



Manawatu Car Club Inc
Club Bulletin
January - April '24
Edition

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PEN...



If you don't think the last four months have been busy for the MCC then read on and after you get to the 76th page of this bulletin you will be thinking what I am now thinking, and that is wow we have done a lot in the last four months!!! I think the only event that doesn't get a detailed mention in the pages that follow is the 76th AGM of the MCC that was held at the end of February '24, which if you missed it and want to read a bit about the year that was then click on the following links to read my report and the financial report, it wasn't a bad year...

Presidents Report: <https://manawatucarclub.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/AGM-23rd-February-2024-Presidents-Report-Final-Version.pdf>

Financial Report: <https://manawatucarclub.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/AGM-23rd-February-2024-Financial-Report-Final-Version.pdf>

There are many highlights over the past four months, none more so than what you will find on the last four pages of this bulletin..... if you skipped to the last four pages just now, welcome back from reading one of the best things that I have been involved in as President of this club... it was an emotional time for all of those involved and I am not shy in saying that I had a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye, and I wasn't the only one.

So Winter is nearly upon us, and we all know what that means... yep, colder and shorter days... nah who cares about the weather, it is Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series time, and what a Winter Series it is going to be! Entries are now live, but if you don't know how to enter click on the following link and this short video will show you how to enter via the new Motorsport Online process:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEJqH9BkQul>

This years Winter Series will be one an interesting one for many reasons... I won't elaborate too much on this now as I am mindful of the number of pages in this bulletin already, so all I will say is that I hope that you can come racing with us...

As you would have noticed from the last couple of bulletins, these are now coming out every 3 or 4 months now, as we have more and more events with larger fields things behind the scenes are a lot busier than usual so we just don't have the time to do a bulletin every month, I wish we did, but we are posting more and more posts on our Facebook page than ever before so that everyone is kept up to date on what is happening with the club and the events that are being run, and to help with the administration of the club Jodie Bell has stepped up to become the Club Secretary which gives Jeff Braid more time to concentrate on the events, congratulations Jodie 😊

Richie

MANCHESTER HOUSE FOOD DRIVE

On the 5th of May '24, the Manawatu Car Club carried out a Charity Food Collection around the streets of Feilding in wake of the announcement by Manchester House that they were literally out of non-perishable food items. The food drive was put together in a matter of days by MCC Committee Member Jaron Olivecrona, who with the help of several volunteers on the day, along with a few race cars and MCC branded vehicles, gather at Manchester Square and then toured around the Feilding streets collecting food donations from the Feilding Community. Given the timeframe that Jaron had to put this together, it was a roaring success, so congratulations Jaron.



As well as the mountain of food collected on the day, the MCC added a donation of \$3,000 which was raised from Charity Circuit Cruises held at our race and drift events throughout the previous year.

To keep the food coming in throughout the year, the Manawatu Car Club is asking that everyone that enters one of our events this year please bring one item on non-perishable food with you to the event so that we can pass these food items onto Manchester House so that they can continue to help those people / families that need it the most... so if you can help out please do so as you will be making a world of difference to so many people who are finding it hard in the current economic climate.



Richie



MEET THE 2024 COMMITTEE



President: Richie Arber
Mobile: 027-2900-668

president@manawatucarclub.org.nz



Vice President / Treasurer: Tim Wilde
Mobile: 027-472-9664

accounts@manawatucarclub.org.nz



Events Manager: Jeff Braid
Mobile: 027 -477-3337

info@manawatucarclub.org.nz



Club Secretary: Jodie Bell
Mobile: 027-674-2318

drift@manawatucarclub.org



Jill Hogg



Kaye Flanagan



Donna Whale



Nick Stewart



Jaron Olivecrona



Troy Brown



Greg Browne



Russell Harris
Club Advisor



Brian Davies
Club Advisor



Malcolm Glen



June

Saturday 1st – Winter Series Test Day
 Sunday 2nd – Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 1
 Sunday 16th – GT Oil / Transpec Services 4.5km Bent Sprint

July

Saturday 6th – Winter Series Test Day
 Sunday 7th – Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 2
 Saturday 13th – Drift Practice
 Sunday 14th – GT Oil / Transpec Services Open Day Round 2
 Friday 19th – Manfeild Test Day
 Sat 20th – Sun 21st – 24Minutes of Le Manfeild/Superkarts

August

Saturday 3rd – Winter Series Test Day
 Sunday 4th – Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 3
 Sunday 11th – GT Oil / Transpec Services Back Track Autocross
 Saturday 17th – Back Track Drift Tutoring

September

Saturday 7th – Winter Series Test Day
 Sunday 8th – Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Round 4
 Sunday 15th – GT Oil / Transpec Services Open Day Round 3
 Saturday 21st – Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series Prizegiving

October

Saturday 5th – Drift Practice
 Friday 18th – OctoberFast Test Day
 Sat 19th – Sun 20th – OctoberFast Race Meeting

November

Sunday 3rd – GT Oil / Transpec Services Open Day Round 4
 Fri 8th – Sun 10th – MG Classic Meeting
 Saturday 16th – ShowVember
 Sunday 17th – GT Oil / Transpec Services Back track Autocross & Motorkhana

December

Friday 6th – Manfeild Test Day

Sat 7th – Sun 8th – Mitre 10 MEGA Summer Series 24/25 Round 1



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WINTER SERIES 2024

Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon



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Manawatu Car Club

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NEW MEMBERS

Since the previous magazine the club's membership has continued to increase, attracting people from a wide region that includes the East Coast, the Central Plateau and the Kapiti Coast.

Laura Barr	Feilding
Kevin Bovey	Levin
Stuart Bovey	Levin
Joshua Clarke	Rongotea
Yoshi Comeskey	Paraparaumu
Kirsty Cooley	Porirua
Riley Cooley	Ohakune
Phillippe Guerin	Paraparaumu
Werata Kake	Gisborne
Liam Kake	Gisborne
Andrew Lowe	Bunnythorpe
Bradley Roundtree	Feilding
Gary Roundtree	Feilding
Troy Twomey	Ohakune
Kylas Twomey	Feilding
Brad Welch	Feilding



We welcome these people into the club and look forward to delivering their expectations. It's interesting to note the increase in the number of members with a specific interest in drifting, remembering that our club was possibly the first to support the discipline in this country through Japanese students at the International Pacific College who owned powerful sports cars, the sport originated in Japan.

Enjoy your time with us ...

CLUB CHAT

One of the big new-year stories is that long time club member and renowned engine builder Bryan Hartley has returned to open wheel racing following a 28-year break! Back when the premier Australasian category was Formula Holden with the 3.8 litre V6 motor, Bryan's CV reveals he contested support races at the final Australian Grand Prix meeting in Adelaide (1995) and the first at Albert Park (1996) driving a Dome F102, prior to those meetings he had finished second in the 1995 New Zealand Grand Prix at Manfeild. 2024 saw him on the grid at the Taupo round of the Super Sprint MSNZ Championship Series in the GVI Formula Open NZ races, driving a Formula Pacific Ralt RT4, the same type of car that he raced in the 1986 New Zealand International Series. With talented youngsters who have graduated from the club's summer or winter series on the grid a pair of 9ths were Hartley's best results first time out, they will improve with more wheel time and race fitness...



At Round 3 of the 2024 Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship at Hampton Downs the MCC's Kaleb Ngatoa became the first kiwi driver to win a race, beating series' leader Roman Belinski in the process. Both started from the front row of the grid, Kaleb slotting in behind the Polish driver but when Belinski locked a brake on the opening lap the lead changed with Ngatoa resisting every move as the two cars ran less than half a second apart, entering the last of 35 laps the gap was 0.268 which increased to 0.389 when they took the checker flag following a superb drive from our young man. His reward was being presented with the Dorothy Smith Memorial Trophy by the legendary Kenny himself, a trophy that has special significance to the Feilding track. Son Kenny was entered for the 2009 New Zealand Grand Prix; Dorothy took ill and was taken to Palmerston North Hospital where she passed away on the eve of the race. The 92-year-old attended all of Kenny's meetings but never watched him race, being content to wait for him in the pits. Kenny missed qualifying but to honour his biggest supporter started from the back of the grid, picking up seven places to finish 7th. Dorothy Smith, a lady who will never be forgotten and honoured in the most appropriate way...



Two weeks after the high of winning at Hampton Downs Kaleb felt the low side of the sport at Highlands Motorsport Park. In practice he was right on the pace and looking good, but in Part 2 of qualifying he glanced the wall exiting the final corner with the checker flag out to end the session. The medics took him to Queenstown hospital where the diagnosis was a broken hand which meant missing the final three races of the super competitive international series. The outcome was a loss of points and prize money after dropping from third in the overall standings to 6th equal with Hong Kong driver Gerrard Xie. It was a costly moment, no fun watching from the pits either...

Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon sported a refreshing partial new look for January's Super Sprint Championship meeting. Most obvious were the white painted concrete safety barriers with the sponsor signage upgraded, in the pit area there were areas of new bitumen replacing gravel surfaces and a more suitable Portacom building replacing the old Secretary's office. A long overdue step in the right direction but there still remains much to be done...

History was made at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon at Round 3 of the 2024 Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship meeting. Saturday's Race 1 was the 300th since the Toyota Racing Series inaugural event at the Timaru International Raceway on 08/09 March 2005 with 18 cars on the grid, Walter Grubmuller from Monaco was the only overseas entry, Fiona Hamilton the only female driver. Winding the clock back 19 years with another link to Manfeild, Brendon Hartley won the very first TRS race run on a wet track, but local Brent Collins took round honours. A week later at Teretonga Park the round winner was Chris Pither, Manfeild hosted rounds 4 and 5, Brendon winning two of the three R4 races in front of his home crowd driving the #28 GVI backed Tatuus FT-40, Collins claiming his second-round win, Andy Knight took the honours in R5 and Daniel Gaunt R6 at Pukekohe. Collins won that first series, Hartley and Pither were 4th and 5th in the standings...



At that time, 15-year-old Brendon would never have dreamed where his first association with the Toyota brand would lead to in his racing career. Fourteen years later he was signed by Toyota Gazoo Racing to drive in the FIA World Endurance Championship as a replacement for Fernando Alonso who had returned to Formula 1, the outcome has been astonishing. In the four seasons with TGR there have been two wins and two seconds in the famous Le Mans 24 Hour race, backed by two WEC World Championships and twice runner-up in the # 8 car. That's a seriously impressive record, sadly one that's overlooked in this country...

Many club members and motorsport people will remember the circuit's Operation's Manager Steve Easthope who departed in October 2021 after 17 service. In mid-2023 the Kimbolton resident was appointed Venue Facilities Manager at the Central Energy Trust Arena in Palmerston North, the city's multi-use sports and events facilities that handles something like 3,000 bookings a year. Steve controls the Arena 1 oval, four Arena

buildings, the Arena 6 artificial turf and adjacent sports grounds together with the two grandstand lounges, Arena Lounge on Level 2 and the J A Russell Supplies Lounge on Level 4 that offers a panoramic view of the city and region. That's a big step up from Manfeild...

Club member and former Aussie Supercar driver Chris Pither was back in the country with the Super Sprint Series. He had the key role of Driving Standards Observer, specifically for the Castrol Toyota Formula Region Oceania Championship. At Manfeild he was back on home turf, a circuit with good memories...

Seeing Greg Murphy at Manfeild supporting his youngest son Cormac in the Toyota 86 Championship was a reminder that the 'Boy from the Bay' began his circuit racing career at the track when he won the inaugural Shell Scholarship in 1991. The prize was a fully supported season in the National Formula Ford championship under the guidance of Richard Lester Motorsport, he placed third and his exceptional ability was acknowledged the following year with co-drives in the Nissan Mobil 500 series, sharing the Whittakers' Ford Sierra RS500 with Kayne Scott the pair finished 4th in both the Pukekohe and Wellington races. There was a stint in Formula Holden single seaters that included winning the 1994 New Zealand Grand Prix at Manfeild, two years later a LMGT2 class 2nd placing and 14th overall in the Le Mans 24 Hour race driving a New Zealand entered Porsche 911 GT2...

But it was Aussie Supercars that catapulted Murph to star status in the late 1990s and early 2000s, winning the fabled Bathurst 1000 on four occasions highlighted by the sensational 'Lap of the Gods' during qualifying for the 2003 race. His last major event was the 2021 NZ Grand Prix at Hampton Downs won by Shane Van Gisbergen; Greg finished 5th in the sixteen-car field after scoring a podium placing in the preliminary race. A remarkable career that began at Manfeild 34 years ago...



One of Australasia's rapidly rising stars is Jaxon Evans, his name linked to Manfeild through Rob and the late Wendy Lester being his grandparents and their national championship winning daughter Debbie his mother - very strong motor racing genes! The former Karter shot prominence four years ago when he competed in

Porsche Carrera Cup series in both Australia and Europe which resulted in participating in the Porsche Junior Programme Shootout, he headed eleven other young candidates to receive a 225,000 Euro scholarship which opened new doors that led to winning the 10 round Porsche Carrera Cup France series and securing drives in both the FIA World Endurance and ISMA Sports Car championships, co-drove the winning car in the inaugural Nurburgring 12 Hour race while closer to home he co-drove the second placed Porsche GT3 R in the 2020 Bathurst 12 Hour race. Two years later came a Supercar drive for Brad Jones Racing sharing a ZB Holden Commodore with Jack Smith that resulted in a DNF, last year the pair finished 21st in the new Gen 3 Chev Camaro, 2024 sees the 29-year old's career take another big step forward on two fronts. A full-time Supercar drive replacing the underperforming Smith in the # 12 SCT Logistics car alongside Andre Heimgartner at BJR and the more recent announcement of securing a top seat for the seven round Fanatec GT World Challenge Australia Powered by AWS series. Evans and Chaz Mostert are driving new factory supported Ferrari 296 GT3s for West Australian based Arise Racing GT in the ProAm category, the two professionals being joined by highly regarded bronze co-drivers Elliott Schutte and Liam Talbot - "I'm pretty pumped to get behind the wheel of a Ferrari 296 GT3 car at some of the best circuits in the country. The car is a work of art and has already achieved big results in European and American competition. Everyone is a Ferrari fan, even if they say they're not." In the opening round at Phillip Island on 12-14 April the Ferrari's qualified 1-2 and were 1-2 in Race 1, split by 1.6 seconds with Mostert in front, Race 2 saw the pair cross the line P4 and P7, Round 2 is the end of May at Sydney Motorsport Park. Like Brendon Hartley, Jaxon Evans doesn't get the media coverage and recognition he deserves in his country of birth...



