



Manawatu Car Club Inc
Club Bulletin
April & May '23

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PEN...



Hi Everyone,

Well it has been a huge couple of months for the club, with lots of things happening both from an events point of view and from behind the scenes...

Firstly though, if you don't follow our other avenues of communication, that being social media in the form of our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/ManawatuCarClub then let me tell you that it is nearly time for the first round of flagship race series, the Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series (FAEWRS). With over 110 entries to date, it is going to be a cracker of a first round.

FREE SPECTATOR ADMISSION

Feilding Auto Electrical Ltd 2023 WINTER SERIES

Dates:
Round 1: 3rd-4th June
Round 2: 1st-2nd July
Round 3: 5th-6th August
Round 4: 2nd-3rd September

Test Day Saturday. Race Day Sunday

Classes:
GT Cup GT-A and GT-B
IB Cup
SF Cup
RS Cup
Single-Seaters
MX5 Cup
Classics Cup

Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon

Photo: Jarod Carruthers Photography

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PIT CREW Design **MANFEILD** **MotorSport**

Back to the last couple of months... Well April started off with the last round of the Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series, great weather, good grids, awesome racing, and everyone had lots of fun. Then we had the Super Sprint Team revisit us for another round of NZ Championship racing... A week later and it was Summer Series Prize Giving, where just on 100 people attended and for the first time ever, we had 100% of the award recipients attend the event. It was a very special night as we also honored some of our wonderful V-Force team with some very special volunteer awards. A summary of the prizegiving night and some great pictures of the award winners are in the following pages.

May saw us get back on track with the ever-popular Back Track Drift Tutoring, once again the weather was good, and the event was sold out which is a great reflection of the time and energy Troy and his team put into events like these.

May also meant that it was MSNZ AGM & Conference time. Jeff Braid and I attended on behalf of the Manawatu Car Club, and I must say that it was a very well organized and run weekend, with lots of

informative and interactive seminars, and the AGM was very constructive in many ways as well. If you want to read more about the seminars and the AGM, then please have a look at the below links.

https://motorsport.org.nz/2023-friday-conference-summary/?utm_source=ClubContacts25052023&utm_campaign=b798e20792-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_09_09_09_52_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_98d18bfade-b798e20792-465316900

<https://motorsport.org.nz/76th-conference-agm-agm-summary/>

On the Saturday night the MSNZ Awards Dinner was held at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and what a great night it was for the Manawatu Car Club...

Life Member and Club Patron, Brian Davies was awarded the “Clerk of the Course D’Honneur”. As a Clerk of the Course for over 50 years, Brian has dedicated himself to the world of motorsport, displaying outstanding service to the sport in New Zealand and overseas. As one of the top officials in the industry, Brian possesses a unique set of skills required to run events at the highest level. He has a complete understanding of the rules governing the sport, the ability to enforce them with fairness and justice, and is always prepared to respond quickly and effectively in extraordinary circumstances.

One of Brian's most significant contributions to New Zealand's motorsport was his involvement in the Wellington Street Races of the 1980s and 1990s. As one of the two assistant Clerks of Course during the inaugural event in January 1985, Brian was instrumental in finding a workable solution to a significant issue that arose during the race.

Brian's extensive experience and expertise were further demonstrated when he was appointed as the FIA representative for a World Land Speed Record attempt in 1995. His professionalism and quick thinking were crucial in dealing with the difficult conditions and managing the situation when the attempt came to an abrupt end.

Brian Davies is a true leader, respected at all levels of the industry, and his dedication to motorsport is unwavering.





Fellow Life Member and Club Patron, Terry Rush received an “Historic Heritage Award”. Terry is an avid motorsport competitor, volunteer, collector, historian and all-around enthusiast.

Terry’s passion for motorsport was lit in the ‘50s and ‘60s at Ohakea, Ardmore and Levin where he watched the world’s greats such as Sterling Moss, Jackie Stewart and Jim Clark both as a spectator and ‘flag flutterer’.

Through the ‘70s, Terry began competing in the sport he had enjoyed for so long. Starting with beach racing Volkswagens, he then spent time in Formula Vee before embarking on a major project within the sport.

Alongside Rob and Wendy Lester and Dan Higgins, Terry was part of the team who identified the need for a circuit in the Manawatu and set about building Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon. The circuit would go on to be a huge success, hosting international events of all disciplines.

The pride of every New Zealand bloke is often their shed and what’s in it, and Terry’s is no different. Terry boasts one of the most impressive private collections of motorsport history in New Zealand. McLaren, Brabham, Cooper, McRae, Lola, and Begg’s are some of the marques maintained and admired in Terry’s collection along with a range of classic road vehicles and rare motorsport memorabilia.





I was very honored to accept a very special award on behalf of the MCC... as one of the original founding car clubs, the MCC was awarded a beautiful plaque celebrating 75 years of MSNZ.



It was also an honour to get a picture of this award alongside a good friend of mine and the clubs,
President D'Honneur Shayne Harris.



The icing on the cake came with the last award of the night where our very own Brendon Hartley took out the Jim Clark Trophy against some very tough competition in Shane Van Gisbergen and Mitch Evans. It is the fourth time that Brendon has been awarded the Jim Clark Trophy.





Another great event held in May was the Winter Series Information Night. Over 50 people joined us in person, while another 31 joined us online, to hear about the upcoming Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series... it was a very informative evening with COC Malcom Glen, Scrutineer's Rod McCardle & Greg Browne, Chief Rescue Marshall Noel Beale, and Event Organiser Jeff Braid, all speaking on the night. A huge thanks to Rod from R&A Automotive www.facebook.com/RAAutomotive for opening his shed up for us to use on the night, and to Trent Smith and Graeme Bretherton for organising the BBQ and for supplying the sausages for the hungry crowd.

See you all soon at the first round of the Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series

Richie



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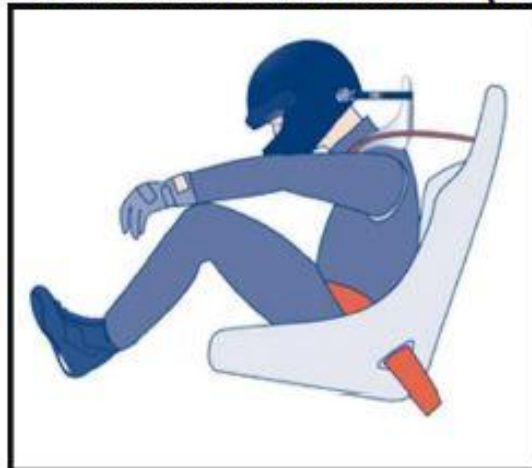


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FRONTAL HEAD RESTRAINTS (FHR)



Motorsport New Zealand has widened its requirement for competitors to use a Frontal Head Restraint (FHR) system in competition vehicles. [An amendment \(#36048\) to Schedule A](#) of the Motorsport Manual issued on 15 July 2022 outlines the phased introduction of the new FHR requirements.

The Frontal Head Restraint is designed to stop a driver's head from violently moving forward during an impact. This safety device is now an incredibly common part of motorsport safety globally and has without a doubt saved countless lives and prevented equally as many serious head, neck and spinal injuries, even during relatively low-speed impacts. The FHR works by limiting the lateral movement of a competitor's head during a frontal impact.

Currently, Motorsport New Zealand requires the use of a complying FHR device for all 'National Race' and 'Championship Rally' and higher event permit grades in New Zealand. The new requirements will be phased in from now until 1 January 2024 as follows:

- From 1 January 2023: FHRs will also be required for all 'Clubmans Rally' event permit grades.
- From 1 January 2023: FHRs will also be required for all 'National Rally' event permit grades.
- From 1 May 2023: FHRs will also be required for all 'Clubmans Race' vehicles with a safety cage. (RS Cup and SF Cup)
- From 1 January 2024: FHRs will also be required for all 'Rallysprint' event permit grades.
- FHRs will remain recommended for all ClubSport Basic & Advanced events

Note: FHRs will not be required in Clubmans Race vehicles that do not have a safety cage. However, it is highly recommended that all vehicles without a safety cage install the minimum safety equipment to install an FHR system.

MEET THE 2023 COMMITTEE



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Noel Beale



Jill Hogg



Kaye Flannagan



Donna Whale



Greg Browne



Nick Stewart



Markku Braid



Troy Brown



Malcolm Glen



Russell Harris
Club Advisor



Brian Davies
Club Advisor



JUNE

Saturday 3rd Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 1 – Test Day
 Sunday 4th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 1 – Race Day
 Sunday 18th Transpec / GT Oil 4.5km Bent Sprint

JULY

Saturday 1st Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 2 – Test Day
 Sunday 2nd Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 2 – Race Day
 Saturday 15th Drift Practice
 Sunday 16th Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day
 Friday 21st Manfeild Test Day
 Saturday 22nd 24Mins of Le Manfeild – Superkarts plus Mini Enduros Day 1
 Sunday 23rd 24Mins of Le Manfeild – Superkarts plus Mini Enduros Day 2

AUGUST

Saturday 5th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 3 – Test Day
 Sunday 6th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 3 – Race Day
 Sunday 13th Transpec / GT Oil Back Track Autocross / Motorkhana
 Saturday 19th Back Track Drift Tutoring

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2nd Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 4 – Test Day
Sunday 3rd Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 4 – Race Day
Saturday 16th Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Prize Giving
Sunday 17th Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day

OCTOBER

Saturday 7th Drift Tutoring
Friday 20th OctoberFAST!! Test Day
Saturday 21st OctoberFAST!! Race Day – Super Trucks
Saturday 21st Manfeild: Circuit Chris Amon 50th Dinner Celebrations (TBC)
Sunday 22nd OctoberFAST!! Race Day – Super Trucks



NOVEMBER

Sunday 5th Transpec / GT Oil Manfeild Open Day
Saturday 18th ShowVember
Sunday 19th Transpec / GT Oil Back Track Autocross



DECEMBER

Friday 2nd Manfeild Test Day
Saturday 3rd Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series – Test Day
Sunday 4th Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series 23/24 Round 1





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NEW MEMBERS

Another big influx of new members with twenty people accepted into the club, five from Otaki and one from the southern side of Cook Strait. We welcome you, enjoy what the club offers.

