Eaves (28) from Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucester.
5. Leeds Metropolitan University student Daniel Marr (20), from Bradford, West Yorkshire.

About Drive & Survive

Drive & Survive UK is based at Enstone Airfield, near Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. The centre provides a comprehensive range of driver training and bespoke events for companies keen to reduce their exposure to risk and provide a unique experience for corporate guests.



Press calls

For further information contact Nigel Charlesworth or Melanie Denny at Green Flag on 0113 399 1427/1387 (out of hours 07711 964 615).

Public-relations@greenflag.com

www.greenflag.com



Contact Information

Melanie Denny

UKI Partnerships

<http://www.greenflag.com>

0113 399 1387

Online Web 2.0 Version

You can read the online version of this press release [here](#).