Mentioning the Land of Oz, Feilding Flyer Kevin Ingram winged his way to Melbourne to compete at the VHRR Phillip Island Classic Festival over the weekend 8-10 March, the meeting doubling as the 4th and final round of the 2023/24 SAS Autoparts MSC NZ F5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series. PI is the largest historic motorsport event in the Southern Hemisphere, the weekend had six F5000 races scheduled. Kevin's Viceroy Lola T332 was one of ten kiwi cars in the 21 strong entry list, unfortunately during the practice sessions the car was plagued with fuel issues before being withdrawn from the meeting with lost oil pressure. In Australia several categories use elf Race 102 fuel that is rated greater than 102 octane, it appears that the French elf fuel can 'melt' seals which in Kevin's case allowed too much fuel into the oil system with a resultant loss of oil pressure. It must have been very disappointing being reduced to a spectating role but he was able to share the excitement from the 'other side of the barriers' with wife Helen, albeit in temperatures as high as 39 degrees...

For the ANZAC Formula 5000 drivers it was a hectic three days with three practice sessions and qualifying before the first of the six races that were mainly over five laps of the 4.445-kilometre circuit, the winner of the inaugural Phillip Island Historic Grand Prix receiving the Kevin Bartlett Trophy. Bartlett won the Australian Drivers Championship twice and shared a Ford XA Falcon GT with John Goss to win the 1974 James Hardie 1000 at Bathurst co-driving a Ford XA Falcon with John Goss, though probably better remembered for inverting the Channel Nine Chevrolet Camaro Z28 at Reid Park in the 1982 race!

Young Auckland driver Codie Banks was the individual star in a Lola T332, winning all five races, one was red flagged and cancelled following a first lap incident involving F5000's and a car from another category. For the 8 lap Feature race the grid was reduced to 12 cars, Banks taking the flag 1.7 seconds ahead of three Victorian drivers and fellow countryman Grant Clearwater, he was presented with the trophy by 'KB' himself, also receiving the Jack Brabham Driver of the Meeting Award - as good as a weekend gets...

The Lola T332 that Banks drove has very close links to Manfeild through three top Australian drivers who raced at the circuit following the opening in October 1973. Stories suggest that chassis HU16 wasn't factory built but Kevin Bartlett's team constructed the car from parts, running in Chesterfield cigarette colours on both sides of Tasman. The next owner was Queenslander Bruce Allison followed by Adelaide's Johnnie Walker, all three raced at the Feilding track together with Max Stewart, Warwick Brown, Paul Bernosconi and other top line Australians during that 'golden era'. Walker was the first driver to break the 100 mile an hour lap average barrier, today the Banks Lola T332 carries the Magnum Wheels livery that appeared on his car from 1976 to remind us of those 'Gods of Thunder' days...



What's in a name? The rejuvenation of open-wheel racing with the GVI Formula Open New Zealand Series raises a question over the name that was originally known as Formula Atlantic in North America back in 1974, two years later category came under the ISMA umbrella. In 1976 the motor racing countries in the Pacific Basin created its own category based on Formula Atlantic but named Formula Pacific with the first race held in New Zealand in January 1977, remaining our premier single-seat class until 1983, replaced by Formula 5000. In an attempt to create a truly global category the world governing FIA introduced Formula Mondial to replace both the Atlantic and Pacific names, the regulations stipulated a flat bottom chassis, and no ground effect designs, engines had to be 1.6 litre four-cylinder units sourced from a production touring car but only the Ford Cosworth BDA was homologated. The FIA intended to stage a World Cup final following Zone Series in 1983, the Southern Pacific Zone series in Australia and New Zealand was won by Charlie O'Brien, the North American by Michael Andretti, however the final that was to be held in Quebec over four races was cancelled the month

before it was due to be run. Formula Mondial was only embraced by New Zealand, Australia, Canada and America, being dropped as an International Formula at the end of 1984...

Fact or fiction? Regarding the categories name in this country, the older generation will recall that Atlantic was a popular brand of petrol at that time, the Shell company who were heavily committed to our motorsport weren't happy with the exposure Atlantic were receiving with the name used in all forms of media including the television coverage of the races. The NZ Courts ruled in favour of Shell and the name was changed to Formula Pacific. Another twist in the story...

After witnessing the GT cars racing on the Feilding track during the Super Sprint Series the thought of Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon hosting the grand final of the 2024 Golden Homes North Island Endurance Championship was an exciting prospect. Unfortunately, it appears that the circuit had no additional dates available involving the 95 Decibel noise limit. Manfeild's loss is Hampton Downs gain, the Waikato track will host Round 1 on 04 May and now Round 3 on 15 June, in between Taupo hosts Round 2 on 25 May for a Tony Quinn trifecta, another ouch for lower North Island race fans. The club's evergreen Brian Green has entered the One -Hour races, driving a McLaren 570S...



Has Dennis Martin discovered another star in his galaxy? Jackson Culver from North Canterbury is the latest name to emerge from the Sabre Motorsport Formula First school at Manfeild with a full national championship season his reward. Another karting graduate, early races suggest that the twelve-year-old could be on the path to following in the footsteps of previous graduates. Former national champion Dennis Martin is the Formula Vee/First magician judging by the number of top young drivers he's pulled out of his hat, no bunnies...



Formula Ford has been in existence for a remarkable 57 years, the story actually began in 1963 when the Motor Racing Stables in England were conducting driving schools using Lotus Formula Junior chassis fitted with standard 'Kent' motors used in the Ford Anglia 105E. In December 1966 MRS displayed their car at a major motor show, such was the interest that Ford agreed to provide MRS with fifty-four later model Cortina GT motors at a discounted price of 50 pounds each. The following year Ford itself announced the new class which led to the first stand-alone Formula Ford race being staged on 2nd July 1967 at the Brands Hatch Circuit, Belgium being the first country outside the UK to adopt the category.

Formula Ford was introduced to Australia as a National Series in 1970 a year earlier than New Zealand, in 1972 David Oxtan won the inaugural New Zealand title, subsequent winners include three MCC members, Kevin Ingram (1982/83), Shane Higgins (1986/87) and Sam McNeill (2006/07). Internationally Formula Ford has been an important stepping stone in open wheel racing, its simple tubular chassis has stood the test of time but could that be about to change. Motorsport Australia has established a working group to evaluate modernising the current basic design to create a tubular frame car with improved safety features for future generations while retaining the features of low grip and low aero - halo, front/rear/side crash structures, extractable seat, driver headrest, side pods and wheel tethers. Racing would be a three-class structure to retain the older 'Kent' engine, current and proposed new Duratec powered cars until at least 2028, now we await the reaction of present-day care owners and drivers from around the world to the Aussie thinking. Perhaps it's an appropriate time to remember Henry Ford's famous quote "if it ain't broke don't fix it" ...

The club's fastest lady has turned heads on both sides of the Atlantic. Last year Rianna O'Meara-Hunt created history racing for 'Heart of Racing' in the United States, combining with Hannah Grisham to be the first female pairing to win in the Pirelli GT4 America with double victories in the final round on the Road Course at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, after receiving their trophies and spraying the bubbly both ladies kissed the famous bricks marking the start/finish line. Her 2024 campaign began driving a BMW M4 GT4 at Portimao (two wins) and contesting the Dubai 24 Hour Series before being selected for the Aston Martin Racing Elite Driver Academy and a drive in the GT Cup Championship series partnered by Scotland's Jodie Sloss in an Aston Martin Vantage GT4. In April's debut outing at Donington Park they podiumed in three of the four sprint races in the GTH category before finishing fourth overall in the Endurance race after post-race penalties were applied, round 2 is at Brands Hatch on 18/19 May. The target for both 22-year-olds is racing in this year's Le Mans 24 Hour, could Rianna become the first NZ woman to compete in the French classic...



Success comes from a combination of natural talent and commitment, in many instances full parental support plays a vital role. Rookie Jackson Culver has burst onto the Formula First scene and made people sit and take notice, he doesn't come from a big town or city. The Culvers live at Loburn, 50 kilometres north of Christchurch in the North Canterbury foothills, a small rural community with no shops, it does have a school, a cheese factory and orchards. No distractions...

RH

THE CHECKER FALLS

March saw the passing of two people who had strong links to Manfeild for very different reasons.

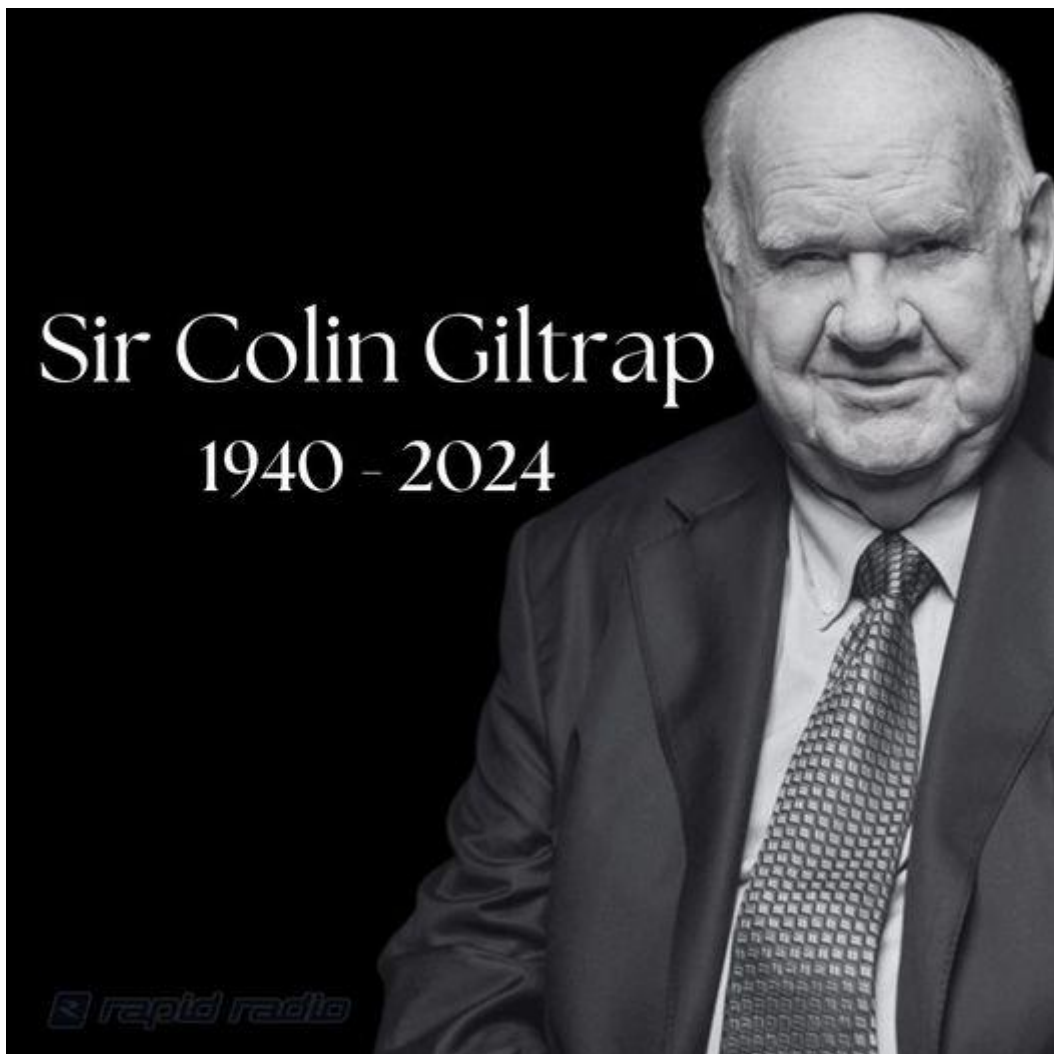
Popular Feilding driver Bill Robson died on 08 March. The 77-year-old was one of racing's characters who was extremely competitive driving his light blue 1964 Austin Seven with #56 on the doors in the Super Mini Challenge and similar classes. Both Bill and the car were familiar sights on the North Island circuits, his commitment was shown when he travelled to Levels Raceway near Timaru for the Southern Classic meeting in February 2020 that celebrated the Mini 60th and OSCA 50th Anniversaries. At Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon he was a regular on the grid for the Pre 65/Mini Challenge races where the 1380CC 'brick' was a front runner in the Miglia group and often embarrassed the 'big boys' in the David versus Goliath battles that the popular category produced so many times - Bill Robson proved so many times that age is just a number and not a barrier on a racetrack...



Caryll Clausen MBE JP was the first Mayor following the formation of the Manawatu District Council from the previous Feilding Borough Council, serving from November 1989 through to October 1995. Caryll was a great supporter of the Manfeild Autocourse, highlighted by sharing the ceremonial ribbon cutting to open the 1.5 kilometre 'back track' extension with Dan Higgins on 17 December 1993 which made the Feilding track the

longest permanent circuit in the Southern Hemisphere. Caryll had an ebullient personality, very much a people's person she passed away on 19 March at 92 years of age...