KANE ANDERSON	Otaki
ZANE DHILLON	Pahiatua
MADI DHILLON	Pahiatua
BEN DUCK	Palmerston North
BRENDAN GAWLER	Otaki
CALLUM HICKFORD	Marton
ROBERT HOLLIS	Wellington
SHAYNE HUGHES	Wanganui
STUART LAWTON	Paraparaumu
DEAN SPICER	Upper Hutt
MIKE SPICER	Upper Hutt
JOSHUA THIELE	Palmerston North
ALLY THIELE	Palmerston North
NICOLA VAN ROOIJEN	Otaki
THEO VAN ROOIJEN	Otaki
SAMUEL VAN ROOIJEN	Otaki
ALISTAIR WEEKS	Wellington
MATTHEW WEIR	Levin
HELENA WILSON	Palmerston North
OLLIE WORKMAN	Brightwater



This a brief geography/history lesson for those who have little knowledge of where Brightwater is. First settled as early as 1843 it's a small agriculture town (population 2,500) situated on the banks of the Wairoa River 20 kilometres southwest of Nelson. Benefitting from the local climate vineyards dominate the countryside with a major annual event being a Wine & Food Festival. Historically, Brightwater was the birthplace of Nobel Prizewinning scientist Sir Ernest Rutherford, the 'Father of nuclear physics'. Lessons over..

CLUB CHAT

The mystery of the second Manfeild in the Wellington suburb of Tawa has been solved thanks to MX5 racer Conrad Healey who knows the owners! The magnificent home was sited behind the spectator embankment near where the pit return road is but was generally unnoticed by people who attended motor race meetings. Built in the 1890's the house dates back to the horse racing days where it was used by the Feilding Jockey Club for administration and jockey's accommodation. In 2006 the house was removed by Central House Movers to their Bulls depot and sold to Ian and Paula Cuff who had it relocated to their 1.45-hectare lifestyle property in Tawa, when 'reassembled' a 14-year restoration began that included adapting their home for modern living while retaining the original native timber features. With a floor area of around 615 square metres there are seven bedrooms, three bathrooms and garaging for five cars, add a purpose-built annex, a home gym and a workshop. Upon completion the imposing 130-year-old homestead was renamed 'Manfeild Villa' because of the link, if you're really curious to see this important piece of Feilding history the address is 172 Bing Lucas Drive, Tawa...



Hard working MCC Secretary Jeff Braid reached a significant milestone in his life in the month of March, but it took 65 years to achieve. Jeff became the proud recipient of the iconic GOLD CARD which means that he has become a 'Senior Citizen' and can enjoy the benefits that come with it. Congratulations Jeff and welcome to a new world.

Many people will be wondering what rising star Kaleb Ngatoa is doing these days. Like a number of top rugby players he can see a future of racing in Asia and Japan where he will be contesting Round 2 of the FIA certified Formula Regional Japanese Championship at the Suzuka Circuit on 11-12 May, the championship being part of a regional driver development series. The cars are similar to those run in the recent Castrol Toyota ROC and Kaleb will be racing for the Suketina team that has a close working relationship with the leading Super Formula TGM outfit. This is an exciting new direction in Kaleb's career and fellow club members will be monitoring his progress very closely. For the immediate future it's 'sayonara' to Marton and 'kon'nichiwa' to Japan...



Over the years a number of club members would have met Bill Richie who is a FIA Motorsport NZ Steward, some would have worked alongside him in the Level 2 control room, a small number would have raced against him and a smaller number possibly visited him following a summons relating to an on-track incident during a race. Bill is an Alfista, the name given to enthusiasts of the famous Alfa Romeo marque, much less known is that he's also a NZ Land Speed Record Holder! The attempt was made on Canal East Road at Waitakaruru on the Hauraki Plains where Roger Freeth and others set records, driving his Lola Ford IndyCar Freeth achieved 313.539 km/h (194.858 mph). On 10th April 1994 Bill Richie set a new record speed for a diesel-powered car when he achieved a two-way average speed of 171.739 km/h (106.714 mph) driving a Citroen BX TZD Turbo 5-door hatchback, 29 years ago that was very quick for an oil burner family car...

It's been revealed that the 'new' motor in Caitlin Chowen's Honda Civic in a combination of components from three engines. The basis is a 2.0 litre crankshaft block, attached is a 1.6 litre cylinder head while the valves are actuated by a camshaft from a 1.8 litre model which makes the # 54 Civic 100% Honda, in a roundabout way...

Club member, MX5 racer and media scribe Richard Bosselman drives a wide variety of interesting cars that he road tests for his Motoring NZ on-line column, March included a trio of contrasts. Germany's Opel brand is an offshoot of General Motors and is not well known in this country though the Holden ZB Commodore and Astra were rebadged Opels. On his home forecourt Richard had two variants of the new Opel Mokka SRI's which is the flagship model, one petrol and other the Mokka-E electric, and he was very impressed with the 5-door compact hatchbacks, the headline to his review being "Boldness in design is matched by genuine driving flair; it's the right car to put Opel in the spotlight".

The third car was from the Land of Uncle Sam, the Ford Mustang Mach 1 that was first produced in 1969. In 2021 the seventh generation appeared following a 17-year hiatus, the following year Ford New Zealand imported fifty cars that were all immediately sold except for one that was retained by the company's Marketing and Press Department, it was this 'Fighter Grey' colour example that Richard was given the keys to. The specs of the Mustang with the iconic Mach 1 badging show that much has changed in the engine room, the original car had the 5.8 litre pushrod Cleveland 351 V8 that produced 250 horsepower, more than fifty years later the 2021 version has a 5.0 litre quad-cam Coyote V8 pumping out 480 with top speed rising from 206 km/h (128 mph) to 287 km/h (166 mph). The price on the home market also rose from US\$3,122 to US\$52,915, those 49 lucky kiwi owners in 2022 paid NZ\$97,990. The last Ford Mustang that RB tested was the \$93,490 GT Bullitt back in 2019 so it will be interesting to read his thoughts on the Mach 1. Obviously, being a motoring scribe is a very privileged occupation...



Club Vice-President and Treasurer Tim Wilde discovered the cruel side of the sport when he entered the Pukekohe 'Final Fling', an event that he desperately wanted to compete in as it marked the final meeting at the South Auckland circuit after 60 years of motor racing. Preparation of the Papaya colour (McLaren orange) MX5 was meticulous, and the driver was already in the zone when he headed off from Havelock North with high hopes. Unfortunately, his on-track expectations failed to materialise as the weekend's racing quickly unravelled with the car's differential failing on the second lap of Race 1. It wasn't 'game over' because fellow MX5 competitor Benny Yan from Christchurch had a contact in Auckland who could help. A replacement was located but it had to be removed from a 'donor' car, the casing from the race car had to be replaced and the differential fitted - adding to Tim's woes was the fact that the replacement was a locked unit! Meanwhile, at the other end of the car the exhaust manifold studs had sheered as they dismantled the underside of the car to remove the differential, with a supreme team effort that included Benny the car was race ready at 10.30 on

Saturday night. The following morning's race was frustrating as Tim was forced to endure the clouds of smoke created by grease spraying over the hot exhaust, after finishing at the back of the field the decision was made to withdraw from the meeting. Did the trouble begin when Tim had to change his regular number and from the available options selected the number 13? In Tim's words - "It's part of the sport to have such a weekend, if ya can't handle and even enjoy the bad times you shouldn't own a race car". The Pukekohe Final Fling didn't deliver the hopes of Tim Wilde, but as fellow MX% driver Matt Dilly put it - "At least we're on a racetrack".

The Manawatu Car Club's 'Retro Group' has expanded to thirteen cars with the unveiling of President Richie Arber's Honda Accord at the final round of the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series. The car ears the Castrol Mugen Honda livery on the Accord driven by Osamu Nakako to win the 1997 Japan Touring Car Championship, his fifth and final JTCC title. The Boyden and Hogg stables each have three cars, Greg Cuttance has two while Richard Clulee, Geoff Spencer, Warren Dunn, Brendon Lucas and now Richie Arber have one each, Paul Dewar's NASCAR Dodge Intrepid doesn't count because it's a genuine ex Team Penske race car that was driven by Joey Lagano. The latest addition to the ranks is the E30 BMW M3 of Brendon Lucas that carries the Mobil colours bringing the total of Bavarian Motor Werke's cars to seven. These Tribute cars certainly bring colour to the grid and each livery has a very interesting background story to tell...



Word is out that Greg Cuttance is reducing his classic fleet because "two cars are one too many". Greg's first tribute car was the legendary Dick Johnson Tru Blu XD Falcon and it appears that it's the one looking for a new home, which suggests that the man from Dannevirke will concentrate on racing the equally stunning tribute Dick Johnson Zakspeed Group A Greens-Tuf Ford Mustang that the Queenslander raced in 1985/86. Having just one car does make the choice of which to race much easier...

For those who enjoy motor racing on the big screen there's a big budget movie in the pipeline that stars A-lister Brad Pitt and will be directed by Joseph Kosinski who was responsible for 'Top Gun : Maverick'. Apparently, Lewis Hamilton is an advisor and shooting will start at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone in July this year. It will be eagerly awaited with the hope it will have a good story line...

Useless Information Department. On 03 April 2023 the mobile phone was 50 years old, remember the original 'brick' as it was called...

