



## Round 3, Phillip Island Race Report

28 - 29 May 2011

Friday and Saturday saw some sunny but windy weather conditions. Track conditions were dry and cold. Sunday was a different story, dry for race two and raining for races three & four.

After a couple of incidents during the practice sessions, we had 12 cars front up for qualifying. Despite a rush overnight session replacing an engine in the Speads of Josh Hunt, it unfortunately didn't make it out of the gate for qualifying.

### **Qualifying:**

Becoming a familiar story this year, Adam Proctor (Stohr WF1) qualified on pole with a 1:30.3 lap time, .76 seconds in front of Aaron Steer (West WX10) with Mark Laucke (West WR1000) 3<sup>rd</sup> on the grid and fourth qualifier Jonathan Stoeckel (West WR1000), who has been getting quicker and quicker every meeting. Young SA Formula Vee driver Rhett Payne on his first drive in his sports racer (West WR1000) qualified 5<sup>th</sup> and Graeme Cook (West WR1000) rounded out the top 6 qualifiers.

### **Race 1:**

Conditions for the gruelling 30-minute first race were almost perfect, with the exception of strong winds costing a second or so in lap times. The start saw Steer launch the car in front of Proctor and manage to lead for the first 6 laps until Proctor shut the door on the very fast turn 12 leaving Steer no where to go. Steer's high speed off put the field under safety car for 3 laps while he was towed out of the gravel. Meanwhile in the mid-field Stoeckel who also had a great start was running 3<sup>rd</sup> with Cook only centimetres behind him, and Laucke looking for any opportunity to get Cook. The opportunity came in lap 4, now Laucke was stalking Stoeckel until a mistake in lap 6 let Laucke through to the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot where he remained for the rest of the race. Stoeckel gallantly held off Cook's challenges for another 9 long laps, until a drive train issue had him retire in lap 14. Meanwhile rookie West driver, Payne moved from 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> keeping the pressure on Cook. In an unfortunate incident in his first Sports Racer round, Payne hit a large hare running across the track, causing substantial damage to the front left of the car forcing a retirement in lap 16.

Proctor won race 1 convincingly with 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Mark Laucke, with Graeme Cook 3<sup>rd</sup> and Sue Hughes (Radical SR3) in 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Race 2:**

The weather report for Sunday was bleak at best, with the locals advising that heavy rain was imminent. Fortunately the weather held out for race 2. Proctor started again from position 1 beside Laucke with Steer relegated to start from the back of the grid due to Saturday's off track excursion. Steer had a fantastic start and managed to get to position 3 by turn 2 and pass Laucke coming into turn 12 then started hunting down Proctor. Further back in the field Greg Steer managed to work his way from position 8 on the grid through to 5<sup>th</sup> place, passing Peter Mackie (West), Michael Whiting (West) and Hughes. Whiting who had a terrible start fought his way back from 9<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. Proctor was first across the line in front of Steer, with Laucke, Cook and Greg Steer making up the first 5 positions.



### **Race 3:**

Then came the rain. The radar looked like it was only going to be a quick shower, so most of the field risked staying on slicks, with Proctor, Steer (Aaron) and Cook changing to wets. Wets proved to be the better choice with Proctor, Steer (Aaron) and Cook making the first 3 positions and never being challenged by the remaining drivers. Further back in the field Stoeckel starting from the rear of the field made his way through to 5<sup>th</sup>, but an off in lap 10 put him out of the race leaving an opening for Steer (Greg) followed by Whiting. While the track started to dry out toward the end of the race, it was too late for the rest of the field with Adam Proctor finishing 1<sup>st</sup>, Aaron Steer whose front tyres were “fried” due to the drying track came 2<sup>nd</sup> with Graeme Cook 3<sup>rd</sup> followed by Laucke, Steer & Whiting.

### **Race 4:**

The rain didn't let up with everyone going out on wets for the final race. This time the track stayed pretty much consistent for the whole race. Proctor again lead from start to end, with Aaron Steer never really challenging. Aaron explained, “my wets were history in the closing laps of race 3 due to the heavy car and the track drying out, all I could do for race 4 was just focus on staying on the track”.

The action was really in the mid field with Steer (Greg), Cook & Laucke. Steer had a great start leading Cook into turn 2 behind Laucke. Steer held off Cook for a couple of laps, until a bold move on turn 4 pushed him back to 5<sup>th</sup> place. Steer followed Cook and Laucke for 9 laps hoping for an opportunity to gain position. In the last lap Laucke understeered off turn 4 with Cook following off. Steer couldn't believe his luck finishing third for the final race. Further back Mackie, Bingham and Whiting had their own battle with Whiting finishing 6<sup>th</sup> in front of Mackie & Bingham.

### **Round Summary**

All the participants of round 3 had a fantastic weekend, including those forced out through crash damage or mechanical issues. With over 4 hours of track time over the three days on the incredible Phillip Island circuit left some very weary drivers, with big smiles on their faces.

Round 4, at Wakefield Park on November 19 includes a 12 lap sprint race and a 35 minute enduro. As this is the series final, we are expecting our largest field for the year to finish off the 2011 Sports Racer Series.