In April the country lost one of its most influential business leaders when Sir Colin Giltrap passed away at the age of 84. His influence on our motor industry over a period approaching seventy years is immense, a story that began in the 1960s when he co-founded Monaco Motors in Hamilton's Victoria Street. Today the family owned Giltrap Group leads the statistics in terms of franchises and sales, brands that range from Mazda, Nissan and Toyota to Audi, BMW and Jaguar to Rolls-Royce, and Bentley, in the high-performance market Aston Martin, Lotus, Porsche, Maserati, Lamborghini and McLaren. Dealerships extend from both sides of 'The Bridge' with a specialist Service Centre on the outskirts of Christchurch. He stepped down as Group Chairman in May last year, sons Michael and Richard Giltrap now share the responsibility of running an organisation with more than 1,000 employees. Often overlooked is his contribution to New Zealand motorsport, in particular the A1 Grand Prix (A1GP) international single seater series. The concept of A1GP was drivers representing their country in identical cars at events around the globe using a Lola chassis/Zytek engine combination from 2005/06 to 2008/009 when a new car based on a Ferrari F1 chassis with Ferrari V8 engine was introduced to increase the profile. A1 Team New Zealand was formed and owned by Colin Giltrap, the car known as 'Black Beauty' with the driver roster including Earl Bamber, Chris van der Drift, Jonny Reid and Matt Halliday, Taupo was the host circuit in this country, A1Team NZ were serious challengers with a best result of runner-up to Germany in the 2006/07 series. Better known are the Giltrap Group sponsorships assisting the careers of individual drivers including our own Brendon Hartley, it's another ongoing success story.



By way of diversification, the Giltrap name was closely linked with bringing legendary golfer Tiger Woods to this country to play in the 2002 New Zealand Open at Paraparaumu. In 2012, Colin Giltrap was made a Knight Companion of the Order of New Zealand for his services to motorsport and his philanthropy, he and Lady Jennifer having contributed to many sporting events and charities including the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal, the Starship Foundation, New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation, SPCA and Coastguard Northern Region.

Wealthy, remarkably humble, unassuming and generous, despite his title and community standing Sir Colin preferred to be addressed as 'Colin' in a conversation or a phone call. In our region his profile has been relatively low, there has been a suggestion that he once raced a Porsche at an Ohakea 'Wings & Wheels' meeting, more definite is that he is the biggest single donor towards the planned bronze statue in Bulls honouring Chris Amon.

A statement from Giltrap Group read "Sir Colin was a keen family and businessman, with an all-consuming life-long passion for cars. He is well known for building enduring relationships, valuing people and for contributing to the automotive industry and in the world of motorsport which is legendary".

The car in the photograph has special significance, an extremely rare 1965 Porsche 365A Carrera hardtop that was the company's high-performance road car at that time, its complex 2-litre quad-cam flat-four engine developed 130 horsepower that gave the car a 198 km/h (123 mph) top speed.

Club Secretary Jeff Braid recalls seeing the car in Hastings when he was a teenager, in January 2018 Sir Colin had the Porsche shipped to Waiheke Island for Brendon and Sarah Hartley's wedding car. So appropriate...

RH



CLUB MEMBERS GO RACING

Our people were among the 84 drivers who competed in Round 2 of the Super Sprint New Zealand Championships over the weekend 19-21 January at the Taupo International Circuit, running in six of the seven categories that included the opening round of the Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship.

An impressive seventeen car grid assembled for the CTFROC single seaters where Kaleb Ngatoa was right on the early pace with P2, P9 and P3 in the practice sessions followed by P5 in qualifying, the time sheet headed by his Giles Motorsport teammate, young Australian Christian Mansell. Kaleb's weekend started well with 4th place in Race 1, he finished Race 2 a lap down in 14th but recovered strongly to claim 7th in the 25 lap Feature. Those results placed him 7th on the points table heading to his home circuit for Round 2.

Kevin Ingram was one of ten Formula 5000 drivers with their eyes fixed on the Historic Grand Prix Trophy awarded to the winner of the feature race. Ingram and Dunedin's Steve Ross dominated the 10 lapper in an epic duel, the southerner taking the checker by 8/10ths of a second, third placed Tony Galbraith was more than half a minute behind the pair. Ross made a clean sweep of the weekend's three races, heading the Feilding flyer by 1.9 seconds in Race 1 while in the Handicap he crossed the line 2.8 seconds ahead of Codie Banks, Ingram was P4 8½ seconds behind the winner. Incidentally, the SAS Autoparts MSC NZ F5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series no longer carries overall points, each round is run on an individual basis.



Waka Nathan Harris was the club's only entry in the Holden All-Comers class, amongst the ten starters was young Australian Porsche hot shot Harri Jones. Waka's weekend began with 7th in Race 1 followed by 8th in Race 2 before finishing on a high with 3rd in Race 3. Brady Wild (remember him?) won three from three despite coping time penalties for a false start and exceeding track limits, Jones was his only challenger.

The hard luck story belonged to Jonathan Hogg. A transponder failure meant there was no qualifying time recorded which resulted in starting from the back of the 27- car grid in the first Historic Saloon, Sports and GT

race and forking out \$105 for a replacement unit! Race 1 saw Jonathan overtake seven cars to place 20th, Race 2 ended after 5 of the 6 laps with a front suspension problem which required engineering skills to repair, Angus Fogg offered help, a welder was found, a trip into town for a welding mask, Foggy went to work, problem fixed. Team Hogg and the BMW 'Batmobile' were rewarded with 9th place in Race 3, a good way to end the weekend. Tony Bromley and his familiar green BMW 2002 were also in the field, after qualifying P12 there was a DNF, Race 2 produced P10 before finishing with P7 in Race 3.

From the club's perspective, one of Taupo highlights was the number of youngsters competing in GVI Formula Open NZ who had graduated from the MCC Winter Series via Formula First and Formula Ford, Brody McConkey, Dylan Grant, Hayden Bakkerus, Toby McCormack, Zach Christensen and Ethan Sillay. They were all super competitive, Grant winning the opening race and Bakkerus the following two. As a bonus it gave each of them a taste of what the country's premier open wheel racing was like over the past forty years...

Round 3 took place at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon a week later with only four classes scheduled to race - Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania (CTFROC), Toyota 86 and Summerset GT championships plus the Super V8 Race Series, only 12 races over the two days involving 82 competitors.

In the CTFROC Kaleb Ngatoa was expected to shine on his home circuit, 5th and 4th in the two Qualifying sessions confirmed he was on the pace and just 4/10ths slower than series leader Roman Belinski from Poland and classy Australian Christian Mansell. The opening two races were 22 lappers, the first being the 300th TRS race with the finishing order Belinski, Mansell and Liam Sceats with Kaleb P4, 10 seconds behind the winner. The second was a full-on gun fight between Mansell and Ngatoa after Belinski drifted back to last place with electrical issues, as hard as Kaleb pushed, he couldn't find a way past and had to settle for second place, 0.686 behind in a 1-2 result for Giles Motorsport.

Race 3 for the prestigious Dan Higgins Trophy was to be over 27 laps but nature intervened, heavy rain bringing out the red flag on lap 23 and the race finishing behind the Safety Car with Belinski ahead of Mansell and Sceats, after starting P4 Ngatoa dropped a place to finish 5th. The points table showed Belinski leading with 158, Mansell on 135, Sceats 127 and Ngatoa 108 with three rounds to run.



Three races, three winners were the talking points in the Toyota 86 Championship, three Australians (Alice Buckley, Summer Rintoule, Lochie Bloxsom) boosting the entry to 23 cars that included four female drivers, the two visitors, Christina Orr-West and Breanna Morris. Two members enjoyed racing in front of the home crowd, Justin Allen and rookie Jackson Rooney who posted the 8th and 4th fastest times respectively in qualifying. Race 1 had a tight finish, John Penny winning with Rooney P3 only 0.624 behind and first six cars over the line covered by 3.6 seconds, Allen placed 9th 6.8 behind the winner.

Allen's big moment came in the Reverse Top 10 Race 2 where he shared the front row with Bloxsom, the #99 NAPA car led from lights out to take the checker more than three seconds ahead of the chasing pack led by Hunter Robb and Rooney, two members on the podium was a great result. Robb improved one place to win Race 3 from points leader Tom Bewley with Allen claiming 3rd, 6/10ths ahead of Rooney in P4. Best of the Aussie drivers was Alice Buckley, after qualifying P12 she had race placings of 12, 3, 3. At the end of the weekend the overall standings showed Bewley sitting on 217, 37 points ahead of Robb, Rooney 5th on the table with 141, two places and 23 points ahead of Allen.



The Super V8 Race Series races were confusing with four classes running together! Just the one member participating, Waka Nathan Harris in his Holden Commodore Super Tourer who was up against the brutal Trans Ams, the new TA2 category cars and ten V8 Utes that completed the 25 strong field. Qualifying clearly showed the lap time variance, pole sitter Kerry Jones clocked a 1.04.692, the best V8 Ute lap was NZ1 Brad Kroef's 1.19.748, a difference of fractionally more than 15 seconds. The time sheet showed Waka 14th quickest, 10.98 slower than Jones' time, it wasn't to be his weekend. After placing 15th in Race 1 more than 70 seconds behind winner Grant Brennan, the Holden retired to the infield on the third lap of Race 2 for a DNF that resulted in a Race 3 DNS. Kerry Jones won both Sunday races, the V8 Utes had their own door to door battles, but all were lapped in each race, the slower ones nearly twice in a serious miss-match.

The other category was the Summerfield GT Championship, the first appearance of these cars at the Feilding circuit with the 16-car grid comprising the names of Porsche, McLaren, BMW and AMG Mercedes-Benz. Brian

Green was the club's sole representative, returning to the track where he won the very first race in October 1973, on this occasion driving a McLaren 570 S GT4 instead of a V8- engined Holden Torana XU-1. Brian opted to bypass Race 1 of one hour duration in which winner Clay Osborne completed 51 laps but ran both Sunday races, finishing P12 in Race 2 over 20 laps and P11 in Race 3 that ran for 30 minutes, Rick Armstrong winning and covering 24 laps on a wet track. Greenie still has plenty of competitive spirit left in his tank...

The Sprint Series moved from Feilding back up north to Hampton Downs for Round 4 a week later where Kaleb Ngatoa, Chris Symon and Josh Smith starred, and Cooper Cooley secured three podium finishes. Saturday's wet conditions were a challenge, Kaleb qualified P6 with point's leader Bilinski P14, nearly five seconds off the pace. The Polish star had a reversal of form to win Race 1 while Ngatoa placed 15th, one of five drivers a lap down. Race 2 ended with the Alpine Academy driver Nicola Lacorte claiming his first win, Bilinski placed 4th and Ngatoa 7th, 7.04 behind the Frenchman. The Feature 23 lapper was the weekend's highlight, Bilinski and Ngatoa started from the front row, the Pole got the jump but a brake lock-up at Turn 3 gave the Marton driver an opportunity, once in front Ngatoa had to use all his experience to retain the lead, the pair never more than a few tenths apart with Bilinski trying everything he knew to find a way past, the inspired Ngatoa took the flag 4/10ths ahead to be the first New Zealander to win a race in the 2024 series. The meeting brought important changes in the standings, Kaleb leapfrogging to 3rd, 33 points behind fellow kiwi Sceats and 83 behind runaway leader Bilinski.



Meanwhile Chris Symon continued his extraordinary run of Formula First championship race wins, bagging another three, though he was pushed very hard in the final race by Liam Nicholson who was only 0.112 behind as they crossed the line. It asks the question - can the Newbury School Principal be beaten?

Josh Smith out-qualified 17 other runners in the GTRNZ Group 1&2 by 4½ seconds but the winning margins in the first two races were much closer than predicted, 0.604 and 0.456 respectively, there was no hat trick thanks to a DNS in Race 3. GTRNZ 3/4 had a massive entry of forty cars that included two members, Cooper Cooley and Waka Nathan Harris who qualified 5th and 6th, though more than 2½ seconds off the pace. Cooley was on the P3 step of the podium in all three races while Waka had a mixed weekend. A DNF in Race 1 was followed by a 10th after receiving a 10 second breakout penalty under the handicapping rules (one of eleven drivers who infringed), his meeting finished on a better note with 5th place in Race 3.

Fast lady Rianna O'Meara-Hunt returned to her roots by competing in the Super Karts that run five spaced classes in each race to accommodate the 42 competitors. With both running Rotax Lights, Rianna (L1) duelled with Tyler Edney (L2) all weekend with honours shared.

Six categories in all (no members in the Pirelli Porsche Championship) raced in variable weather conditions, a wet track can be a great leveller...

From the Waikato there was the long trip down SH1 to the Euromarque Motorsport Park (Ruapuna) on the outskirts of Christchurch where a new addition to the programme was the Trans-Tasman TA2 Challenge. Eight Australian teams crossed 'The Ditch' for the two round series headed by Nathan Herne, at stake the Jason Richards Memorial Trophy.



Two American drivers had arrived to contest the last two rounds of the CTFROC series, Jacob Abel who placed 3rd last year and Indy NXT racer Bryce Aron, the weekend producing three different winners, two standing on the top step of the podium for the first time. Kaleb Ngatoa had been second quickest in two of the three practice sessions by 100ths of a second before falling to P4 in qualifying behind Bilinski, Sceats and Abel, 0.479 off the pole time. The Race 1 result followed the qualifying form, Bilinski and Sceats were split by 6/100ths after the 20 laps with a 3½ second gap to Abel and a further 8/10ths to Ngatoa. With Race 2 a Reverse Top 8 it was a new ball game, victory went to South Korean Michael Shin who was 12.7 seconds ahead of Gerrard Xie when he crossed the line with Canadian Patrick Woods-Toth a further second back, from P8 on the grid Bilinski worked his way through to 4th at the flag with Kaleb close behind.

The feature race for the historic Lady Wigram Trophy had Ngatoa starting from Row 5, Bilinski and Sceats shared the front row, behind them Aron and Wood-Toth. Ngatoa's hopes were dealt a blow on the opening lap when he went wide on a corner and fell to near the back of the pack, he recovered to finish 10th, 25 seconds behind the winner. Sceats had got the jump at the start and resisted every Belinski move to win by 1.18 seconds with another six to Wood-Toth who had Aron for close company - heading into the final round Bilinski led Sceats by 54 points with 90 available, despite the lowly Race 3 result Kaleb retained P3 in the standings 40 points behind Sceats and 21 ahead of Wood-Toth.

Additional South Island drivers joined the Toyota 86 grid for the final two rounds of the Speed Sprint Series, most notable was the well performed Jaden Ransley. Both our members qualified in the top six with Exton setting the pace, Allen was 2nd quickest and Rooney P6. Race 1 ended with Robb scoring maximum points by 2/10ths from Exton and Allen who was 1.3 behind the winner, Rooney crossed the line in 6th place.