AN ERA ENDS

The name of the late Bruce Watt will be well known to those involved with the club's earlier days when he competed in events driving a Morris Minor.

One of the city's 'characters', Bruce was best known for wearing bow ties and for the photographic business that began as a film studio in Cuba Street before establishing a retail business in 1953 on Fitzherbert Avenue, located on the opposite side of Jersey Lane next to where the Gull Service Station is today. Bruce Watt Photography moved to the eastern side of the Square in 1992 on what was then known as the 'golden stretch' between Broadway and Church Street, at that time there were five specialist photographic shops and nine processing laboratories in the CBD area. The beginning of the end came in the late 1990's when the first digital cameras appeared, it accelerated rapidly with the arrival of mobile phones. On Friday 31st of March the name above the door was removed following the last day of trading after 70 years servicing the industry.



A great outdoors man, Bruce Watt was 58 years of age when he died suddenly from a heart attack while out hunting in Santoft Forest, the family and staff continued to run the shop that bore his name...

RH

A MOST UNUSUAL VICTORY

Former Aussie V8 Supercars continue to find new owners, one of the latest is the VF Holden Commodore that famously won the 2016 Bathurst 1000 driven by Will Davidson and Tekno Autosports owner Jonathon Webb.

What made the win famous was the fact that the Tekno/STIX Commodore never officially led a lap in the race! Davidson took the chequered flag in second place 10 seconds behind Jamie Whincup, BUT, Whincup had incurred a 15 second time penalty and \$10,000 fine following contact with Scott McLaughlin's Volvo S60 in the closing stages. Shane Van Gisbergen was officially second with Alexandre Prémat for Triple Eight Race Engineering followed by Nick Percat and Cameron McConville who completed a Holden 1-2-3. The 15 second penalty dropped the Whincup/Paul Dumbrell '888' Commodore to 11th in the official result, seven seconds ahead of Chris Pither and Richie Stanaway who shared the New Zealand Super Black Racing Ford FG X Falcon.



Triple Eight Race Engineering lost their appeal, just as they did seven years later in the first race of the 2023 Repco Supercar Championship at Newcastle - different circumstances though...

RH

TRACK CHAT

The club was well represented at the Historic Racing Club's 'Legends of Speed' at the Hampton Downs Raceway over the weekend of 18/19 March. The meeting attracted 240 entries with the programme incorporating 13 classes, club members participating in eight of them.

Scott McCaskie lined up in the BMW Open class against seriously strong opposition and had his best track outing for some time, after qualifying 7th quickest he placed 10th in the Scratch race followed by a 13th and 9th in the two Handicaps.

The Heritage Touring Car grid included three members in the ten-car field, Ben and Geoff Boyden being joined by Brendon Lucas to form a trio of BMWs, the superb Boyden cars are well known while Brendon drives an E30 M3 presented in Mobil livery. Brendon qualified P6 and scored P4 in the Scratch race followed by a DNF and DNS in the handicaps, Ben qualified P7 that was followed three top ten results with a 7th, 9th and 5th while Geoff had a bad start to his racing after qualifying P10, a rare DNF in the scratch after 4 laps before his fortunes improved with an 8th and 7th in the handicaps.

Graham Barnes wheeled out his potent V8 Capri for the Historic Sports Sedans to face a small but high-quality field. P8 in qualifying translated to 5th place in the scratch, the first handicap resulted in a 7½ second victory, the second brought 6th place to complete an excellent weekend.

Dennis McConnell, Peter Bromley and Jonathan Hogg were among the nineteen HVRA class entrants and scored seven top ten finishes between them. McConnell was fastest of the group in qualifying with P4, Bromley was P8 and Hogg P15. McConnell's score card showed a 6th, 11th and 6th in the three handicap races, Bromley was the star with two 2nds to his name by the narrow margins of 0.45 and 0.29, in between there was an 8th. Hogg was the big improver by translating his lowly qualifying time into a 6th placing in the first race 6.6 behind the winner, race 2 ended in 13th place before the final race saw the BMW 'Batmobile' involved in a super close finish, crossing the line in third place only 3/10ths behind the winner.

The TCM (Touring Car Masters)/NZ6 had three scratch races with Greg Cuttance in the field of 26 cars. Driving his familiar TruBlu Dick Johnson tribute XD Falcon Greg qualified P10. Race 1 ended early with a DNF, but the weekend ended on a high note with 12th and 8th placings against major opposition that included the two Pinepac Fords that were driven by Nathan Anderson (Mustang) and young Australian rising star Jett Johnson (XE Falcon). The pair dominated both qualifying and the result sheets with the only blemish being Johnson's DNF in the first race.



Tony Elmiger and Bill Robson figured strongly in the Pre-65/Mini Challenge races, qualifying 5th and 6th respectively of the nineteen drivers, the session ended with nine cars covered by less than 5 seconds. The Elmiger Mustang placed 5th in the scratch race with a 2nd and 15th in the handicaps while Robson's weekend finished with placings of 7th, 2nd and 8th to show how competitive Bill and his blue 'brick' are in the grouped category.

There were two open-wheel classes that both drew double figure fields. Eleven cars faced the starter in the Formula Open NZ where Liam Sceats is proving to be the man to beat. Sam McNeill qualified P3 that was followed by a 5th, 4th and 2nd in the three scratch races, Kenny Smith also ran a TRS-spec car and showed that it's a category he's enjoying, P6 in qualifying was backed-up with a 5th, 6th and 7th in the races.

An exceptional entry of sixteen Formula 5000 'thunderships' including Kevin Ingram and Tim Rush fronted for the meeting which carried points for the SAS Autoparts Tasman Revival Championship, notable absentees were the two GM-1 McRaes of Michael and Anna Collins.

Auckland's Grant Martin couldn't attend the previous round because of damage to his property caused by exceptionally heavy rain which prevented access to his race car! Driving his Talon, Grant was in outstanding form to head Kevin by more than a second to top the qualifying times, Tim being 14th quickest and among the 'gentlemen drivers'.

Race 1 was scratch with a rolling start that ended with Martin ahead of Ingram by 2.68 while Rush improved two places to finish 12th. Race 2 was a handicap, Ingram took the flag in 5th position 3.9 behind the winner while Rush had the satisfaction of finishing ahead of Martin, the pair split by nearly five seconds in 11th and 12th respectively. Race 3 was the 10-lap feature that reverted to the scratch format, like the first it was a Martin-Ingram 1-2 with the pair 2.36 seconds apart, the Rush McLaren placing 12th.

Two memories of the HRC meeting were fog delaying the start of Sunday's racing by an hour and Jett Johnson's first appearance on this side of the Tasman. Jett is a third-generation racer, the grandson of Dick Johnson and son of Steve Johnson, his father flew over for the Sunday races. The 18-year-old won back-to-back TA2 Muscle Car Series titles in 2021 and 2022, this year he's competing in the Dunlop Super3 (Kelly Brothers Nissan Altima) and National TransAm Series in which he's driving a blue Ford Mustang with NAPA Auto Spares sponsorship - Justin Allen would like that...

The month of March ended with the Speedworks Pukekohe 'Final Fling' to signal the closure of the South Auckland circuit after 60 years of service to the sport. The weekend's programme featured 31 races including 'Flying Farewells' with the NAPA Super Trucks taking the final chequered flag.

Club members and Manfeild regulars raced in four of the multiple categories over the three days. Waka Nathan Harris in his Holden V8 Super Tourer lined up in the TA2-TransAm-V8 Open category comprising 27 of the meanest and fastest 'tin tops'. After missing both practice sessions, he qualified an outstanding 5th quickest but the actual races were a different story with 25th and 21st placings before non-starting in the final Reverse/Split Grid.

Three gridded for the Pre-65/Super Mini Challenge that saw Bill Robson the qualifying sensation when he recorded the 4th fastest lap, Tony Elmiger's Mustang was P14 while Shane Hobman finished the session 26th out of the 28 entries. The opening Scratch race brought a dramatic change for two of the trio, Elmiger gained



nine positions to finish 5th while Hobman gained a remarkable 14 places on his way to 12th at the flag with the Robson Mini one place behind. The handicappers weren't very kind to Elmiger in the other races that saw him finish 17th and 18th, Robson scored a P9 and P14 while Hobman had two top 10 results with a 5th and 9th to end his meeting on a high.

Josh Smith successfully took on the field in the Production Race Series, after winning the first race he had a fourth then won the Handicap to end a successful weekend.

The biggest representation was in the Nexen Tyre NZ Mazda Racing Series where there were eight MX5's on the grid including two from Christchurch that raced in last year's Winter Series. The category attracted the largest field of the meeting with 39 cars on a circuit with a maximum 40 car allowed, 31 of them were RX7s and RX8s that are significantly quicker, in the qualifying session the fastest rotary clocked a lap that was 7.22 seconds quicker than Markku Braid's MX5! At the end of the session the MX5s were headed by Braid who had a 4.2 margin over Dom Fransen, followed by Shane Hayter, Benny Yan, Tim Wilde, Scott Topham, Everard Petrie, Dean Evans and Matt Dilley.



The Scratch race was taken out by Evans who pipped Braid by 3/10ths, third went to Dilly from Fransen, Yan and Hayter while Wilde became a DNF after a single lap. The Reverse Grid ended with Braid and Evans working their way through the field to finish 1st and 3rd split by Dilly - Hayter, Yan and Fransen completed the top six across the line. The grid for Race 3 was set on total points, Evans again bested Braid by a full second with Dilly P3 for the third time! The consistent Hayter, Fransen and Yan were the balance of the first six finishers with Topham and Petrie best of the rest, when the points were tallied Markku Braid took the round honours from Evans.

Apologies for errors with regards to the Pukekohe event, post meeting information was sadly lacking and the Race Monitor results unofficial... A weekend to remember for those who took part in a very special occasion...

