

## **Round 3, Tasman Revival, Pukekohe, Nov. 2020**

After a break of three months, the NZ Sports Car Championship series recommenced at the Legends of Speed meeting at Pukekohe. Thankfully HRC had scheduled the racing to be complete by the end of Saturday which proved to be fortuitous as Covid level 3 restrictions kicked in on the following morning. This format was favored by many as it kept the day flowing and the costs down for out of town racers.

The original circuit had been selected for the meeting which caught a few by surprise as they were concerned about the gearing of their cars, but it was also a nice change as some members hadn't raced the long track.

Sports Cars were combined with Formula Open to form one race. The single seaters were to be started approximately 200m ahead of the Sports Cars as was the case at the previous Manfield meeting.

Robert Hulme returned to his Nemesis for this round, perhaps expecting that it would provide the high-speed performance that Pukekohe requires over the Juno (good on Robert for having the choice of race cars to use!)

Nick Rae had addressed the problems arising from Manfeild and was looking good in his Radical as always.

Richard Kelly had his full team supporting him which would serve him well on Friday, and was race fit from his recent successful stint down South.

Mike Greenfield was ready with his immaculately prepared Radical.

The open nature of the circuit was expected to suit Dean McCarroll's Juno.

Steve Sharp was quietly confident that the low drag of the Tiga was going to help him post some good times.

James Coup had entered his very rapid and sharp looking Fraser, and Jeff Sharp was driving his very quick Formula Suzuki.

Anthony Barker made a very welcome return to the field driving the ARES which had undergone a significant rebuild and it was awesome to see him back in the paddock.

## **Practice**

Unofficial practice was on Friday with many of those that hadn't driven on the track for a while taking the opportunity to get reacquainted.

Richard broke a water pump drive which resulted in some frantic work to have it ready for Saturday to keep his championship hopes alive.

Dean was tuning the setup of the Juno which had not run on this track. He had a fairly major rebuild to do after the crash box flange separated causing the left front wheel to become unweighted heading into turn 1 at circa 230kph, causing serious concern to the driver! To be fair, Peter Zivkovic does the repair work, Dean is very good at passing spanners and offering words of encouragement, cups of tea etc...

Anthony experienced teething problems with a new ECU set up and perished outer CV boots.

Jeff Sharp was addressing problems with his Suzuki.

Mike took the opportunity to make himself familiar with the track

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## **Qualifying**

Dean quickly set the fastest time of the session. The next fastest sports car was Richard, followed by Anthony, Mike, Nick, Steve, Robert, James and Jeff. Robert's times were hampered by the car jumping out of gear. It looked as though we would be set for some close racing between Mike, Nick and Steve.

## **Race 1**

Dean led the sports cars away from the start and was soon overtaking some single seaters which had started ahead. By the end of the race, he had overtaken all the single seaters with the exception of Tom Alexander.

Richard made a good start and managed to pass Geoff Harriman on lap 5.

Anthony tried to keep pace with Richard especially as he was finding a way past Geoff. However he spun at Railway on lap 6, and as a result fell down the field.

Nick managed to lead Mike across the line at the end of lap 1. Unfortunately, a few laps later Mike rolled to a stop with a broken axle.

Jeff finished his day with a broken suspension unfortunately.

Robert failed to make the start by 5 minutes as he rushed to fix his gearbox even with the best efforts of Mike Limbrick and Steven to get him ready in time.

## **Race 2**

Dean was once again amongst the Formula Open cars, although this time he meet some of the slower cars at hard to pass sections slowing his progress, finishing with 3 cars ahead of him.

Richard set about catching the slower Formula Open cars. Meanwhile Robert who had started from the back of the grid, closed the gap to Richard but was unable to make a pass. Anthony, doing extremely well for not having raced for so long followed keeping ARES on the black stuff and shiny side up, finishing fourth.

Nick and Steve had a good race going between themselves, swapping places throughout the race with Nick eventually finishing ahead.

## **Race 3**

Dean made a good start but had to slow with damage to his bodywork. After a quick pit stop, he then set the fastest time of the day, with a 56.49s. (faster than any of the single seaters, go sports cars!)

Richard and Robert had a great race as they swapped places until Robert ran wide at the exit of turn 1. Both drivers lowered their best lap times in the process as they sought to gain an advantage.

Nick and Steve had another good race until lap 9 when Steve had a moment. The upshot however was that in the process they both set their personal best times. Nick was only 2s slower than Richard and Steve was only a further .3s behind. An outstanding effort by all!

## **Summary**

There was great racing throughout the field with drivers posting some impressive lap times throughout the field. The gap between the fastest and slowest cars seemed to close up possibly due to the nature of the track, but possibly due to just good hard racing and well matched race cars.

A number of the drivers reported that they were hitting the rev limiter on the back straight due to the different configuration, a sure sign that the top speeds were higher.

Racing with the Formula Open cars enhanced the competition further down the field especially as the straight-line speed was not too different.

A number of the drivers also appreciated the one-day race format which made for a busy day's racing and kept everybody focused.

Thank you to HRC for an excellent meeting.

We look forward to seeing you all t the Paul Fahey meeting, Hampton Downs, 19 - 21 March 2021.