Race 2 was Reverse Top 10 that saw our rookie suffer the scars of close racing, on lap 3 Rooney's car took hits that forced his retirement with rear damage. Meanwhile Ransley was the big mover, going from 9th to 3rd to take the checker behind Bewley and Exton, Allen rounded out the top six. The finish of Race 3 involved the first three from the previous race but in a different order, Exton winning from Ransley and Bewley while Allen and Rooney crossed the line 6th and 7th.

Brian Green took the McLaren 570S south for two more outings in the GTNZ Championship, Rick Armstrong in his Porsche has been the man to beat but on his home track he placed first in only one of the three races. The seven GT4 spec cars were 5 to 8 seconds slower than Armstrong's pole time, Brock Gilchrist in a McLaren was quickest while the lap times suggested Brian would have great battles with Tony Quinn. Race 1 was of one hour duration that included a compulsory pit stop, Quinn and Greene finished 2 laps behind Armstrong in 12th and 13th respectively split by 2.9 seconds, Gilchrist had placed 9th. Race 2 over 21 laps ended with the same finishing order but this time the trio were in single file 13th to 15th, one lap behind winner Paul Pedersen. Race 3 over 30 minutes saw Luke Manson take the checker, further down the field the round finish on a high for Green when he led Gilchrist and Quinn across the line, again in places 13 to 15 following a close encounter that ended with the three cars covered by 0.757.



There was great anticipation surrounding the TA2 Trans-Tasman Challenge, the Australian's having the benefit of significantly more experience with these cars, in particular Nathan Herne who twice won their national championship and also raced in the United States. Not surprisingly Herne topped the qualifying time sheet but only by 0.066 from NZ's Ben Stewart, Aussies Graham Cheney and Mark Crutcher would form Row 2 of the grid ahead of Brent Collins (NZ + 1.47) and Brad Gartner - the signs were ominous!

Race 1 over 10 laps proved to be the TA2's best of the weekend as Herne was fully extended by 18-year-old Stewart in a brilliant duel that ended with the Aussie ahead by 0.623 when they took the flag, there was a 10 second gap to Cheney with Collins P4. That result led to great expectation for Race 2 but the challenge to Herne ended on lap 4 when Stewart had a severe kerb strike that resulted in a broken rear axle, allowing Australia to claim all three podium places with Herne finishing 18 seconds ahead of Chaney and Gartner followed by Collins and NZ captain Peter Ward. Race 3 over 20 laps was more of the same with an Aussie 1-2-3-4, Herne heading Cheney by almost half a minute with Gartner and Crutcher completing the rout, Ward was 5th home 52.6 seconds behind Herne's Dodge Challenger. The visitors left Ruapuna with a new TA2 track record (Herne) and leading the points 179-134 heading to Round 2 in Central Otago.

Round 6 of the Sprint Series at Highlands Motorsport Park saw circuit owner Tony Quinn fly his grandson Ryder over from Australia for the final and deciding round to give him a start in the 68th New Zealand Grand Prix. The meeting had five categories attracting 99 entries on the schedule with our club represented in three with four drivers. Day 1 (Friday) was devoted to practice sessions, three for each class with the TA2 Trans Am having an additional fourth.



In CTRFOC Abel and Ngatoa topped the FP1 times split by 0.029, Quinn was 10th quickest (+.659) with Bilinski a lowly 17th, FP2 ended with Wood Toth 0.1799 ahead of Hedge followed by Quinn, Ngatoa and Belinski, the latter 3/10ths off the pace. FP3 ended with Hedge and Xie at the top of the time sheet, Bilinski improved to P3 with Ngatoa two places back at + 0.484.

For the first time in the series F1/Supercar qualifying was used with three stages that culminated in the Top 8 deciding the key grid positions. In Q1 Bilinski crashed out, the incident saw him penalised three grid positions and being unable to take part in Q2. Ngatoa was 6th quickest but in Q2 he hit the wall exiting the final corner with the checker flag out, P8 got him into Q3 but he sat it out which meant a Row 4 start in the NZGP. The grid would be a NZ front row lockout with Sceats and Hedge, behind them Abel and Xie, Bilinski back on Row 7.

The grid positions for Race 1 were determined by times in Q1, Sceats and Hedge on the front row with Shin and Bilinski behind them, Abel and Ngatoa together on Row 3 - unfortunately Ngatoa was a DNS as he suffered a broken hand in his qualifying incident, both Bilinski and Shin also had qualifying crashes, but their cars were repaired.

For Sceats it was a lights to flag victory with no changes in the leading group as drivers managed tyre wear, crossing the line Hedge was 2.27 seconds behind with a cautious Belinski 3rd and Shin heading the pack. Race 2 was the Reverse Top Eight that had North American drivers Aron and Woods-Toth at the front of the grid, Abel

and Shin shared the next row with Bilinski and Hedge next, Aron got the best launch while from Row3 Sceats lost several places, with good pace Bilinski quickly set about gaining spots to secure a podium result knowing that a DNF could have serious consequences. Out front Aron became the eighth winner in 14 races, 1.34 ahead of Woods-Toth with a further two seconds to Bilinski, further back Sceats dropped points when he took the flag in 9th place - the result confirmed Bilinski as winner of the 2024 CTFROC title with a race in hand.

The 27-lap 68th NZ Grand Prix ended with a kiwi 1-2 as pole sitter Sceats beat Hedge who started alongside by 5.65 seconds with a 4/10ths gap to Shin after a race that required good strategy and tyre management. The biggest talking point was a spectacular finish for champion elect Bilinski, exiting the last corner on the final lap 5th placed Aron hit the wall, with nowhere to go the Pole's car launched off the American to take the checker in mid-air ahead of Aron! The final CTFROC round didn't have the same interest with Kaleb Ngatoa sidelined, the name of Roman Bilinski was engraved on the Chris Amon Trophy as the series winner after finishing 44 points ahead of Sceats with a further 45 points to third placed Woods-Toth, the two non-starts saw Kaleb drop from 3rd to 6th in the standings, tied with Xie.



In the Toyota 86 Championship both Allen and Rooney were chasing big points from the meeting, FP1 ended with Exton quickest, Rooney was P4 (+.723) and Allen a disappointing 15th (+1.194), FP2 had a very different outcome with Allen improving 10 places to P5 (+.772) while Rooney missed the session. Robb topped the FP3 times, Allen was again P5 (+.630) while Rooney did five laps without recording a time to be at the bottom. The all-important qualifying session saw Robb claim pole spot from Bloxsom (AUS) and Bewley, Rooney was P5 (+.547) and Allen 14th (+1.132). Race 1 ended with Robb 4 seconds ahead of Bewley, Bloxsom completing the podium, Rooney dropped four places before crossing the line 9th 0.1 ahead following a race long duel with Exton, Allen placed 14th (+16.68). Allen had an overnight engine change for Sunday, Race 2 saw the NAPA car finish 10th, 16 seconds behind winner Bewley who headed Bloxsom by 1.3 as they crossed the line, Rooney's race ended early when he retired after four of the 10 laps. Race 3 was the Feature 12 lapper where Bewley scored another win, Rooney placed P5 (+29.6) while Allen dropped more points after copping a 30 second time penalty under 'Code of Driving' which cost six places, dropping him to 19th in the official results.

GTNZ had a one-hour race on Saturday and two 30-minute races on Sunday, all three being won by Luke Manson. In the GT4 class Gilchrist was the fastest qualifier, in the 1 Hour he placed 8th overall and Green 12th, both a lap behind the winner. The two 30-minute duration races brought both good and bad news for Green, in the first he crossed the line 11th overall and on the lead lap, Race 3 saw the #61 car finish a lap down in P15 after incurring a 10 second time penalty for crossing the pit exit blend line, the indiscretion costing him two places.

At Highlands Park the second round of the TA2 Trans-Tasman Challenge was on the programme, Herne in his Dodge Challenger making another clean sweep of the three races with winning margins of between 6.3 and 22.11 seconds. For the final race there was \$1,000 offered if he could win from last on the grid, Herne hit the front after seven laps and won by 10 seconds! The Australian claimed the inaugural Trans-Tasman Trophy, NZ's Brent Collins was runner-up with Graham Cheney (AUS) third in the individual standings, Australia comprehensively taking out the team Jason Richards Memorial Trophy - there's no doubt that TA2 is a category with a future in both countries.

With the Super Series completed the attention returned to the national championship scene where our Toyota 86 Championship rookie sensation Jackson Rooney and the RDA Brakes #30 made a rare clean sweep in the penultimate round of the 2023/24 Series at Hampton Downs over the weekend of 16/17 March. Another driver who honed his skills at the Manawatu Kart Club's track in Sheriff's Road, Rooney qualified P2 behind Exton who got the better launch in Race 1, Rooney making his pass on lap 4 to cross the line ahead with point's leader Bewley who started from 7th on the grid P3, Allen claimed 6th place. In the Reverse Top 8 Rooney made it two from two from 8th on the grid after a first lap incident involving four front cars, including Allen and Bewley, gave him a lucky break. Exton finished second ahead of Robb with Allen recovering to P12. Race 3 was a lights-to-flag victory that saw Rooney having to defend his position from Bewley and Robb for the entire distance, Allen scored another 12th to cap off a disappointing weekend.



The final round was also at Taupo on 19-21 April, the 86's being on the support programme for the Repco Supercar Championship round, Bewley (909 points) leading the standings from Exton (899) and Robb (843), Rooney was 4th (723), two places ahead of Allen (625). See separate ITM 400 Supercar report...

The 2023/24 New Zealand Championship calendar was completed at Taupo on 27 April during the running of the HRC Single Seater Festival, the programme included the 8th and final round of the Hi-Q Components Formula First Championship. Chris Symon bounced back from only winning the final race at the previous two rounds to clean-sweep - pole position in qualifying, three race wins, a new lap record and securing his fourth straight title. In the Q session the #1 car topped the sheet by more than half a second, in all three races the minor places were the same with Liam Nicholson ahead of Liam Foster, the winning margins 2.435, 0.390 and 1.856 seconds. In the final standings Symon had 1718 points, 191 ahead of Nicholson (1527 pts) and Liam Foster (1359 pts), for Chris Symon it was mission accomplished...



Sabre Motorsport's Dennis Martin would have been well pleased with his latest 'find' Jackson Culver who had three 6th placings in the 12-car field, though behind fellow rookie Keiano Weir on this occasion. The diminutive 12 years old (photographs show how low he sits in the car) from North Canterbury is currently the country's youngest MSNZ licenced competitor, he began with the aim of being a regular Top Ten finisher (far exceeded) and be the top rookie (achieved by 128 points to make him the youngest rookie trophy winner in NZ motor racing), placing sixth in the overall points standings is testament to his outstanding achievement. On switching from karts to a racing car - "The most difficult transition has been adapting to new driving techniques. It's a bit weird braking with my right foot and not my left one. Mastering heel and toe, learning throttle control and changing the brake bias in the car to adjust to wet and dry have been the biggest challenge. I also love the drafting and when to be in front of the pack and when not to, stay at the back and save the draft until the last laps". Dennis Martin has another jewel in the Sabre Motorsport crown...

At the same meeting Kaleb Ngatoa returned to racing following his NZGP meeting accident at Highlands Park back in mid-January, also in the 16-car field of the increasingly popular GVI Formula Open Series were Bryan

Hartley and first timers Blake Dowdall and Chris Symons who was on double duty. Kaleb headed qualifying by 0.969 from newcomer Sebastien Manson (ex-Formula Ford), Hartley ended the session 6th (+4.24), Dowdall 8th (+5.53) with a cautious Symon one spot back (+6.02), on his first Q lap Dowdall was caught out on cold 'slicks', spinning and bringing out the red flag that resulted in a three-position grid penalty! Taupo disadvantages the pole sitter as they are on the outside turning into Turn 1, in Race 1 Mason took advantage while behind the leaders Adrian Rivers spun (cold tyres?) causing a collision between Dowdall and Rhys Humphries which ended the meeting for both drivers. Ngatoa won by 0.35 from Manson while Symon starred in his category debut, the engine wouldn't fire forcing him to start from pit lane, going from last (P16) to P8 at the checker, very impressive. From the rolling start Manson again led into Turn1 but Ngatoa was soon in front and took the flag 2½ seconds ahead with Brody McConkey P3. In Race 3 Ngatoa got the jump on Manson, Hartley had a great launch from the third row to gain two places, however the Toyota in the back of Kaleb's Swift DB4 began misfiring and the leaders bunched, Hartley dropping places, Ngatoa persevered to finish 3rd behind Mason and Hayden Bakkerus, Hartley fell back to 9th after being placed 5th and 7th in the earlier races, Symon was a DNF after previously claiming P8 and P10...



The GVI Formula Open has four categories, each with their own trophy that acknowledges a past NZ driver - Formula Atlantic (David Oxton), TRS FT40 (Jim Palmer), TRS FT50 (Graeme Lawrence) with the overall champion receiving the Howden Ganley Cup. The fifth running of the series was another success story for Dennis Martin and the Manawatu Car Club with 16-year-old Toby McCormack scoring the double, winning both the Jim Palmer Trophy and Howden Ganley Cup. McCormack made his circuit debut with Sabre Motorsport in the FAE Winter Series before winning the Formula First Cup and Champion-of-Champions Trophy in 2023 before the natural progression of graduating to Formula Ford. Could the 2025 CTFROC now be on the young Aucklanders' radar...

RH

SEASON TO REMEMBER #1

For rising star Jackson Rooney, the past season has read like a fairytale. It began when he was named a finalist for the Tony Quinn Foundation (TQF), through the Hampton Downs New Zealand Racing Academy, annual Toyota 86 Shoot-out together with Mitchell Sparrow, Hunter Robb and Cormac Murphy. The winner receives a cash grant of \$37,500 towards a season of racing, international drivers Daniel Gaunt and Nick Cassidy were on the selection panel that confirmed Jackson had topped all the criteria to become the third winner following Matthew McCutcheon and William Exton. Putting aside a successful karting career on both sides of the Tasman, Rooney made his motor racing debut in the opening round of the 2023/24 '86' series at the Taupo International Motorsport Park in mid-November.