It's good news that the racing career of MCC member Chris Pither is back on track. Chris has an impressive CV to his name with championship titles in V8 Utes and Aussie Supercar's Super2 but never achieved the same level of success in the tough and ultra- competitive major league that's Supercars. His 2023 programme was unknown when he was relieved of driving duties with PremiAir Racing at the end of last season and wasn't picked-up in a co-driver role for the endurance races. In late March it was announced that Chris would be

contesting the Porsche Paynter Dixon Carrera Cup Australia series with EMA Motorsport who will be running two cars, the Melbourne based outfit ran a single car for David Russell last year who finished third in the championship. *"I'm excited by the challenge of racing in the Porsche Carrera Cup for the first time, the car is very different to what I have become accustomed to in Supercars, simple points by being left hand drive, but more so the way the car makes its speed and how to maximise the tyres. It will be a steep learning curve, but I have high expectations and it's great to stay active driving in a highly competitive championship."* Possibly it's a good omen that Chris's Porsche will carry '42', the same number when he won the Australian V8 Ute Racing Series title in 2011, could history repeat itself?



Round one of the PPDCCA was as a support category for the 2023 Rolex Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne's Albert Park Street circuit. Chris's long association with the Coca Cola brand continues as principal sponsor of his car, qualifying ended with P15, 1.67 off the pole time in the 35-car field. Race 1 was red flagged on lap 3 because of multiple crashes, Chris was hit and spun at Turn 3 on the previous lap but was able to limp to the pits with a shredded rear tyre, because of the lengthy recoveries and barrier repairs the race was declared with no result. Races 2 and 3 brought placings of 13th and 17th which put him 14th in the point's standings. The eight-round series continues at Hidden Valley in the Northern Territory on 17/18 June and includes the Bathurst 1000 meeting with the final round in Adelaide at the end of November...

RH

STEWART'S MITRE 10 MEGA SUMMER SERIES, ROUND 3



Held over the first two days of April, the 2022/23 Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series finale attracted a healthy total of entries boosted with the inclusion of a round of the NZ Superlap Series. The final round of the 2022/23 NZ Formula First Championship attracted a field of 17 with 45 cars facing the starter in the four Summer Series classes, the fields ranging in size from four to seventeen cars.

Saturday's racing/testing sessions included a short period of light rain which made the track greasy while Sunday was perfect autumn weather with temperatures in the high teens.

The RS Cup had thirteen cars on the Round 3 grid, qualifying finished with 6.1 seconds covering the field that had Hayden Arnold, Rodney Penn, Eddie Arnold and Graeme Wall at the pointy end, however Hayden had lapped under 1.30 which cost him 50 championship points!

The Scratch race saw Steele slow away, but he quickly regained the lost ground to make the order Hayden Arnold, Steele, Wall, Eddie Arnold, Anna Wild and Shayne Hughes. The first positional changes occurred on lap 3 with Keith Pfeffer and Rodney Penn passing Wild who dropped to 8th place ahead of Chowen. The race ran out with Andrew Manderson overtaking Chowen and Penn the only changes in the running order, but the outcome didn't match the finishing order as the first three drivers had collected breakout penalties - Wall erred three times (P10) with Steele (P12) and Hayden Arnold (P13) five times each! Eddie Arnold was officially first ahead of Pfeffer, Wild, Hughes, Manderson and Penn.

Jo Dunn and Nick Fisher shared the front row for the Reverse Grid, but Dunn was quickly swamped on the opening lap leaving Fisher leading Paul Rodgers, Hughes, Manderson and Wild. By half-distance Hayden Arnold had taken the lead while Fisher dropped to 4th but was ahead of Wild and Steele while Manderson became a DNF, going into the last lap the order was Hayden Arnold, Steele, Hughes and Rodgers and it remained that way, however the first two drivers had gone under 1.30 on a single occasion and the 10 second penalty dropped them out of the top six, Hughes taking maximum points ahead of Rodgers, Eddie Arnold, Wall, Fisher and Wild.



Manderson was a DNS for the handicap that had the field spread by 30 seconds, Jo Dunn was first away 10 seconds before Chowen and Fisher, last to go were Steele and Hayden Arnold. Dunn led the first four laps with Fisher quickly assuming P2 followed by Hughes, Chowen and Rodgers, the big movement coming in the final two laps as the two stormtroopers came through the pack. Going into the final lap Fisher led Hughes, Eddie Arnold and Dunn, when the checker fell Fisher led Eddie Arnold who pipped Hughes by 2/100ths, from the back Hayden Arnold was P4 ahead of Rodgers and Steele. Three drivers picked up time penalties for breakouts, Eddie Arnold had 10 seconds added to his race time, Steele 60 seconds and Hayden Arnold 70 seconds which made the top six finishers Fisher by 0.65 from Hughes, Rodgers, Penn, Pfeffer and Dunn who was 9.3 behind the winner.

The SF Cup entry of 11 cars was half that of Round 1 in December, Steen McGhie topped the qualifying times by 0.15 from Caitlin Chowen, Darren Utting, Peter Beauchamp, Louis Kelly and Greg Browne, the six drivers covered by 8/10ths.

In the Scratch race McGhie was very slow off the line and drifted back through the field while Utting had taken the lead by Turn 1 and was never headed, leading Greg Browne who started from row 3, Beauchamp, Darren Walker who was behind Browne on the grid and Chowen. Walker overtook Browne for P2 on lap 3 but broke-out in the process, the penalty time dropped him to 6th in the official results after taking the flag 2.3 seconds behind Utting. Browne, Beauchamp, Chowen and Lucas Kelly all moved up one position and were covered by 3.4 seconds.

The Reverse Grid had McGhie missing, Huszka, Brett Uncles, Spencer Morris and Kelly were at the front of the grid with Browne, Walker and Utting at the back. A car in the esses gravel trap on the opening lap resulted in a Safety Car intervention followed by a Full Course Yellow, racing resumed on lap 4 with Kelly leading Beauchamp, Walker, Uncles and Utting, next time round Walker overtook Beauchamp with the final lap producing a thrilling finish as Walker, Beauchamp and Utting chased down the leader. In the drag to the flag cars were three wide with Walker winning by 2/10ths from Beauchamp with 3/10ths to Kelly, Utting, Browne and Chowen, the first four cars over the line being covered by 1.005. No breakouts!



The Handicap 6 lapper had a 25 second spread with Trent Smith, Browne and McGhie non-starters, Uncles was first away from Morris and Huszka with Utting, Chowen and Walker last to get the flag. Uncles lost the lead to Morris on lap 2, on the next lap Huszka was P2 with Uncles followed by Kelly, Beauchamp, Utting, Chown and Walker who was 15 seconds off the lead. At the line the order was Huszka, Utting, Beauchamp, Morris, Kelly and Walker within 3½ seconds, however Utting had incurred one time penalty and Walker four, dropping the drivers to P6 and P8 respectively, advancing Beauchamp, Morris, Kelly one position with Chowen 5th.

Seventeen drivers were entered in the IB Cup where the field was covered by 8½ seconds when qualifying ended, top of the time sheet was Kieran Moorman by 2/10ths over Ian Thompson followed by Steve Hardie, Cooper Cooley, Nick Stewart and Koln Yannakis.

The 6 lap Scratch race quickly became a duel between the two on the front row with Moorman leading Thompson, the chasers were led by Hardie, Stewart, Cooley and Dave Burroughs. There were some positional changes further back as Thompson took the lead on lap 5 and held it to the finish where he was 0.23 in front of Moorman with a five second gap to third placed Hardie who had a similar margin over Cooley, Stewart and Yannakis who completed the top six.

The Reverse Grid had Logan Moorman and Dave Thomsen on the front row with Colin Harper, Darryl Hunter and Richie Arber behind them, Thompson was alone on the back row. Thomsen took the lead from Logan Moorman on lap 3 with Hardie, Stewart, Kieran Moorman and Thompson who had gained nine positions, the first three were running very close together and broken away from Stewart and Donald McIntyre. On the last lap Hardie passed Logan Moorman to finish P2 behind Thomsen, the trio covered by less than a second while Stewart led Thompson and McIntyre over the line, the latter less than six seconds behind the winner.



With a field so tight the Handicap spread was only 20 seconds with Colin Harper having a 10 second start over Kane Anderson and Arber, last away were the trio of Hardie, Kieran Moorman and Thompson. Harper and Arber ran one-two throughout the entire distance with Arber challenging very strongly over the final lap before backing out of an inside overtake at Higgins to settle for P2 3/10ths behind Harper. Anderson held third before yielding to Ian Humphrey on lap 4 who proceeded to have an 'off' in Turn 7 which dropped him to last place! Anderson dropped back in the closing laps as the faster cars moved forward, when the checker fell the order was Harper, Arber, Thomsen, Logan Moorman, Yannakis and Kieran Moorman with back marker Thompson 7th and 5.2 seconds the winner, the first eight cars covered by 5.7 seconds. The handicappers were right on the mark, three races, no breakouts, well done...

The GT Cup drew only four entries with Gregory Hirst from the NZ Superlap Series trying his hand at circuit racing. In the qualifying session the three GT-A cars were split by 3.7 seconds with Daniel Gordon quickest ahead of Josh Smith and Hirst, GT-B driver Tony Stewart completed the field and was six seconds slower than Gordon on the time sheet.

In the Scratch race Gordon took off when the light went out while Smith struggled off the line before taking P2 by the esses, at the end of lap 1 the margin between the leaders was already out to three seconds and increased by around five seconds each lap, Smith slowed on lap 2 and struggled on to finish 3 laps down, that

elevated Hirst and Stewart. Gordon cruised home more than half a minute ahead of Hirst with a 27 second gap to Stewart.

