

# Two more top forklift drivers reach RTITB Operator of the Year Grand Finals

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Some of the industry's best lift truck operators, employers and training organisations came together on 15th September to see two more Grand Finalists selected in the day three heats of the RTITB International Forklift Operator of the Year.

At the end of the day, Emily White of System Training was announced as the overall winner of the heat by John Clements, Business Development Manager & Counterbalance Product Manager for UniCarriers. With the next best score, Matthew Vassallo of Hasbro was declared as runner-up. Both contestants will move forward to the Grand Final of the competition in early 2017.

Held at the International Materials Handling Exhibition (IMHX) at the NEC, Birmingham, the ten competitors in heat three had beaten hundreds of applicants from three continents in order to win the chance to compete. Partnered by McCue and UniCarriers, the competition is now in its fourth cycle, with this year's event marking RTITB's first international competition.

During the heats, each competitor was required to complete four assessments – two practical tests (sponsored by DOLAV, Racking & Storage Solutions and Pyroban), a test of the forklift drivers knowledge (sponsored by Transaid), and successful completion of a pre-use inspection (sponsored by TruckLOG). RTITB judges – Nick Welch, Simon Richards, Simon Docherty and Matt Orin – carefully observed and marked the 10 forklift operators, with the driver with the lowest total score being declared the winner.

The last round of heats take place on Friday 16th September where two winners will once again qualify for the next stage of the competition. In addition, following this final heat, RTITB will announce which two operators who did not earn a place in their individual heat, but have the next best scores, have also earned a place in the Grand Final.

The competition, which this year is proudly supported by B & B Attachments, FSDF, UKWA, BACA Workwear & Safety, has been devised by RTITB to acknowledge the hard work and dedication placed by safe and efficient operators throughout the industry, and instil the message of safety to employers across a wide range of industries. One of the most crucial aspects of the four assessments completed by competitors in the heats is the pre-use inspection, and RTITB hope that the competition will help to raise awareness of this vital daily

check.

According to the Health & Safety Executive, over 18% of workplace incidents occur as a result of mechanical failure which could be avoided through completion of a pre-use inspection. Furthermore, a pre-use inspection will help to reduce the cost of ownership and contact penalties, increase truck uptime, improve battery life and, most importantly, help to prevent incidents and injuries.

The competition continues throughout IMHX, ending on Friday 16th September.

**Visit stand 9A40 to watch the heats in action.**

For further information on the competition, visit [www.opofyear.com](http://www.opofyear.com), or follow on Twitter (@opofyear) or Facebook – RTITB Operator of the Year Competition.

Heat three's finalist line up was:

- Leighton Hughes, trained by Industrial Services (UK) Ltd, and employed by Hasbro
- Adam Turner, trained and employed by CEVA Logistics – VW Dordon
- Paul Dainty, trained and employed by CEVA Logistics – VW Dordon
- Viki Bradford, trained and employed by Wincanton
- Matthew Vassallo, trained and employed by Hasbro
- Dariusz Mocny, trained and employed by Wincanton
- Ian John, trained by Main Port Training and employed by Hasbro
- Neil Jennings, trained by System Training and employed by Cars Billington
- Emily White, trained and employed by System Training
- Artur Syndoman, trained and employed by Teva UK

Source: RTITB