For the TQF, the 20-year old's rise has been another major success story, and the fairy tale had a very happy ending after winning five of last six races in the championship, three at Hampton Downs and two at Taupo. In recent years a competitor has been selected by the TQF Trustees for a coveted prize, on this occasion a Gen3 Supercar test with the powerhouse Triple Eight Engineering squad. Fittingly, on the final race podium it was announced that this year's recipient was Jackson Rooney. There is also the possibility of a test in the team's Group 4 AMG Mercedes.

It was a full-on season of '86' racing, however at Easter Jackson found time to head to Blenheim for the 2024 NZ Kart Nationals, despite being out of karting for a period he returned home with the Rotax Light title. When you're hot, you're hot...

RH



SEASON TO REMEMBER #2

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR.

Winning a national title is a ambition or dream of sportspeople irrespective of age and discipline. Sport have never been less than highly competitive, having your name engraved on the winner's trophy becomes the ultimate achievement, possibly the pinnacle of a career.

Winning a national title can be the easy part, defending it can be much more difficult, for a club father and son both have been the defender three times!

Ross Symon won the NZ Formula Vee Championship consecutively four times in 1986/87/88/89, remarkably 35 years later his son Chris has repeated the feat many though impossible. In both eras the competition was of an exceptional standard, for Ross an older age group while Chris has been challenged by the new generation of rising talent. The cars are very much the same as when Formula Vee was first introduced here back in the late 1960s, nothing altered with the name change to the more appropriate Formula First, the 1200cc Volkswagen based cars are the least powerful of our open wheel classes, they are the least sophisticated, yet, for more than three decades have provided arguably the closest racing at circuits around the North Island. They have taught drivers all about wheel-to-wheel-racing and aerodynamics with the slipstreaming technique that's often the difference between winning and losing.

Back in Ross Symon's day there were hard men like top dressing pilot George Hetterscheid on the grid, together with NZ champions Rob Lester, Roger Coles, Dennis Martin and then 12-year-old Scott Dixon. Fast forward to the Chris Symon era you find the names of McConkey, Hendl-Cox, Frazer, Foster, Nicholson, Dowdall, Grant, Manson and Potter, all youngsters on a mission and hungry for success.

Eight New Zealand motor racing championships shared between two people in the same family is both remarkable and unique, it also poses a number of questions for the 33-year-old Newbury School Principle - where to now?

Two years ago Chris Symon drove the North Island Formula Ford Scholarship Van Dieman RF01 in the Giltrap Group NIFFC recording three Top 10 finishes in his six races in a car so different from his humble VW-based racer, at the end of April he took another big step by racing an ex-TRS FT-40 at Taupo in the GVI Formula Open NZ series and acquitted himself very well in varying weather conditions - is it decision time?

At 22 years old Chris was a late starter in the sport, his four successive years as the New Zealand Formula First champion is an astonishing record - 90 races, 65 wins, 72.2%; 86 Top 5 finishes, 95.6% and 90 Top 10 results, 100%, amazing statistics in such a competitive category.

Maybe he's content with equalling his father's record, maybe he sees another Formula First title, maybe a move into Formula Open NZ, maybe retirement to concentrate on his career in education. There's a lot of maybes...

RH



FEBRUARY FLATFOOT / R2 MITRE 10 MEGA SUMMER SERIES

A busy weekend with two full days of racing following the Friday test sessions, the total entry number being boosted to 184 with the inclusion of the New Zealand SuperKarts together with the OK Cup (formerly 2K Cup), Production Series NZ, Touring Car Masters/NZ Six, Historic Sports Sedans, Formula Open and the Pirelli Porsche Championship categories.

The Pirelli Porsche Championship round is a one-dayer with two 10 laps races and a 25- minute mini enduro, the 25 car grids a mix of 911 variants, Boxter, 944 and Cayman models. Regan Scouler dominated the class, winning all three races without being challenged with a best lap of 1.08.909 which was nudging the magic 100 mph barrier. Also Saturday only were the OK Cup that had 19 'budget' cars competing in the two 33-minute races, top qualifier Michael Jamieson won the first 0.762 ahead of Edward Fea but retired on the final lap of the Reverse Grid that saw Fea take the checker flag - the top drivers covered 23 and 20 laps respectively in the elapsed time races.

Thirty drivers were chasing points for the NZ SuperKart Driver's Championship across five classes, the rolling start 7 lap races having split grids. Qualifying ended with Karts International's Andrew Hall 4.6 seconds ahead of his two rivals, in the other categories the front row difference was tenths or hundredths of a second. Hall cleared away from the field in Race 1 to win by 26 seconds, he retired after 5 laps in Race 2 that ended with Carl Hanson scoring an easy win from Kim Stevens, Race 3 saw Hall make it two from three by a wide margin over Stevens with the fastest lap of 1.08.645. In the other classes Zane Hills (KZ2) had two wins, Rotax DD2 had three different winners, Grant Withers (Rotax Max Heavy) two wins and Joseph Pearce (Rotax Max Light) two wins, in all cases by tenths.



The meeting marked the first Manfeild appearance of Production Series NZ that had 23 cars fronting ranging from a quartet of diminutive Daihatsu's to a 6.2 litre Holden V8 Ute, qualifying showed a lap time difference of

27.8 seconds! Ben Van der Werf and Chris Sparg were the fastest qualifiers and dominated the results, finishing 1-2 in the Handicap races after conceding 60 seconds to the first cars away.



The Touring Car Masters field of 12 included Michael Eden (Ford Falcon GT), Ian Easton (Roush Mustang), Grant Crosby (Ford Mustang), Jayd Queenin (Holden Commodore), Greg Cuttance (XD Ford Falcon) and the return of Grand Prix Hydroplane champion Ken Lupton (Ford Mustang). Daniel Gordon in his turbocharged Datsun had qualified P7 but headed the V8 cars in all three races with Crosby following him across the line, Lupton had a pair of 3rds with Queenin on the bottom step of the podium in the final race. Forming a split grid were eight NZ Six cars, Sheryl Hanright taking their flag twice before Bradley Wenzlick claimed a hard-fought win.



The high-performance theme included a grid of 13 Historic Sports Sedans, qualifying saw Jim Trueman's Chev Monza head Shane Murland by 1.3 seconds - Robert Jack, Jon Telford, Graham Barnes and Paul Dewar rounding out the top six. Race 1 lost much interest when Barnes, Trueman and Murland retired at various stages, Telford's Mazda RX8 Chevrolet crossing the line well clear of Jack and Dewar, the latter running his NASCAR ex-Penske Dodge Challenger. Race 2 was a Handicap with six cars missing, Trueman was flagged away last, giving Steve Pearson 50 seconds and Telford 20 seconds. The two back markers worked their way through the pack with Telford scoring back-to-back wins from Trueman and Jack. The second Handicap saw the spread adjusted to 55 seconds with the field reduced to seven runners. Steve Pearson and Peter Hooper (+10 secs) were first away, at the rear Trueman gave 10 seconds to Telford but jumped the start to incur a 5 second penalty before retiring on lap 2, Gordon Burr took over the front running after three laps with a break over Dewar, Hooper and Jack who were covered by 2½ seconds, the trio being reeled in by Telford. Burr led into the final lap but was caught by Telford on the run to the flag, the margin being 0.915, a 4.3 gap to Dewar in P3 ahead of Hooper who held out Jack by 1.1, Pearson was a DNF after 5 laps.



Additions to Day 2 were Formula Open and the five categories involved in the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series. Following his CTFROC series accident in which he suffered a broken hand Kaleb Ngatoa was a Formula Open non-starter which reduced the field to 11 cars, Zac Christensen headed qualifying from Toby McCormack (+1.023), Gary Rush, Leo Francis, Rhys Humphries and club member Bryan Hartley who was having his second outing in the category, the six cars covered by 4.4 seconds. Race 1 was 10 laps rolling start that had the same pattern as qualifying, Christensen beating McCormack by .424 with big gaps to Rush, Francis and Ethan Sillay who had started from the back row, Hartley took the flag in 8th place (+56.115). Race 2 had the same format with Sillay promoted to P6 on the grid, the first three cars were in the same order as Race 1 with Christensen's winning margin down to .316, Humphries placed 4th after having an earlier DNF. Hartley's race ended with a broken input shaft on the first lap while Sillay was disqualified for ignoring an official signal. Race 3 was a 15 lapper that had 10 drivers face the starter, again it was Christensen versus McCormack at the front but on this occasion the winning margin was out to nearly seven seconds as Christensen completed a

clean sweep. Adrian Rivers was an impressive 3rd followed by Rush, Francis and Sillay had a great duel for P5, the pair split by .384 as they crossed the line.

Qualifying indicated that the Hi-Q Components Formula First racing would be typically close with the 16 cars covered by 5.3 seconds, the five fastest laps by under 2 seconds and Chris Symon heading the times by 1.25 from Liam Nicholson, Jensen Foster and Hayden Lines. Dennis Martin's 12-year-old rookie Culver Jackson was 10th quickest 3.15 off Symon's time, the number '10' stayed with Culver with his race score card showing 10, 7, 10. Race 1 was a thriller between the front row drivers, Symon leading the first two laps before Nicholson hit the front, behind them were Lines, Jensen Foster, Liam Foster and Harry Scott all running in close single file formation. Symon was back leading on Lap 4 with Nicholson .158 behind and the pack order unchanged, on the next lap Jensen Foster leapfrogged Lines for P3. Lap 8 saw Lines retake Jensen Foster to make the finishing order Symon by 7/10ths over Nicholson with a 3.93 gap to Lines who was 2/10ths ahead of Foster then a gap to Scott and Ron Carter who completed the top six 9.08 behind the winner.

Race 2 effectively ended on Lap 6 with a Safety Car intervention that saw the entire field cross the line covered by 7.14 seconds, prior to that it had been 'game on' with three different leaders at the conclusion of the first four laps. Jensen Foster got the best start from Row 2 to lead Symon, Lines, Nicholson, Liam Foster and Scott, on Lap 3 Lines was in front from Jensen Foster and Symon, further back Jack Groenewald overtook Scott for P6. Next time round Symon headed Lines, Nicholson and Liam Foster as Jensen Foster dropped off the pace before retiring on Lap 4 and bringing out the SC. The race ran the full 8 laps in single file with cars taking the flag split by tenths of a second - Symon, Lines, Nicholson, Liam Foster, Scott and Groenewald being the first six finishers. The big moment came post-race when Symon was handed a five second penalty for 'passing under Safety Car' which dropped him to 11th in the official results. That rare 'defeat' of the champion elevated Lines to first and the next nine drivers gaining a position. Race 3 was revenge for Symon though he didn't lead until Lap 4. The # 1 car was overtaken by Nicholson at Turn 1 and then by Lines on Lap 2 to sit 3rd followed by Jensen Foster, Liam Foster and Groenewald, there was a Safety Car but the race went 'green' at the end of Lap 3, Symon made a decisive move at Turn 1 to pass Nicholson while Jensen Foster got ahead of Lines for P3, Lines reversing their positions on Lap 6 as Symon edged away from Nicholson, at the finish the gap was 1.034 with 9/100ths back to Jensen Foster who had retaken Lines followed by Liam Foster, Scott, Groenewald and Carter before there was more drama. Lines penalised 5 seconds 'for careless driving' which cost him three track positions to 6th.

As in Round 1 RS/SF and IB/GT were grouped together to increase the size of their respective grids. Five RS and 13 SF Cup made up their field, newcomer Derek Clarke topping the qualifying session by half a second from Josh Donohue, next were Greg Browne, Connor Cleland, Tessa Bevan and Logan Jane. Richard Howe was P14 on the grid and quickest RS Cup ahead of Jack Snelgrove.



Race 1 was Scratch over six laps, Clarke blasted off the line and left the field in his tyre marks, behind the V8 Commodore Donohue and Bevan were fighting over P2, further back Howe led Nick Kacouris in the RS group. The first three crossed the line in that order but had collected break-out time penalties, most notably Clarke who went sub-1.25 five times with a best 1.22.878 to have 100 seconds added to his race time, Donohue and Bevan each had 10 seconds added. The adjusted official result showed Chris Huszka as the winner 0.349 ahead of Greg Browne with Cleland, Donohue, Gerald Watson and Bevan next, their cars covered by less than 5 seconds. Howe took the maximum RS points, finishing 4.737 ahead of Kacouris with Snelgrove 3rd.

Race 2 was the Reverse Grid with the RS cars at the front led by Aksal Harkan and Graeme Wall. Starting from grid 14 Browne led at the end of the first lap followed by Harkan, Donohue, Hayden Arnold and Cleland, a Safety Car intervention closed the field up before the race went green on Lap 2, next time around Donohue was in front of Browne with Huszka, Cleland, Wall (RS) and Jane next. Browne retired leaving the finishing order Donohue by 2.3 seconds over Huszka, Arnold, Cleland covered by 0.638, Clarke and Jane - Donohue had incurred a 10 second breakout penalty and Clarke 30 seconds, which dropped Donohue to 4th and Clarke from P6 to 13th, the latter elevated Bevan into the top six with Wall the first RS finisher (9th) from Kacouris and Snelgrove.



Thirty-five seconds covered the grid in the Handicap with Wall having a 5 second start on the other RS drivers, Rodney Penn had 5 seconds on the SF runners, at the back Clarke gave Donohue, Browne and Huszka 10 seconds. Wall made the most of his handicap to lead for five laps, initially Kacouris was P2 before Penn took over the chase, at half distance Donohue had progressed to 7th with Clarke reducing his deficit to 23 seconds behind the leader, a lap later it was reduced to 18 seconds. On the final lap Donohue hit the front at the Hairpin before Wall was swamped by the SF cars of Arnold, Jane, Cleland and Penn before he took the flag in P7, four spots ahead of Clarke. The winning margin was 2½ seconds, the four cars 3rd to 6th covered by 0.249, outstanding handicapping! Clarke got hit again by time penalties, the 40 seconds dropped him from 11th to 13th and last finisher, in the RS Cup Wall was 7½ seconds ahead of Kacouris (P10) and 20 ahead of Snelgrove (P12), Howe a DNS.