Gordon made it two from two in the Reverse Grid, highlighted by clocking a sub 1.10 time on lap 2 before cruising to a 15.6 second win over Smith to a further 20 seconds back to Hirst, Stewart was a DNF after three laps.

The Handicap was down to three starters with Hirst missing, Stewart had 30 seconds start on Smith with Gordon five seconds further back. The '888' car took the lead on lap 3 and opened up a 7 second gap over Smith after another 3 kilometres of racing while Stewart retired to the pits. Sensing the race was running to an obvious conclusion with only two runners' officials reduced to distance to five laps, but there was no trifecta for Gordon after he inexplicably spun in the esses allowing Smith to cross the line with an unexpected 7.3 advantage.



It was most appropriate that Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon hosted the final round of the 2022/23 Hi-Q Components NZ Formula First Championship with Chris Symon being the champion elect. Seventeen cars fronted with the leading question being can Symon regain his winning streak and who will fill the minor placings in the championship standings?

Held on a damp track Qualifying saw Brody McConkey and Toby McCormack quickest with Symon P3 0.128 off the pole time and sharing row 2 of the grid with Harry Scott.

The first of the 8 lap Scratch races on Saturday afternoon had the first three rows covered by less than a second, McConkey grabbed the lead with Symon moving to P2 on lap 1 followed by Scott, Jack Groenewald, Hayden Lines and Jensen Foster while McCormack slipped in the midfield pack, with five cars in the leading group Lines made the first big move when he went from 3rd to 1st on lap 4 to head Symon, Scott and Groenewald, on the next lap McConkey gained two places to be third. Symon hit the front for the first time of lap 5 and led the field to the checker 0.173 ahead of Lines, McConkey, Scott and Groenewald who was three seconds behind the winner.

Symon made a perfect start to Race 2 to lead McConkey Scott, Jensen Foster, Groenewald, Foster and Lines through the first lap that saw both Paul and Toby McCormack have off-track excursions. Symon dropped to P3

behind Foster and McConkey as the lead changed on each following lap, at half distance McConkey headed a seven-car train before he and Symon led alternate laps over the line. The penultimate lap saw the order Symon, McConkey, Scott, Foster, Line, Groenewald and Nicholson with the outcome far from decided, Symon got a break on the chasing pack to beat Scott by 1.7 seconds, Lines claimed P3 4/10ths ahead of McConkey with Nicholson, Groenewald, Paul McCormack and Toby McCormack who had staged a great recoveries, however Groenewald had received a 20 second penalty which dropped him to 12th in the official results, Nicholson's 5th placing ensured finishing runner-up in the championship.

The final race was typical Formula First with the first four cars crossing the line covered little more than half a second apart after the lead changed multiple times through McConkey (4), Symon (3) and Scott (1) with a nine strong pack separated by tenths of a second for lap after lap. Positional changes came thick and fast, at the halfway point the order was Scott, Symon, McConkey, Lines followed by the father and son McCormacks as placings settled down on the run home, but any one of eight cars could take the checker flag. With 3 kilometres to run it was Symon ahead of McConkey, Scott, Lines and the McCormacks, the result would come down to drafting and the final corner. Three wide out of Turn 7 with the flag in sight the cars were a blur as they crossed the line in a photo finish, Symon winning by 4/1000ths from McConkey with Lines a hundredth of a second away in P3 and Toby McCormack 9/10ths behind the winner, next were Scott, Paul McCormack, Groenewald and Regan Edwards, the top eight finishers covered by 3½ seconds. It was a sensational ending to the championship as Formula First again delivered the ultra-close racing that has long been a feature of the category.

The Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series was completed for another year after producing racing of varying quality, there were a number of new drivers coming into the sport together with new or upgraded cars to show that club level racing is very alive and well in the Manawatu...

RH

RUSTY'S NOTES

Racing against yourself and the clock is what the Prowear New Zealand Superlap Series appears to be it's all about. It's a MSNZ supported category with four classes which are dependent on the car's specification - Street, Pro-Street, Pro-Open and Unlimited. The competing drivers had six 10-minute track sessions over the two days with the fastest recorded lap being 1.12.578 set by Unlimited class driver Brendon Sole, the drivers with the fastest lap in their class at the end of the weekend are the winners. It's an individual form of motorsport that has its own following and it was their first visit to the Feilding circuit...



One of the Superlap drivers was Gregory Hirst from New Plymouth who took the opportunity to also compete in the GT Cup races in a car powered by a turbocharged V6 motor. Comparing his fastest laps times, in the Pro-Open Superlap he did a best 1.14.461, his quickest GT Cup lap was 1.14.506 in the qualifying session...

Another 'double' driver was Caitlin Chowen who ran in both the RS Cup and SF Cup in Rounds 2 and 3, in the former her repowered 2-litre Honda Civic, in the latter the Nissan Primera from the Greg Browne stable. Was it hoped to win two pieces of silverware in the same series? One thing was certain, Caitlin was a very tired young lady by the end of racing...



Saturday's late morning light rain made life a lot more interesting with a 'greasy' track to contend with. There were numerous 'twitches', particularly between the exit to Turn 1 and the Hairpin that sharpened up the driver's reflexes with 'butt clencher' moments. It was the sort of conditions that are an integral part of the sport, dry surfaces aren't always possible...

Palmy Formula First drivers Jenson Bate and Darren Henderson locked horns all weekend, beginning in the qualifying with 11th and 15th places respectively split by 0.57. In race 1 Henderson took first blood with 14th to Bate's 15th with a nearly three second gap, Bate avenged that defeat in race 2 by 0.169 when they both finished inside the top 10, one all, but Henderson had the last say by finishing two places ahead in race 3 (13 v 15) as Bate lost something like ten seconds over the final laps - two-one to Henderson who also claimed the faster lap. Bate did come out on top in the championship though, placing 6th which is the same as last year while Henderson was 18th on the table...

Staying with Formula First, a special mention of Feilding's Bob Dillow who races in the Master's category for drivers over 45 years of age. Bob's weekend scorecard read 17, 13 and 10 after qualifying 10th fastest, 3/10ths quicker than Jenson Bate. In the final championship standings Bob finished 12th overall and claimed the Masters title so congratulations to another Feilding Flyer..

Ian Humphrey and his trusty Falcon XR8 had a big moment during the IB Handicap race, after being the 8th car flagged away Ian had moved up to 3rd place by the end of lap 3 and looked a definite threat to the leaders. His race came undone on the next lap in Turn 7 when the car left the bitumen and stopped in a massive dust cloud just short of the tyre wall, it must have been very close. After gathering his thoughts, the driver resumed racing well behind the field to take the flag 42 seconds after the winner, maybe the thought of a chocolate fish was the distraction...



It was the tenth season that Newbury School Principal Chris Symon has competed in Formula First and he gave his fellow competitors another lesson in race craft in what has been a remarkable season. No doubt highlighted by his third successive championship after one of the longest winning streaks in this country's motor racing history that ended at his home circuit after 18 straight victories, beaten by Liam Foster with the margin 0.058 - 21 wins from 22 races is an impressive and unique record. It could be assumed that Chris will continue racing with the objective of matching his father Ross's four back-to-back championships...

The now traditional Charity Circuit Cruise during the Sunday lunch break always attracts a car or cars that are a little different to the norm. At the meeting the standout was a 2010 SS Chev Camaro with a 427 cube LS3 Stroker motor fitted with a Whipple supercharger in the engine room, perfect for traffic light grand prix with 800 horsepower on call. With a Safety Car leading the cruise to monitor the speed it must have been very frustrating for the driver not being able to unleash the beast, apparently he's a neighbour of our ace photographer Jarod Carruthers...

The weekend ran very smoothly with fifteen races plus the six NZ Superlap Series sessions, those travelling long distances would have welcomed the early Sunday finish when Hugh Wilde waved the final checker flag mid-afternoon at 3.35. Unfortunately, two events scheduled for the end of day were cancelled, the GT Cup Bonus and Russell's Relay Race, seemingly caused by insufficient numbers...

RH

2022/23 MITRE 10 MEGA SUMMER SERIES AWARDS

The Summer Series Prize Giving and the club's Awards Dinner was held at Feilding's world class Coach House Museum on Saturday 29th of April. Seventy-eight people attended, a very significant increase on previous years. It was also notable that for the first time all the prize/awards recipients were present with several travelling from Napier, Wanganui and Paraparaumu.

Andrew Stewart, General Manager of Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega in Palmerston North, was the special guest and presented the Summer Series trophies, Russell Harris and club President Richie Arber hosted the function.

Each of the 2022/23 Summer Series and Award recipients were briefly interviewed by Jeff Braid following their category presentations.

RS CUP

- | | | |
|------------------|---------|------------------|
| 1 Paul Rodgers | 612 pts | Wanganui |
| 2 Caitlin Chowen | 480 pts | Palmerston North |
| 3 Eddie Arnold | 412 pts | Palmerston North |



SF CUP

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------|----------|
| 1 | Darren Walker | 599 pts | Napier |
| 2 | Greg Browne | 544 pts | Halcombe |
| 3 | Peter Beauchamp | 533 pts | Feilding |



IB CUP

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------|------------------|
| 1 | Ian Thompson | 419 pts | Wanganui |
| 2 | Cooper Cooley | 409 pts | Feilding |
| 3 | Nick Stewart | 405 pts | Palmerston North |



GT CUP

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------|-------------|
| 1 | Tony Stewart | 509 pts | Aramaho |
| 2 | Josh Smith | 427 pts | Hastings |
| 3 | Daniel Gordon | 217 pts | Paraparaumu |



CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS (Top Points Scorer)

Paul Rodgers



COMMENT: - RS Cup runner Caitlin Chowen was the only female to receive silverware for her efforts. Her series was highlighted with wins in the Handicap races at the first two rounds with no other podium results.