The combined IB/GT Cup resulted in a field of 31 cars split 20/11. Cooper Cooley dominated qualifying with a 1.10.311 lap to head Darryl Lucas (GTB) by 5.4 seconds with another half second to Jamie Potts. Rowan Trotter clocked a best 1.19.899 to top the IB sheet, 1.1 ahead of Simon Hetterscheid with 1/100ths to Donald McIntyre and another 0.099 to Richie Arber, the fastest eight IB drivers were within 1.933. The start of the Scratch was a great spectacle as the field headed into Turn 1, Lap 1 ended led by Cooley, Lucas, Sam Gordon who made a great start from Row 3, Ivan Knauf and Peter Beauchamp with Hetterscheid and Trotter leading the IB pack. By the end of Lap 3 Knauf had worked his way to P3 trailed by Potts, Beauchamp and Gavin McLaughlin while Trotter had overtaken Hetterscheid. With a lap to run Potts moved past Knauf, out front Cooley had extended his lead to 26.3 when he took the checker with another 9 seconds separating Lucas and Potts. Knauf, Beauchamp and McLaughlin completed the top six covered by 44.385, next were Trotter, Hetterscheid and Irdan Harkan at the head of the IB runners. Lucas took the GTB points ahead of Knauf and Beachamp. Cooley's best lap was 1.08.781, closest to that mark was Potts' 1.14.510.

The start of the GT Reverse Grid saw Cooley rocket from Row 5 to lead out of Turn 1 so it was effectively 'game over' barring a mechanical failure. Potts moved ahead of Beauchamp on Lap 2 to take up the chase, behind them the order was Lucas, Knauf, McLaughlin, Brendon Lucas and Warren Cleland. Out front Cooley's lead grew to 23.7 by mid-distance, Brendon Lucas retired on Lap 5 and race ran out with Cooley crossing the line with a 35.54 advantage over Potts with another 16 to Darryl Lucas who held out Beachamp by 0.477.



The IB Reverse Grid had Adele Dean on the front row (Justin Allen a DNS) with Steen McGhie and Nix van Rooijen behind her. When the lights went out Geoff Boyden made a perfect launch from Row 5, the momentum took the #66 Castrol BMW into the lead on the opening lap followed by Kolin Yannakis, Kane Anderson, Ben Duck, Donald McIntyre and Hetterscheid who started from Row 10 at the back. By the halfway point the order was Boyden, McIntyre, Hetterscheid, Yannakis, Harkan and Trotter who were in a group, Dean became at DNF. There was a relatively close finish with the first six crossing the line covered by 8½ seconds,

Boyden's winning margin was 2.74 over McIntyre with 2/10ths to Hetterscheid, the first six completed with Harkan, Trotter and David Thomsen.

The GT Handicap drew eight starters, Sam Gordon first away with Potts 40 seconds later and another 15 seconds to Cooley. Gordon led for 5 laps with the positions behind him constantly changing, initially Brendan Lucas, McIntyre, Beauchamp and Knauf, By the end of Lap 3 McIntyre was the chaser while Cooley was P4 and 25 seconds off the lead with Potts three spots back. Going into the last lap Gordon's lead down to 1.3 before Cooley took the lead at Turn 1, such was his pace that he took the flag by more than 10 seconds, Gordon was second despite a 5 second penalty for starting outside the box followed by Potts, Cleland, Brendon Lucas and Daryl Lucas, the latter 19.3 behind Cooley.



Thirty seconds covered the 19-car field in the IB Handicap, it was going to be a busy six laps for the back markers working through the traffic. Steen McGhie was the scratch starter with Trotter and Harkan together at the back. McGhie seized his opportunity, leading Anderson, van Rooijen, Colin Harper, Hogg, and Yannakis in the early stages, by the end of Lap 3 Harper led McGhie as the pack began to bunch, another lap saw Duck sitting P4 ahead of Hogg, Steve Hardie and Arber with the back markers in mid-field. With a lap to run Harper who started plus 10 seconds had broken away from McGhie with a group of twelve locked together chasing the final step on the podium. Harper crossed the line 7 seconds in front of McGhie, over the final 3 kilometres Hogg emerged P3 ahead of Duck, Hetterscheid, Thomsen and Arber with the five drivers covered by 1.2 seconds, places 3rd to 14th were a blur as they crossed the line separated by tenths of a second - great stuff and the perfect way to end the day...

RH

RUSTY'S NOTES

For many people, especially club members, the highlight of the weekend was seeing Gerald Watson back behind the wheel of the yellow #28 Datsun 1200 coupé. It's more than 20 months since the second round of the 2022 FAE Winter Series was cancelled as a result of Gerald suffering a 'medical event' and crashing into the tyre wall on the outside of the esses. After receiving prolonged trackside attention, he was admitted to Palmerston North Hospital's ICU and has since made a full recovery that has allowed him to race. At the time Motorsport New Zealand CEO Elton Goonan issued a media statement which included "I want to thank and acknowledge the Manawatu Car Club volunteer officials and the emergency service personnel who did an outstanding job in responding swiftly to this incident." The meeting was cancelled at 11.30am under force majeure in what was an extremely emotional and stressful situation. Welcome back Gerald...



JAROD CARRUTHERS PHOTOGRAPHY

Included in the Pirelli Porsche Championship field were holidaying English husband and wife Pete Evans and Faye Noble-Evans who leased two cars (Cayman and Boxter) for the day. Pete quickly got on the pace to score three Top 10 finishes, both were seriously impressed with the circuit layout, particularly the banked corners. Even on holiday a day racing would be much better than a day at the beach...

Following January's Super Sprint Series meeting with only four categories, spectators really got value at the Flat Foot with thirteen categories, 32 races and more than 180 competitors - all for free admission. The variety of saloons racing was exceptional, from the diminutive Daihatsu micros to V8 sports sedans and just about everything in between, there was something for everyone. The racing was of the expected high standard with each day concluding before the scheduled times, Saturday 4.15 and Sunday 3.35 which was 45 minutes ahead of the track closure. Impressive work by the Level 2 officials and V-Force to keep the ball rolling...

There was an exceptional call made by Club President Richie Arber on Day 2 to split the IB and GT Cup fields for their Reverse Grid and Handicap races following a 'chat' with the upstairs officials. Both had good numbers (IB 20 - GT 11) to make it work and there was plenty of time for an additional two races on the programme. Safety

is paramount in motor racing, best illustrated by the respective fastest lap times - Rowan Trotter 1.19.004 and Brock Cooley 1.09.019, close to a 10 second difference. The IB Handicap was the final race of the meeting and ended with the gaps between the 4th and 14th finishers varying from 0.073 to 0.967, the sort of racing that brings the punters back...

Starter/Flagman Hugh Wilde had an assistant on the stand for part of the days, the 'dress code' suggested the lady in question was one of the V-Force who would normally be stationed at a flag points. The lady in question had obviously studied the checker flag technique that involves rolling the wrist for maximum effect, she was extremely good and one can only assume that the lady in question is Hugh's understudy...

The V8 Holden Commodore of Feilding's Derek Clarke was quick, too quick. Entered for the RS/SF Cup, indications were there in qualifying with two sub 1.25 laps, during the three races the number of breakouts was well into double digits with a fastest lap of 1.22.876 which was 2.124 seconds under the SF Cup breakout lap time. Three chocolate fish was the reward, however promotion to the IB Cup appears inevitable...

The sight and sound of Paul Dewar's NASCAR Dodge Challenger was one of the many weekend highlights. The car is the 'real deal' having been run by Penske Racing (later renamed Team Penske) and driven by Sam Hornish Jr before Joey Lagano took the wheel for the 2012 series, the following year Penske switched to Ford. The 'audio' is provided by a 5.9 litre Dodge V8 producing 850 horsepower and capable of spinning to 9,000 rpm, those are serious numbers...



LEGENDS OF SPEED FESTIVAL

Held at Hampton Downs on 20-22 March, the latest LOSF honoured the Lawrence family, Graeme holding centre stage with brothers Tony and Brian who also raced but didn't achieve the same profile on the track.

Their father Doug established Lawrence Motors on Wanganui's Victoria Avenue and would have strongly influenced the siblings 'need for speed', he raced the family Citroen Light 15 in the 7th Ohakea Tophy race in 1956 placing 5th in the Handicap Division, later a 'bobtail' Cooper T39 and Lola Mk1 sports cars. Doug achieved the 'magic ton' (100 years) before he passed away on 29th December 2016.

There is a wonderful true story of that Ohakea meeting that was the family's introduction to the sport. Doug told them he had to go somewhere and emptied everything out of the car, the unsuspecting family were rather surprised when the Citroen lined-up on the second row of the grid with hastily taped numbers on the doors!

Graeme's exceptional career is well documented, as a teenager he began with a Humber 80 before the family garage saw many cars over the following years, a Ford Anglia, Chrysler Valiant and others followed by a string of single seaters that brought Graeme significant success both at home and abroad, particularly in Asia, best remembered being the stunning Ferrari 246T and later Lola T332. As part of the Festival examples of many of the cars that the family raced featured in the lunch-time parades, a real trip down memory lane with a few surprises.



The weekend featured appropriate racing categories where the MCC was well represented in what were big fields on Sunday, Saturday's rain resulted in many cars not running as they only had slick tyres!

In the HVRA Saloons Halcombe's Dennis McConnell was outstanding with a 3, 5, 2 scorecard, Jonathan Hogg had two top 10 finishes while Peter Bromley's weekend finished early when his BMW 2002 lost the gearbox oil plug and a suitable replacement couldn't be found. Graham Barnes, Shane Barnes and Bruce Goodwin faced the starter in the HMSC Historic Sports Sedans, Shane securing two podium results in a class dominated by Jon Telford's Mazda RX8.

Five members gridded for the 12-strong Heritage Touring Cars - Brendon Lucas, Darryl Lucas, Richard Ransom, Geoff Boyden and Ben Boyden. Both of the Lucas cars (Darryl 2) and Geoff Boyden had top three finishes, Ben B a best 7th and Ransom three top 10's with P5 the standout. Sean Browne and Greg Cuttance waved the flag in the Touring Car Masters/NZ6 Handicap races, Browne was P3 in qualifying but could only manage a 5th before dropping into the teens, 'Cutty' qualified 17th before picking up 16th, 11th and 10th places.



In the open wheel categories, Bryan Hartley missed Saturday because of the weather (no 'wets'?) but gridded for both Formula Open NZ races on Sunday where he had a 5th and 7th in a category where young drivers are coming to the fore as Hayden Bakkerus and Zac Blincoe each took a checker flag.

Both the Formula First and Formula Ford racing was outstanding. In the former qualifying on a damp track saw Hayden Lines beat Chris Symons by 0.528 for pole, followed by Liam Foater and Liam Nicholson, Lines backed up his qualifying effort by heading Symons by 1.65 in Race 1 with Nicholson P3. Race 2 brought another defeat for the defending champion as Foster crossed the line 7/100ths ahead and Nicholson third. Race 3 was even tighter with the winning margin .035 but this time with Symon in front of Foster and Nicholson again behind the pair.

The Giltrap Group North Island and Historic Formula Fords combined to field a grid of 20 cars, a critical round for our Blake Dowdall who was 0.511 behind Zac Blincoe in the qualifying session and ahead of Seb Manson and Toby McCormack. On a damp track, in Race 1 Dowdall headed Blincoe by 0.034 with Dylan Grant P3 6/10ths behind the winner. Both Sunday races were fought out between Manson and Mason Potter, finishing in that order both times with Dowdall third, albeit 3.49 and 7.06 seconds behind. It now looks to be a three-way battle for the overall series with two rounds to run, Dowdall headed to Hampton Downs sitting third and departed at the top of the points table by one point from Dylan Grant with another four to Blincoe heading to his home circuit for the penultimate round on 6/7 April.

A most satisfying weekend from the club's perspective on a weekend that celebrated the achievements of one of Manfeild's favourite sons and his family...

RH

ITM 400 SUPERCARS TAUPO

Club members were to the fore in two of the support categories at the ITM 400 Repco Supercar Championship round at the Taupo Raceway run on 19/20/21 April that saw Saturday's racing take place in conditions ranging from wet to extremely wet with suggestions of officials being faced with the possibility of pulling the pin.

Carrying additional Tracgrip sponsorship for the final round of the 23/24 Toyota 86 Championship, rookie Jackson Rooney was one of the weekend's outstanding performers as he continued his recent golden run to dominate time and result sheets, only once not on the top spot. The 21-car field included three Australian's who have been running in our series, Lachie Bloxsom, Alice Buckley and Summer Rintoule, the kiwi ladies were Christina Orr-West and Breanna Morris. Rooney headed both practice sessions by 0.2 and 0.3 respectively before claiming pole position with a lap half a second quicker than in FP2, 2/10ths ahead of William Exton and the impressive Ben Stewart. Toyota 86 veteran Justin Allen had a troubled Friday, his crew having to replace the differential, he went from 14th fastest in FP1 to 12th in FP2 before qualifying in the same position .885 behind Rooney.



In the first of the 20-minute races run in Saturday's wet weather Rooney was beaten off the line and lost places before regaining the lead to beat Bloxsom by 1.3 seconds, Allen had a real liking for the conditions and picked up five positions to finish 7th (+13 secs) with Stewart 12th home. Race 2 was the Reverse Grid, Sunday's dry track brought Rooney only defeat when he finished a lowly 18th but only 15 seconds behind winner Tom Bewley in the tight field, Buckley and Hunter Robb completed the podium with Allen P4 and Stewart five places back. Young Rooney bounced back in Race 3 to beat Robb by more than three seconds with the consistent Bloxsom in 3rd place closely followed by Allen (+7 secs) with Stewart again in the Top 10, P8.

With Taupo being the final round Tom Bewley took the title after his closest rival William Exton retired from the final race on lap 4, allowing Hunter Robb to finish runner-up and also claim the Rookie of the Year Award. Bewley's prize includes a TGRNZ supported drive in a round of the ADAC GT4 German Championship at the famous Nurburgring behind the wheel of a GR Supra GT4 Evo.

Blake Dowdall headed to Taupo holding third place in the Giltrap Group North Island Formula Ford Series that also doubled as the final round of the NAPA New Zealand Championship, there were nine South Islanders in the 22-car field including title contenders Will Neale and Blake Knowles. Dowdall's weekend began with P4 in the opening practice session 1.1 seconds of the pace set by Neale, with Mason Potter and Zach Blincoe next on the sheet. FP2 saw the pace quicken by 1½ seconds, Sebastian Manson clocking 1.34.739 to head Dylan Grant and Potter while Dowdall dropped two places to 6th, 8/10ths behind Manson. Qualifying ended with the order Manson, Blincoe and Neale as Dowdall dropped to P10 and 1.85 off the pole time.

The Formula Ford races were also of time constrained 20-minute duration, Manson winning the first from Grant and Neale, Dowdall slipped back to 14th at the flag and 47 seconds behind the winner. The PNBHS student improved six positions to 8th in Race 2 and much closer to the front runners, finishing 3.8 behind Knowles who took the win ahead of Manson and Blincoe. Race 3 could decide both titles, the finishing order was Neale, Manson, Knowles with Dowdall 7th and 11 seconds back from the victor with Blake Knowles third place enough to secure the four round 2023/24 NAPA championship by two points over Mason Potter, the pair 87 points ahead of Will Neale. The Giltrap Group North Island Series was raced over six rounds, despite lower-than-expected results at Taupo Blake Dowdall (1063 pts) retained his 3rd place in the final standings, ahead of him Mason Potter (1110 pts) with Dylan Grant (1146 pts) the winner at the end of an enthralling season..

Special mention must be made acknowledging Keith Miller and his commitment to racing in the highly competitive Formula Ford class. This driver epitomises everything that's good about the sport, Keith's invariably found at the tail of the field, what's important is that he's doing what he enjoys, and no one can deny him that...



In the 2024 Repco Supercar Championship our 'adopted' driver is Jaxon Evans (close family connections to the MCC/Manfeild) who drives the Brad Jones Racing #12 SGT Camaro alongside kiwi teammate Andre Heimgartner. The weekend started well with Heimgartner 6th fastest in FP1 with Evans 2 places back (+0.267), in the wet Qualifying they dropped to 9th and 17th (+0.755) before Heimgartner jumped to P3 in the Shootout thanks to being an early runner, he went on to win Race 7 by .138 while Jax gained seven places to round out the Top 10 finishers, a wet track is an effective leveller.

The rain had gone making it a dry track for Race 8 qualifying, but both slipped down the order to 11th and 21st respectively in the 24-car field, in the 60 lapper Heimgartner had a five-place gain to finish P6 and Evans seven spots for P14. Grid position is so critical - "We are just getting something not right whether it's the tyre pressure or how we the car balance heading into qualifying". After three rounds Evans sits 18th on the point's table and leading 'rookie, he's also the second highest ranked BJR driver behind Heimgartner and ahead of the more experienced Bryce Fullwood (P20) and Macauley Jones (P23). It seems that the focus has to be on the Q set-up...

A final comment on the ITM400 Meeting - both local teams and the 67,411 spectators who attended over the three days had a glimpse of the massive logistics involved in staging a meeting of this magnitude to meet the standard required by the Supercar management. There was innovation, a flyover by four Warbird Havards and the hugely popular 'Track to Town' drive of the competing Gen3 cars that brough Taupo to a standstill, a first for Supercars though at Darwin's Hidden Valley round there's a similar parade with all the Team Transporters taking part, taking it to the people is great promotion. In all facets Taupo was an outstanding success that has led to talk about a second round in our country and its viability. The Quinns holds all the aces, but...



Round 4 takes place on 17-19 May in Western Australia with the Perth Supersprint, the direct distance between the two circuits is over 5,400 kilometres!

There was a Supercar 'record' broken when the grid assembled for Race 2 at Taupo when Matt Payne and Brock Feeney formed up for the start, with an average age of 21 years 193 days they became the youngest front row in the championship's history. Nine years ago, Race 2 at Townsville had Chaz Mostert and Scott McLaughlin at the front of the grid, their average age was 22 years 244 days, nice that a New Zealand driver was involved on both occasions...

DID YOU KNOW

For more than a century ordinary people on the eastern side of the Tasman Sea have never been less than enthusiastic about speed - whether on land, water or in the air. It was, and still is, an important aspect of our country's growth and development.

On land there has been an extraordinary passion regarding the need for speed, whether two or four wheels, whether open wheel or saloon, whether racing on a sandy beach, a horse racing track, an airfield, on streets or a man-made circuit.

There has been remarkable backyard 'specials', exciting series like the Tasman Cup that brought the world's top drivers to our shores, Formula 5000, Formula Pacific and the Toyota Racing Series that involves a new global generation of young drivers with great aspirations.

Competition brings out the best and worst in so many sports, in the Land of the Long White Cloud the greatest rivalry in any sporting contest involves our ANZAC neighbours. In motor racing it's seen Australian drivers coming to compete against their kiwi counterparts on our circuits, they have been the best of the best with names like Moffatt, Brock, Geoghegan and Beechey, others like Bartlett, Walker, Stewart and Allison who were so supportive of Manfeild in its earliest years.



In recent decades the greatest rivalry comes in the Australian Supercar Championship that was created from the previous Australian Touring Car Championship that dates back to 1960 when the title was decided on a single race (It became a series in 1969), David McKay winning driving a Jaguar Mk1 3.4 at Gnoo-Blas in Orange (NSW), November the same year the first Armstrong 500 was run at Phillip Island, later becoming the annual Bathurst 1000 classic. The ATCC evolved from Appendix J to Improved Production and Group C before the FIA Group A category was adopted in 1985, the era that saw the names of kiwi drivers engraved on the silverware thanks to Jim Richards (JPS Team BMW) and Robbie Francevic (Volvo Dealer Team). The 2013 arrival of the new generation V8 Supercars saw Shane Van Gisbergen break the winless drought, the Gen 2 Supercars brought success for both SVG and Scott McLaughlin, today's cars are Gen3 Camaros and Mustangs.

Through this extraordinary period of Australian motor racing history, has the question ever been asked -who was the first New Zealander to compete in an ATCC race? ANI Data has provided the answer that goes back to 1963 and the 4th ATCC race at the Mallala RAAF Base in South Australia that attracted a 29-car field and was won by Bob Janes in a Jaguar Mk2 3.8. On the grid was an Austin A95 Westminster wearing #16 with the driver

entered as C N Roskilly, the car retired after completing three laps. ANI Data were able to identify the driver as Christopher Jan Nigel Roskilly who ran a classic car business in our country, his son was able to confirm that he did race a succession of cars when he returned 'home' two years later including a supercharged Triumph Herald estate, Mk3 Ford Zodiac and 3.3 Vauxhall Victor.

Roskilly competed in the 1972 Heatway Rally (the forerunner of Rally New Zealand) in the Vauxhall but withdrew after twice rolling the car and a head-on crash with a service vehicle, also in the field and seeded #38 were prominent Manawatu Car Club members Bryan Bate and Pat Groube in a Mk 2 Ford Cortina.

A stalwart of the Auckland classic car and classic racing community, C J N Kilkelly passed away in 2012 aged 72, his name virtually unknown in wider circles but is an important inclusion in the ATCC/ Supercar story...

RH

STEWART'S MITRE 10 MEGA SUMMER SERIES - ROUND 3

April 5/6/7 was another big weekend of racing at the Feilding circuit, so big that the schedule was extended to three days to accommodate all the categories. In addition to the four M10MSS classes there was Formula First, Formula Ford, Historic Muscle and Saloon cars, Mazda Racing Series, Touring Car Masters/NZ Six, MX-5 Heritage Cup and the final round of the NAPA Super Truck Championship that collectively added up to 33 races over two days, involving nearly 140 entries. Friday was a test/practice day that included the qualifying sessions for Touring Car Master/NZ Six, Mazda Racing Series, Historic Muscle & Saloons and MX-5 Heritage Cup (see separate story) - necessary to ensure the meeting met the curfew times.



This report's main focus is on the M10MSS races, first is an overview of the other categories.

In the Historic Muscle and Saloon Cars, Glenn Allingham headed the 13-car field in qualifying, 1½ seconds faster than Shane Barnes, but didn't feature in the three handicap races. Giving away 65 seconds Kevin Gimblett took the flag in Race 1 from Sean McCaughan and James Buchanan, Gimblett got the double in Race 2 heading Natalie Campbell and Brady McCaughan, however he had to settle for 6th in Race 3 as Nigel McDonald edged out Brady McCaughan and John Sampson.

Seventeen drivers fronted for the Mazda Racing Series including South African Stiaan Kriel who quickly mastered the track to be 3rd quickest in qualifying behind Warren Crowther and Stuart Lawton, the top nine cars on the sheet being within 0.969! Kriel followed up by winning the Scratch race .486 ahead of Crowther with Will Kitching third, in the Reverse Top Ten Kitching headed Crowther and Lawton, with Kriel dropping to 14th at the line. The Race 3 grid was based on Points Gained, Kriel securing his second win by 3/10ths from Crowther and Kitching, in the 10 lapper the first 12 finishers were covered by 9.4 seconds.

The Touring Car Masters/NZ Six brought an interesting mix of cars to the grid including a Pontiac TransAm and Holden Torana SLR5000, 16 cars in total equally split between the two classes. Jayd Queenin pipped Ken Lupton by 0.183 in the TCM followed by Dennis Lovegrove and Greg Cuttance, in the NZ Six's Bradley Wenzlick prevailed 3/10ths ahead of Brydon Hickson, Brent Cooper and Sean Browne. Dan Gordon didn't record a qualifying lap (transponder) so started from the back of the TCM grid, powering the HMC Monaro through the pack to beat Queenan, Lupton and Lovegrove as the field finished behind the Safety Car, Cooper took the NZ Six honours from Wenzlick, Race 2 ended with the order Gordon, Queenan, Lovegrove, Lupton withdrew after 5 laps, Browne being the first NZ Six home 0.099 ahead on Cooper and Sheryl Hanright. Race 3 was also a Safety Car finish, handing Gordon his trifecta but this time from Lovegrove and Queenan, Bradley Wenzlick headed his father Shane and Hickson in the NZ Six's with Browne being a non-starter - two finishes behind the Safety Car killed the race interest but in no way diminished Dan Gordon's superiority.



There's been added interest in the Hi Q Components Formula First Championship with the unbeaten record of defending champion Chris Symon taking a knock at the two previous meetings. Come Manfeild he missed

qualifying (see Rusty's Notes) which meant starting from the back of the grid in the first race, the top four drivers were separated by 0.995 with Liam Foster heading Liam Nicholson, Harry Scott and Hayden Line while rookie Jackson Culver was 7th fastest in the 12-car field.

In the opening race Nicholson got the jump at the start and was only headed briefly by Foster on lap 4, it was great scrap between the pair who were split by 0.371 with a four second gap to Scott. Symon had worked his way to P4 by the end of lap 2 but that was as far as he got, finishing 15 seconds behind the winner with young Culver following him home. That result put Symon 5th on the grid for Race 2 that was more of the same with Nicholson leading Foster before the positions reversed for laps 6 and 7, their duel continued to the flag with Nicholson winning by 0.261 with a 7 second break to Lines and Scott, Symon didn't make any track position gains before retiring at the Hairpin on the final lap. Culver made a great recovery after leaving the track exiting the esses, regaining the four lost positions in one and three-quarters of a lap to claim 5th place.

Race 3 was the class pick-of-the day with Symon and the two Liams continually swapping places at the front of the field throughout the 8 laps, split by 10ths of a second each time they crossed the line. With a lap to run the 1-2 gap was 0.054, Symon grabbed the lead at Turn 1 and wasn't going to be denied, taking the checker .251 ahead of Foster with a 3 second gap to Nicholson and Lines who held off Scott by 2/10ths with Culver next home - for Symon a satisfying end to a difficult weekend.



There was significant interest in the NAPA NZ Formula Ford Championship/Giltrap Group North Island Series because teenage club member Blake Dowdall led the GGNIS by one point from Dylan Grant with a further 11 points to Zach Blincoe. With top South Island drivers Blake Knowles and Will Neale in the 22-car field qualifying would be critical, when the session ended the fastest 12 cars were covered by less than a second. Sebastian Manson topped Mason Potter by .022 with Knowles another 1/100th back in P3 followed by Grant, Toby McCormack and Dowdall who was half a second off the top time. The first 10 lapper was like a high-speed freight train with front rowers Manson and Potter leading the way, the pair swapped positions multiple times, right through the field drivers were involved in duels, often crossing the line side by side. As the race ran out

Manson, Potter, Knowles and Grant had a small break on the pack, Blincoe retired with a lap to run which eased the pressure on Dowdall, that remained the order to the finish with 0.350 the winning margin, Dowdall taking the flag 9.8 seconds after Manson. Race 2 was a virtual carbon copy of the first with the same finishing order for the top 4, however Neale jumped from 12th in Race 1 to 5th in Race 2 to head Blincoe who had Dowdall alongside but .198 behind in P7, more valuable points dropped. Race 3 ended with the first five cars over the line in 9/10ths of a second following an almighty race to the flag. This time Potter got his revenge over Manson by .172 with Neale, Knowles and Grant finishing in a blur of colour, the second wave was nearly five seconds behind with Blincoe again holding out Dowdall, this time by .075. Race 4 was the extended 12 lapper that had Dowdall moving up a place (5th) on the grid, the battle for supremacy and maximum points involved the top five from the previous races with Blincoe, Dowdall, McCormack and Izaak Fletcher locking horns in a second battle. The racing was fast and furious with elbows out before Potter secured back-to-back wins after breaking away from the pack in the closing laps, taking the flag 3.4 ahead of Neale and Manson with a 9/100ths gap to Knowles and Grant, six seconds back Blincoe again bested Dowdall (+.936) with McCormack and Fletcher 3/10ths back. Sebastian Potter recorded the fastest lap of the weekend with a best 1.12.027 and went to the top of the Giltrap Group North Island Series standings, 5 points clear of Dylan Grant and 35 in front of Blake Dowdall with one round remaining.