In the SF Cup Darren Walker scored three wins and three podiums, Greg Browne one win and five podiums with Peter Beauchamp also securing five podiums.

The IB Cup ended with only 14 points separating the top three place getters - Ian Thompson, Cooper Cooley and Nick Stewart. The ten races produced nine different winners, Irdin Harkin was the driver who took the checker twice.

Fields in the GT Cup were disappointing with grids of 7, 6 and 4 cars. The two classes, GT-A and GT-B, were combined for the trophy. GT-B driver Tony Stewart taking the honours.

Champion of Champions Paul Rodgers brought all his family over from Wanganui for the occasion. The RS Cup racer only won one race but had seven podium finishes, a series is about points gathering.



MANAWATU CAR CLUB AWARDS

KIRK TROPHY - HELPER'S AWARD

Troy Brown



V-FORCE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Mikaela Waldron



MIKE WEBSTER MEMORIAL TROPHY - DEDICATION & PERFORMANCE IN FLAG DEPARTMENT

Renee Thompson



ALWYN DAVIES MEMORIAL TROPHY - RESCUE MARSHAL AWARD

Barbara Wild



ROSS TILLSON MEMORIAL CUP - LONG SERVICE AWARD

Bob Higginson



BLAIR TENNENT MEMORIAL TROPHY - OUSTANDING CLUB PARTICIPATION

Jarod Carruthers



COMMENT: -Troy Brown is the club's Drift Co-Ordinator who has overseen significant and on-going growth of the discipline in the lower North Island, also a regular competitor.

Mikaela Waldron is a new member of the club's flag sector and probably the country's first transgender volunteer.

Renee Thompson (flag) and Barbara Wild (crash/rescue) hold key positions and operate from the Level 2 control room.

The irrepressible Bob Higginson is a long serving and highly experienced member of the crash/rescue squad. Jarod Carruthers has become the club's outstanding photographer, both at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon and special functions, his work features on the club's Facebook and in MCC Bulletins.

The most enjoyable evening concluded with a presentation by President Richie to series sponsor Andrew Stewart and thanks to the people who contributed to the success of the night - Piki Fairbairn (Coach House Museum), Chef Adele Parker and her team of volunteers, photographer Jarod Carruthers, interviewer Jeff Braid and the amazing Jill Hogg for bringing it all together.

RH



SUPER SPRINT SERIES MSNZ CHAMPIONSHIP

Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon's mega month of racing in April ended with Round 7 of Motor Sport NZ's premier Super Sprint series, the televised meeting including a round of the D1NZ Pro Championship and a flyover by the RNZAF's Black Falcons aerobatic team returning to Base Ohakea!



The club had strong representation across the classes, several having stand out performances over the weekend to enhance their reputations.

The Giltrap Group North Island Formula Ford Championship wrapped up at the meeting with all three races on the first day, the 12 strong entry including 1994/95 national champion Shane Drake. Blake Dowdall had an outside chance of overtaking point's leader Dylan Grant by claiming pole position and winning each race, the highly talented 15-year-old topped the qualifying session from Zach Blincoe and Grant to achieve the first step. Race 1 was Formula Ford like the old days, three cars racing wheel-to-wheel throughout the 10 laps and producing a blanket finish with Grant 0.683 ahead of Blincoe and another 7/100ths to Dowdall. The finish to Race 2 was much closer with Blincoe, Dowdall and Grant crossing the line covered by 9/100ths of a second after another classic finish, it was the same finishing order in Race 3 with Dowdall 0.114 behind Blincoe and another 0.078 to Grant - Blake won the round but had to settle for the runner-up spot after closing the gap to 11 points. Of the other club members, Judd Christiansen duelled with Drake all day for two 6ths and a 7th while Halcombe's John Pickford was just outside the top 10 in each race.



The penultimate round of the Toyota 86 Championship attracted 18 cars with Justin Allen clocking the 10th quickest time in qualifying, 0.69 off Clay Osborne's pole time and ahead of Brock Gilchrist who has been the dominant driver. Race 1 saw Justin finish P8 and 11.7 behind Osborne who took the checker flag, in the Reverse Top 10 Race 2 Gilchrist and Allen benefitted from their favourable grid positions to finish 1-2 split by 6/10ths, Race 3 finished behind the Safety Car with Dion Pitt at the head of the train and Allen in 4th place - with one round to run Justin currently 4th on the points table, 42 points behind Pitt in 3rd and 181 behind Gilchrist, the series leader.

A massive field of 31 cars gridded for the Trade Zone GTRNZ GT3/GT4 races, the field including more than half a dozen of the diminutive STAR cars. Jamie Potts missed out as top qualifier by 0.040 with Bayley Walker P4 at + 0.371, further back in the pack were Shaun Browne (10th), Waka Nathan Harris (16th) and Greg Browne (23rd). Race 1 was a Reverse Grid Handicap that ended with Harris in 2nd place, pipped by 5/100ths of a second, Potts crossed the line 11th and three places ahead of Sean B with Greg B 18th, Walker was a lap down in P30. Being one of the first away, Walker took out the Race 2 Handicap with three club members in the top five finishers, Harris placed 2nd and Sean B 5th while Greg B crossed the line 25th, Potts retiring after three of the eight laps. Race 3 was Scratch format that saw Potts score a deserved win in his V8 Trueno, Walker took the checker in P4 with Sean B P9, Harris just missed the top 10 with P11 and Greg B placed 21st in the big field - a very satisfying day for club members.

Seven club members were entered in the seventeen strong Trade Zone GTNZ GT1/GT2 category and figured prominently on the result sheets. In the qualifying session five figured in the fastest ten cars with Cameron Jones and Ross Thurston P2 and P3 followed by Ben Stewart (5), Josh Smith (6) and Simon Barry (8), Daniel Gordon clocked the 11th fastest lap and Andrew Stewart was 16th on the sheet.

Race 1 was a Reverse Grid Handicap that was won by pole sitter Kerry Jones with the five club finishers inside the top 10, Gordon didn't start while Andrew Stewart was a DNF after four of the 10 laps. Ben Stewart took 3rd with Thurston two places back while Cameron Jones, Barry and Smith placed 7, 8, 9. Race 2 was a Handicap with Barry, Gordon and Andrew Stewart missing from the grid, lap 5 saw Ben Stewart retire and Thurston follow a lap later with a blown head gasket, leaving only Cameron Jones and Smith racing, the pair finishing 4th and 9th respectively. A 13 car Scratch race ended the class programme with victory going to Kerry Jones who was 3.7 ahead of Barry with Cameron Jones 3/10ths back to complete the podium, there were DNF's for Smith (2/10 laps) and Gordon (3/10 laps).



Geoff Spencer wheeled out the # 22 Coresteel Holden for the Ryco 24/7 NZV8 Ute Championship round that attracted eleven of Australia's iconic utilities to renew the legendary Holden versus Ford battles for brand supremacy. Qualifying was close with Spencer P4 but only 0.73 off the pole time which would translate to three top six placings. Race 1 was 8 laps Scratch followed by a Reverse Top 10 and another Scratch that produced a 4, 6, 5 score card with the biggest margin behind the winner being 8.2 seconds, in the other two races the margins were 4.9 and 5.4 which showed that the Coresteel Holden and its driver with the category nickname 'S.O.S.' were still very competitive.

The Golden Homes GT NZ Championship cars finally made an appearance at the Feilding circuit, the grid of 25 included the Porsche, Lamborghini, McLaren, AMG Mercedes, Aston Martin and Ferrari brands, very impressive. The club's only drivers were the ageless Brian Green who shared a McLaren with owner David Rodgers and Rianna O'Meara-Hunt at the wheel of a Porsche Cayman GT4, in qualifying the two cars were 17th and 18th, 5½ seconds slower than the pole time and split by 7/10ths.

In the One Hour race the Francois Beziac/Jono Lester combination were the victors, O'Meara-Hunt was two laps down in P14 with another lap back to the Rodgers/Green car that was officially P17. The second and third races were of 30 minutes duration, in the first Rodgers crossed the line 15th which was three places ahead of O'Meara-Hunt while the second race that included a compulsory time stop became a one lap sprint following a Safety Car intervention. O'Meara-Hunt had her best result with 12th place which was seven places ahead of the Rodger's McLaren while Lester went solo to score his second win of the weekend.



Each day started earlier than normal and included a D1NZ session in the late morning followed by the remaining races that concluded mid-afternoon before a second D1NZ session that ended with the judges awarding Tokoroa's Taylor James the win over championship leader 'Fanga' Dan Woolhouse in the top-two decider. The weekend's racing schedule had a very different look that may not have appealed to long standing Manfeild supporters and raised the question could it be the way of future at Motorsport NZ championship meetings.

The 8th and final round of the Super Sprint NZ series is scheduled for 05-07 May at the Hampton Downs circuit...

RUSTY'S NOTES

Incorporating D1NZ into the programme certainly attracted a younger generation of fans who boosted spectator numbers while the new promoters brought much needed colour to the circuit with Valvoline and Repco signage, the revised pit layout raised plenty of eyebrows though...



Still awaiting its D1NZ debut outing is Olivecrona Drift Motorsport's new challenger that was on display in the pit area and attracting a great deal of attention. The all-new PartsTrader RCF Lexus bodied car retains the familiar Hartley V12, with its twin turbochargers now punching more than 1,000 horsepower. Kester, Jaron and the team revealed the car to invited guests at a glitzy function on the eve of the meeting in the Manfeild Park Events Centre (Stadium). The AWS Graphics applied by Red Star Signs are stunning on a car that's not only a visual head turner but also has an exceptional soundtrack. In short, the Lexus is an engineering masterpiece...



The club's fastest lady was a most welcome addition to the Golden Homes GT grid, Rianna O'Meara-Hunt had a quick trip home between her racing commitments in the Pirelli GT4 America series sharing driving duties with Hannah Grisham in the 'Heart of Racing' Aston Martin Vantage GT4. When home she now spends her time in a new role after becoming the first female driver appointed to the three Tony Quinn owned circuits in dual roles as a 'hot lap' driver and driving instructor. Not bad for a 21 year old...

Spare a thought for Josh Smith whose hopes in the final race of the GTNZ GT1/GT2 championship literally went up in flames. On lap 3 he quickly pulled off the circuit on the back straight with a serious engine room fire, Josh quickly vacated his car then hurried back to trigger the on-board extinguisher system which inexplicably didn't work! There was a further delay in dousing the fire with officials having difficulty removing the safety pin from the first extinguisher that arrived on the scene, maybe more basic fire training is needed? It wasn't quite all bad news though, Josh posted that the burnt transponder survived and still worked...

When Jono Later took the checkered flag in Sunday's final GT race it paid a special tribute to his grandmother Wendy Lester. The lady known as the 'Mother of Manfeild' passed away five years ago to the day. Gone but will never be forgotten...

The club's latest young gun realised an ambition after finishing a close second in the final Formula Ford race of the weekend. Blake Dowdall felt that the time was right to do a celebratory 'shoe', something made popular in recent times by Australians. Ute champion Ryal Harris and Supercar driver Dave Reynolds started it in 2015, the following year Daniel Ricciardo introduced it to Formula 1 while Scott McLaughlin celebrated his first IndyCar win at St Petersburg in 2022 with a 'shoe' using a can of beer instead of champagne. During World War 1 drinking from another soldier's boot was a traditional ritual in the German army, however 'shoeys' date back to the early 20th century when drinking from a lady's slipper became a symbol of decadence. Historically it was believed to bring good fortune so here's hoping that it signals the beginning of greater things for Blake. As for doing a 'shoe', it's probably a matter of taste...



The flag points around the circuit received an upgrade in the form of new Alitrax hardware that controls the lights signalling the status of the sectors to drivers. It's so important to keep up with the latest technology, falling behind becomes hard to catch-up...

Tongues wagged when Andrew Stewart appeared with his Datsun 1200 coupe powered by a 2.7 litre Esslinger that's been the 'hot' motor in speedway midget cars for the past couple of decades, those tongues were wagging again in the pits. Removing the bonnet of Shayne Murland's Mk1 Ford Escort revealed a Synergy V8 engine that was developed in Auckland specifically for speedway midgets! The lightweight motor using Kawasaki motorcycle cylinder heads was the brainchild of engineer/racer Simon Longdill and has been

produced in varying capacities from 2.4 to 3.1 litres with power outputs between 390 and 500 plus, the V8 capable of up to 12,000rpm. The Synergy first appeared in 2009 and was an immediate sensation, when kiwi star Michael Pickens took it to America, he blew away the 'Slingers and the motor was quickly outlawed as it was at Western Springs. Rocking the establishment didn't go down too well...



RH

THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE SQUARE

The Subaru BRAT was a 4WD utility version of the 1.6/1.8 litre Leone GL station wagon that was built between 1978 and 1994 at the request of the President of Subaru of America to meet a rapidly expanding segment of the market. It was manufactured for the export market and not sold in Japan, a small number of countries had CKD kit (Completely Knocked Down) assembly plants including New Zealand where it was situated at Waitara in Taranaki, for the Australian market it was rebadged as the 'Brumby' which is the name for a wild or unbroken horse. The stylish 'Sooby' has a distinctive side profile similar to the iconic Chevrolet El Camino, for twenty years a BRAT was used by the 40th American President Ronald Reagan at his Californian ranch - it was also the first car owned by MCC member Bryce Hogg.

Over a long period Subarus have been popular race and rally cars in this country with the Leone, Legacy and Impreza models, but local RS Cup racer Andrew Manderson has created the world's most unique Subaru competition vehicle that's the end result of a five-year project.

The 194 cm (6'5") former Ubix/Jets NBL player and cycling postie who raced a Honda Integra and won the first IB Cup in 2009 has seriously thought outside the square in creating his own radical interpretation of the humble Brumby as a race car. From the outside it looks like a normal Brumby, however under the bodywork it's very different.

Its 2-litre horizontally-opposed (boxer) engine is not in the front like every other Brumby on the planet, it's positioned under the back tray behind the cab which makes the ute mid-engine, it's now rear wheel drive only and the more observant might have noticed that the driver sits in the middle like the 1966 Ferrari 365P Berlinetta Speciale, the Matra Bagheera/Muna of the late 1970's and the McLaren F1 supercar that was first produced in 1992.

The # 938 bright orange Sooby Brumby is something completely different, it's very cleverly engineered and a real credit to its creator/builder Andrew Manderson. Everyone likes to see race cars that are different, the Manderson Brumby certainly meets that criteria...



RH

MSNZ SUPER SPRINT ROUND 8

The revamped New Zealand Championship Super Series wound up with the final round raced at Hampton Downs on the 'National' 2.7-kilometre circuit over the weekend 5-7 May.

The club was well represented with members figuring strongly in several categories, the performance of Justin Allen in the Toyota 86 championship being the highlight following a welcomed return to form. With the title at stake twenty-one cars were on the grid, Justin was P2 in the second of the three practice sessions that included a frontal barrier confrontation before setting the fastest lap in qualifying by 2/10ths, seventeen drivers were within a second of the NAPA # 99 car.

The three races produced three different winners, Allen got the hole shot in the first 10 lapper and made an early break on the pack who chased him hard before the checker fell for a 0.253 second victory. Race 2 was a Reverse Top 10 in which Justin was the innocent victim in a 'hit and run' that left him stranded in a sand trap that created a Safety Car intervention, he was able to continue with the car 'crabbing' sideways but finished in last place a lap down. Over the next three and hours the rear sub-frame was removed, stripped down, straightened, reassembled and refitted, the work completed with barely 10 minutes to spare!

The 14 lap Race 3 was the title decider with Brock Gilchrist only having the finish to win, in a dramatic incident he was spun at Turn 3 and in last place, Justin had started P7 and worked his way forward to third which he held to the line, 1.86 behind the winner while Gilchrist finished 17th to claim the championship by 11 points. In the overall standings Justin Allen placed 4th overall with eight podium results and a pole which he converted to the top step of the podium.



The biggest field (36 cars) was in the Nexen Tyres Mazda Series with only four MX5's on this occasion and the remainder of the grid comprising RX7s and RX8s. Qualifying saw Markku Braid head Dean Evans by 3/10ths followed by Dom Fransen and Shayne Hayter. Braid was hit by an errant RX7 in Race 1 which dropped him back, Evans taking the win over Fransen by 9/10ths with Hayter 3rd. Race 2 was the longer 10 lapper with the MX5 finishing order Evans, Fransen and Braid with Hayter a lap down, while the final 8 lapper was a cracker with Evans and Braid locking horns in an intense battle. Often side-by-side through corners and the 'lead' changing continually, Braid led out of the final corner for the uphill drag to the flag, but Evans drew alongside on the line to win by 5/100ths while Fransen bettered Hayter for P3 - it was one of the best duels of the day and closest finishes of the weekend.

Geoff Spencer took his place on the 12 strong grid for the RYCO 24/7 V8 Utes where he qualified 6th fastest but only 0.96 off the pole time. In-form driver Jake Stoneman won all three races with Geoff's meeting ending with two P6s followed by 11th in Race 3 in the highly competitive category.

In GTRNZ GT1/GT2 Josh Smith was 4.9 seconds off the fastest lap in qualifying which was 12th quickest before scoring three Top 10 results, 6th and 10th before rounding out the meeting with a deserved third in Race 3.



Waka Nathan Harris was doubled entered at the meeting but after qualifying 13th in the 16 car Super NZ V8s he non-started to concentrate on the TradeZone GTRNZ GT3/GT4 races where he was more competitive. Sean Browne was 2nd fastest in qualifying (+ 0.13), Harris P6 (+ 0.83) and Bayley Walker P12, both Jamie Potts and Ryan Jury broke out with times in the 1.11s. Browne and Potts were DNF's in Race 1, the 8 laps ending with Jury 11th, Harris 19th and three places ahead of Walker, Race 2 brought little joy with Browne's P14 the highest placing and Harris, Potts and Jury making it into the top 20 finishes with Walker P22. Race 3 ended with four cars in the Top 10 and Jury a DNF after completing a single lap, it was Potts and Walker who shared the spotlight with an epic race for the win, V8 power against Walker's turbocharged four cylinder Corolla, the cars being very evenly matched on the smaller circuit where each had their strengths, there were frequent lead changes, often door to door through the corners with the run up the hill to the line the decisive factor on the final lap. Pott's V8 Trueno edged ahead to take the flag with a half second advantage over a gallant Walker, Harris was 5th over the line two positions ahead of Browne who made a great recovery after spinning at Turn 1 on the opening lap, possibly distracted by a television interview on the grid!

The review of the inaugural MSNZ Super Sprint Championship Series under a new promoter will make interesting reading. It was innovative with a greater number of categories that included D1NZ drifting and GTNZ at the major rounds. Competitor numbers were very good. The quality of the racing varied. The trophies were presented on a flashy podium out of the sight of the spectators. The racing was televised including on Sunday's free-to-air CRC Motorsport programme. Hawkes Bay-based Australian commentator Greg Rust was a breath of fresh air. The sponsorships of Valvoline and Repco brought colour. The volunteer workers had some extremely long days. The worrying question at each circuit was - where were the spectators...

RH

HARTLEY FILE

The 2023 edition of the FIA World Endurance Championship began at the historic WWII airfield circuit in Florida between 14-18 March with the 1000 miles of Sebring on the 6-kilometre circuit with two long straights and 17 turns and a rough, bumpy surface, the result of being a former WWII airfield.

The premier Hypercar category expanded with newcomers Ferrari, Cadillac, Porsche and Vanwall (formerly ByKolles) joining Toyota and Glickenhaus to make up an 11-car field- Brendon Hartley, Ryo Hirakawa, Sébastien Buemi and Toyota Gazoo Racing being the defending champions.

In the practice sessions the two Toyotas topped the sheets with Hirakawa and Brendon fastest in the Day 1 sessions before Kamui Kobayashi in the sister # 7 car clocked a 1.45.783 lap to pip Brendon by 6/10ths before the Day 2 session was red flagged with 6 minutes remaining, third quickest was one of the impressive Ferrari 499P's that was under a second off Kobayashi's time - *"It was another smooth day with different track conditions compared to the earlier Prologue, a loss of track temperature and a change of wind. I think things worked well for us, we are working on the details trying to fine tune everything, not making big set-up changes"*.

Unlike previous seasons pre-heating the tyres are no longer allowed, meaning drivers had to run a series of laps until the tyres reach optimum temperature for the final part of the 15-minute qualifying session. Brendon headed the sheet with a 1.45.281 flyer that was nearly 3/10ths faster than Kobayashi's best but in the closing minutes of the session Antonio Fuoco in the # 50 Ferrari bumped Brendon from the top spot with a stunning 1.45.067, more than 2/10ths of a second quicker. Brendon's response was slower than his previous run, Ferrari had achieved pole position on its Hypercar debut which marked the famous factory's official return to endurance racing after a 50-year break - *There was a lot of anticipation before qualifying. My heart was beating, and I had the same sensations like before Hyperpole at Le Mans. There are a lot of places on the track where you can make a mistake, and the sun was coming down too, so it was tricky. We wanted to start on the front row, and it was almost the perfect job"*.



The front two rows were shared between Ferrari and Toyota, row 3 had the Cadillac V-Series.R with Earl Bamber on the driver roster alongside a Porsche 963. From pole position the Ferrari led Buemi in the # 8 Toyota GR010 until the first Safety Car intervention after only 5 laps, Fuoco pitted for a fuel top up before being handed a drive-through penalty for an incorrect restart when the race went green which cost both time and track position. After two hours of racing the Toyotas were running 1-2 with a Porsche 963 in P3 ahead of the Cadillac, for the leaders there were positional changes as pit stops and different strategies came into play. In Hour 4 the leading # 7 pitted under green before Brendon pitted under a Full Course Yellow to clear debris on the track, but as the # 8 car entered pit lane it was closed forcing him to take an emergency splash of fuel and return for a second time when the race went green!

After 6 hours the Toyotas were only seconds apart and two laps ahead of the chasing pack comprising the Cadillac, # 50 Ferrari and a Porsche, with an hour to run the # 7 led by 22 seconds and the Ferrari had leapfrogged the Cadillac into P3. As the leaders ran down the clock the gap between the Toyotas came down before Mike Conway took the checker flag for Gazoo Racing Toyota's 40th WEC victory, 2.16 seconds ahead of Brendon after covering 239 laps, two more than the debutant Ferrari and Cadillac with another two laps back to the pair of Porsche Penske entries - *It's an amazing result for the whole team and I'm incredibly happy for everyone who has worked so hard for this. I'm also a bit disappointed for the # 8 car to be second because it was such a close race, and we led for so much of it. We got a bit unlucky but congratulations to the # 7 crew for the win*".

The race was relatively straightforward for Toyota who enjoyed a fuel consumption advantage and better tyre management while the other Hypercars suffered a combination of mechanical issues, incidents, penalties, lack of race pace and experience at this level with its associated technology. Their respective outcomes may have been disappointing but it was a generally positive start.



Four weeks after Sebring, Round 2 was the 6 Hours of Portimao in Portugal, the Algarve International Circuit was a shorter 4.6 kilometre smooth surface undulating track with one straight and 15 turns - very different to Sebring.

Practice was very similar to Sebring with the two Toyotas swapping lap times in each session as set-up changes were made, qualifying was a familiar shoot-out between Brendon and Kamui Kobayashi in the # 7 car. The pair traded times before Brendon clocked a 1.30.171 to set a new Hypercar lap record, 0.273 seconds ahead of the team boss to complete a Toyota front row, Ferrari locked out the second row ahead of a Penske Porsche and a Peugeot while the Cadillac shared by Earl Bamber started from P8.

Sébastien Buemi started the race in the # 8 GR010 from pole but immediately dropped two positions as the sister car built up a seven second lead, but once past the Ferrari the gap quickly reduced, and the Swiss driver took the lead after 33 laps before the first round of pit stops. After eighty minutes racing the #7 Toyota was forced to pit for a rear driveshaft sensor change following an alert, both sides of the garage worked on the car with the stop taking 10 minutes which dropped the car down to 34th place and out of podium contention. At the two-hour mark Buemi had a half minute over the lead Ferrari when Ryo Hirikawa took over the # 8 car and he continued to build the lead, behind the Ferrari the Cadillac, a Porsche and a Peugeot were battling for a place on the podium.

Brendon took over the # 8 for the final two-hour stint and set a blistering pace, lapping the second placed Ferrari late in the fifth hour to establish a buffer in case of a Safety Car intervention which came with a hour to the finish. With the field bunched up the race went green after 12 minutes and Hartley was able make his final stop for fuel without losing the lead, the # 8 Toyota's trouble-free run continued to the flag ahead of the lead Ferrari and Porsche that were a lap down and separated by 65 seconds at the line. Two laps behind the podium finishers were the Cadillac and the first of the Peugeots which meant five different manufacturers filled the first five places! The # 7 Toyota finished 9th behind the Glickenhaus, seven laps behind its sister car.

For Brendon and Sébastien it was back-to-back victories in Portugal as they had won the inaugural 2021 race with Kazuki Nakajima - *"I am really happy, it's been an awesome weekend right from the start of practice. It was a great race and everything went perfectly, no mistakes by the drivers or on pit stops, we had the right strategy and the car was faultless. A massive thanks to the team, I feel proud of their great work over the first two races. We have maximised our performance using all the experience gained over the years because the competition is getting strong"*.



The result meant that Hartley, Hirikawa and Buemi lead the Driver's Championship with 53 points, 11 ahead of the # 51 Ferrari and 13 ahead of the # 7 Toyota, in the Team's Championship Toyota lead AF Corse Ferrari by 22 points with a further 12 points to Cadillac and Penske Porsche who are equal third.

Two weeks after Portugal the teams were in Belgium for the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps where the Hypercar field had increased to thirteen with a second Cadillac and the first of the Porsche 963 customer cars that was entered by Hertz Team Jota.

The three free practice sessions ended with the two Toyotas and a Ferrari topping the time sheets before qualifying saw Brendon leave the pits on unheated tyres (this year's new regulations, almost immediately the # 8 car half spun and glanced the barrier and with no time recorded would be forced to start from the rear of the field. There was also a dramatic end to the session, Kobayashi had claimed provisional pole position but in the final seconds he was pipped by a Ferrari, the Italian car was judged to have exceeded the track limits and his lap was erased, that restored the # 7 Toyota to pole position by 0.024 over the Ferrari with the other Ferrari and Bamber's Cadillac sharing the second row, the four cars covered by 0.231 over a 7 kilometre lap!

Watched by a record crowd of 72,000 spectators the race began in light rain with the Toyotas on dry tyres, the pole # 7 dropping behind cars on wet tyres while Buemi made up fifteen places on the opening lap from the back row! The combination of a timely Safety Car and the cars regaining their grip advantage saw the two GR010 Hybrids charge through the field at the restart with the # 7 going from 6th to first in little more than a lap while Buemi in the # 8 cleared the LMP2 field to sit in P4. A second Safety Car closed the cars and helped Buemi to 3rd which became 2nd when the leading Porsche suffered issues in the third hour. Taking over from Buemi, Hirakawa struggled with balance issues and was half a minute behind the sister car at the half-way mark, with just under two hours to run Brendon took the wheel for the final stint. With 45 minutes to the finish the leaders made their final stops with Brendon emerging in front of Kobayashi who retook the lead with an off-track overtake manoeuvre that incurred a five second time penalty. The clock ran down with Toyota scoring their third 1-2 of the year in three races with Kobayashi taking the flag 16.63 seconds ahead after 148 laps, the five second penalty reducing the margin to 11.63 in the official results.

"It's an amazing result for the whole team and a big recovery job from our car. Sébastien made an amazing start in tricky conditions and got through the field cleanly after the team made the right call on tyres. That was a big decision, but it was the right one. Car # 7 deserved the victory because they had a little more pace than us, particularly in the middle part of the race. We went in a different direction on set-up, I couldn't challenge Kobayashi in the final stint. We were one set of tyres down after what happened in qualifying so we can be very happy to finish second and take these points."

The opposition continues to dramatically improve with the third placed Ferrari and leading Penske Porsche on the lead lap and split by 2.9 seconds, the four cars covered by 1.17.3 at the line. A lap down in 5th and 6th were the Bamber Cadillac and privateer Hertz Jota Porsche as the Hypercar revival continues.

The Hartley/Buemi/Hirakawa combination continue to lead the Driver's Championship after three of the seven rounds, five points ahead of Conway/Lopez/Kobayashi in the # 7 car with a 24-point gap to the # 50 AF Corse Ferrari that has a two-point advantage over the Bamber Cadillac.

In the Manufacturer's Championship Toyota Gazoo Racing has extended its lead over AF Corse Ferrari to 33 points.

Next up is the 24 Hours of Le Mans on 10/11 June that marks the halfway point in the season and carries double points, Brendon and his two co-drivers will be chasing back-to-back wins in the French classic.

RH