The appearance of the NAPA NZ Super Truck Championship contenders was again eagerly awaited, in the qualifying session 4.8 seconds covered the 12 entries with defending champion Alex Little 0.037 quicker than Brent Collins and another 4/10ths back to Shane Gray. There was a second Q session for the Flying Farewell where the 'mechanics' took the wheel, Gray stayed in his seat and topped the times 1.317 ahead of Malcolm Little (Alex's father and former multiple national champion) with Garry Price 0.983 slower and 6/10ths to Ricky West. In the first 6 lap Scratch race Little was untroubled to beat Gray by 4.16 seconds with Collins P3, the best duel involved David West and Troy Etting for 4th place, 'Westie' getting home by 8/100ths. The 8 lap Scratch saw Collins take the checker 3.121 ahead of Little with a 13 second gap to Gray, the field covered by 22 seconds at the line. Race 3 was the Reverse Split Grid with the eight starters spread over 25 seconds, Connor Etting, Marc King and Ron Salter being on the front with Collis, Little and Troy Etting at the back. Gray started +10 seconds and took the win by 2.2 from Collins with .499 to Little with Salter best of the rest. Obviously Gray had a big advantage in wheel time for the Flying Farewell, but Ash Grey who qualified P7 (+13.66) pushed King's ageing Cummins repowered International to its limited to claim second 4.4 seconds behind with Peter Bartlett holding out Malcolm Little by .869 in the battle for third - Alex Little set the big rig's weekend fastest lap at 1.25.870.



Turning to the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Series:

Grame Wall (+114 pts) and Chris Huszka (+17 pts) led the RS and SF Cup standings going into the final round with an 18 strong field. Kobe Chapman, Josh Donohue and Connor Cleland headed the SF qualifying with Huszka 7th fastest, in RS rookie Jack Snelgrove headed Wall by 4/10ths, Richard How was next of the six class runners. Reverting to a Mazda MX-5, Donohue had the best start to lead Cleland, Jane, Kane Anderson and Chapman, Lap 2 saw Jane leapfrog Cleland but the race was about to take a dramatic turn with Chapman. Spencer Morris and Huszka involved in a tangle in the esses, the lap ran out with the remainder of the field crossing the line to reform behind the Safety Car. It would take time to remove the three cars and the checker was waved in pit lane after three laps with the order Donohue, Janes, Cleland, Rodney Penn, Carl Fransen and Wall, Nick Kacouris was P2 in the RS class ahead of How, Snelgrove and Andrew Manderson who had missed qualifying. The Reverse Grid had Chapman missing on the grid leaving Anderson and Morris on the front row with Jane and Donohue at the back, Mick Toll and Manderson head the RS group with Kacouris and Wall at the rear. On the opening lap Donohue overtook nine cars to take the lead in the esses with Huska, Jane, Fransen and Cleland in a futile chase, Wall and Kacouris led in RS. The first changes came on Lap 3 with Huszka and Selgrove retiring which elevated the field one position, Cleland overtook Jane on the next lap before Fransen also passed Jane, Donohue had built up a 15 second lead when he took the checker, it was much closer in the pack with Cleland, Jane who retook Fransen by 3/10ths with Morris and Penn completing the top six in a tight group. Wall was P7 and ahead of Kacouris who received a 10 second breakout penalty but retained his 2nd place ahead of How, Toll and Manderson. The field was down to 12 cars for the Handicap, Huszka was one of the four non-starters. Sixty seconds covered the grid with Manderson having a healthy 30 second start on Toll and How with another 5 to Snelgrove, Kacouris and Wall, Fransen was at the front of the SF group with Anna Stewart five seconds behind, at the rear Donohue gave 5 seconds to Cleland and Jane. The early laps saw little change with the running order Manderson, How and Toll with a gap to Wall who led Kacouris and Snelgrove, behind them Fransen, Stewart and Penn from the SF group. As the Manderson Subaru ute drew away at the front the back markers were quickly bringing themselves into contention that came down to a frantic final lap for the minor placings, Manderson crossed the line 18.7 ahead of Howe, Kacouris and a rush led by Donohue, Cleland, Penn, Jane, Fransen and Wall, however four of the RS drivers had time penalties ranging from 20 to 60 seconds which had a big effect on the official placings. Manderson and How were confirmed 1-2, behind them the order was Donohue, Cleland who headed Penn by 2/100ths with Janes rounding out the top six. Wall (20 secs) dropped him 9th, Toll and Snelgrove (each 30 secs) to 10th and 11th respectively, Kacouris (60 secs) fell to 12th and last. In the race for RS Cup points Manderson, How and Wall took the big points, Donohue, Cleland and Penn in the SF Cup.



The IB Cup was the cliff hanger with Richie Arber leading Colin Harper by just 3 points and another 9 to Donald McIntyre, the top six drivers by 21 points, it was game on! Qualifying ended with all 19 cars within 6.8 seconds, the fastest twelve by 3 seconds - Simon Hetterscheid topped the time sheet by .112 from Jason Weel, Dave Burroughs and McIntyre were split by 5/100th, Harper and Russell Chapman by 1/10th with another 4/100ths to Matthew Elliot, Arber was P7 2.403 off the pole time, Mazda rotary exponent Simon Barry made a welcome return to his home circuit but didn't take part in the Q session, forcing him to start from the back of 20 car grid. When the Scratch race lights went out Harper made a lightening start from row 3 to lead exiting Turn 1 from Hetterscheid, Burroughs, McIntyre, Weel, Arber and Ben Duck who started from row 5, Hetterscheid was shuffled back two spots on lap 3, another 3 kilometres saw Chapman slingshot to 4th ahead of Hetterscheid, Duck and Arber. Harper had a 1½ second break on the field going into the final lap that brought a number of positional changes, McIntyre was second home 8/10ths ahead of Burroughs and Chapman then Hetterscheid, Weel, Arber and Nick Stewart, however Chapman had collected 20 seconds penalty time which dropped him to 11th which benefitted the drivers behind him as they chased series points. The Reverse grid had Barry on pole after a DNF, the mid-field was strong with the back three rows stronger again, starting from P8 Derek Clarke bolted into the lead at the Hairpin ahead of Hetterscheid, Steen McGhie, Jonathan Hogg, Caitlin Chowen, Duck and Weel. The big moves began on lap 2 where Weel emerged 3rd followed by Harper, Hogg, Duck, McIntyre and Arber. Clarke was overtaken by Harper going into Turn 1 on lap 4 and soon dropped another three positions, into the final lap was unchallenged at the front with Weel more than a second behind then Hetterscheid, Chapman, McIntyre and Hogg in line astern, however the official result from upstairs showed that Weel (10 secs), Chapman (10 secs) and Harper (30 secs) had incurred time penalties which dropped them to P6, P12 and P16. So Hetterscheid declared the victor 0.413 ahead of McIntyre with Hogg 3rd followed by Clarke, Duck and Weel, Burroughs and Arber were next - McIntyre had one hand on the series' silverware.



JAROD CARRUTHERS PHOTOGRAPHY

The Handicap had a 50 second spread with David Thomsen on scratch, Chowen and Adele Deane at 15 seconds, Barry, McGhie and Nix van Rooijen another 10 back, Weel, Harper, Chapman and Hetterscheid were together at the rear. In the MX5 driven by Josh Donohue in SF Cup Thomsen wouldn't relinquish the lead until the final lap, at the midway point he led Chowen, Barry, Deane and van Rooijen, three ladies in the first six, Arber

headed the chasers. Barry moved to 2nd on lap 4 but still had work to do before hitting front on the final lap to beat Thomsen over the line by 2.3 seconds, four seconds back were Chown and Deane split by 0.224 with Arber gaining seven places on his way to 5th ahead of Duck, a patient McIntyre took the flag 10th behind Van Rooijen. The back markers didn't meet the handicapper's predictions, in 12th place Harper was first of the group followed by Weel despite incurring a 10 second time penalty, Chapman and Hetterscheid (P16).



The GT Cup the field was small in quantity (8 entries) but high in quality with three divers in contention for series honours - Peter Beauchamp topped the standings by 8 points over Ivan Knauf with Jamie Potts 34 further back at the start of the day. Potts laid down the challenge in Qualifying with a best 1.12.641, nearly three seconds faster than Stuart Bovey with 2/10ths to Nick Brough, Knauf and Beauchamp were P4 and P5 but off the pace.

With Bovey a non-starter the Scratch race belonged to Potts from go to whoa, led Beauchamp by 6.6 seconds at half distance with Brough running 3rd after overtaking Knauf on lap 2. There were no positional changes before the flag with Pott's winning margin 7.2, behind Knauf the order was Rowan Trotter, Warren Cleland and Gavin McLaughlin who had missed the Q session. Bovey was on the front row for the Reverse Grid and led the opening two laps before Beauchamp made a pass for a short-lived lead before Potts hit the front, Bovey retired leaving Knauf 3rd followed by Brough, Trotter and Cleland. At the checker flag Potts held a 4.7 advantage over Beauchamp with 1.9 to Brough who had overtaken Knauf on lap 5.

Brough was a DNS for the Handicap leaving six cars spread over 30 seconds, Trotter and Cleland sharing the front row with a 10 second start on Knauf and Beauchamp, another 5 to Bovey and 15 to Potts at the back. Cleland got the jump at the start to lead Trotter for five laps, Beauchamp headed Knauf and Bovey, Potts' charge had ended after two laps. On the final lap Beauchamp was reeling in Cleland and hit the line 0.96 ahead, Trotter was 2.5 back in 3rd with Bovey and Knauf completing the finishers - for Beauchamp a very rewarding day in terms of points.

RH

RUSTY'S NOTES

The biggest story involved three-time Formula First national champion Chris Symon who missed practice and qualifying before arriving at the track in time for Saturday's first race, most unusual, he did explain his lateness. Chris had been attending a school principal's conference in Singapore and arrive home on the Saturday morning! With no qualifying lap time he had to start from the back of the grid in the first race, finishing fourth, there was an extremely rare DNF in race 2 but his weekend finished on a high with victory in race 3 to consolidate his lead in the 2023/24 NZ championship...

It's been revealed that IB Cup driver Donald McIntyre is currently competing in his 61st year of racing and remains extremely competitive driving the #47 Mk1 Ford Escort. Residing in Hawkes Bay, Don is the father of the highly talented John McIntyre who made his circuit racing debut at Manfeild in 1990 as a 13 year old before building a CV that makes impressive reading - three- time winner of the NZ V8 Touring Car Championship, two-time NZ Gold Star Champion, awarded the Jim Clark Trophy, in the Australian V8 Supercars John debuted for Team Kiwi Racing with Jason Richards his teammate in 2002 with his best result in seven Bathurst 1000's being sixth place in 2011 sharing a Stone Brothers Racing FG Falcon with Shane Van Gisbergen, the pair finishing on the lead lap. Part of 47-year-old John's fitness programme is 1,000 push-ups every day, Don is happy to use his son's rowing machine for exercise...

Holding only a three-point lead in the IB Cup at the start of the day club President Richie Arber was hoping for rain, he excels on a wet track. The weather gods let him down, Donald McIntyre took full advantage of the dry to clinch both the series and the Champion-of-Champions Trophy. Maybe our leader didn't pray hard enough...



The grid for the Historic Muscle and Saloon Cars offered great sight and sound with the names of Camaro, Corvette, Ford GT, Mustang and Capri V8 in the field, the Touring Car Masters matched the HMSC with Monaro, Torana SLR5000 and Pontiac Firebird. The results sheets for the TCM showed that the V8's were unable to catch Dan Gordon's turbocharged Datsun that scored a treble, Dan lost out in the audio though...

The IB Cup field was enhanced with the return of Simon Barry after what seemed a long absence. Like Camerson Jones, Simon is a big fan of rotary engines and celebrated his track return by winning the Handicap race by more than two seconds - eezy peezy Japaneez...

One of the stars of the NAPA Super Trucks was Brent Collins in a Team Little Freightliner, his career is testimony his versatility. Go back to the two South Island rounds of February's Super Sprint Series where there was the inaugural Trans-Tasman V8 TA2 Muscle Car Challenge featuring the new generation Trans-Am cars. Collins was the pick of the kiwi drivers and finished runner-up to highly experienced Aussie hot shot Nathan Herne for the individual Trans-Tasman Trophy, Australia claimed the Jason Richards Memorial Trophy (one of three) as the winning team. To further jog memories the South Canterbury driver won the inaugural Toyota Racing Series back in 2005 (Brendon Hartley won the very first race at Timaru) and 10 years later was a Formula 1 driver though not in the 'major league'. Collins F1 experience was driving the unique three-seater Arrows A3X for 'Formula 1 Rides NZ' at South Island circuits, the cars being based on the Arrows A21 that were driven in the 2000 F1 season by Pedro de la Rosa and Max Verstappen, the latter's career has come a long way since those days! With two passenger's side-by-side behind the driver, the pair of A3X cars were built by Tom Walkinshaw Racing and powered by a 3.5 litre V10 that produced 720 bhp and spun to 15,000 rpm. The 'back seaters' paid from \$800 (x3) to \$1,200 (x5) for their hot laps, a real bargain in terms of bang for your buck...

RH

2023/24 M10MSS PRIZE GIVING / MCC AWARDS

This year's dinner took place at Feilding's Coach House Museum on the late afternoon of Saturday 13 April with 65 people attending. Other than the various trophies/awards the function gives the opportunity to acknowledge the club's volunteers who attend at no cost.

Hosted by Russell Harris and Club President Richie Arber, the fast-paced night began with the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series prize giving with M10M manager Andrew Stewart making the presentations and Jeff Braid interviewing the recipients.

RS CUP

Graeme Wall - 631 pts

Jack Snelgrove - 410

Nick Kacouris - 388



SF CUP

Josh Donohue - 592 pts

Connor Cleland - 527

Logan Jane - 523

IB CUP

Donald McIntyre - 458 pts

Richie Arber - 436

Colin Harper - 423



GT CUP

Peter Beauchamp - 577 pts

Ivan Knauf - 513

Jamies Potts - 460

In Peter's absence the trophy was accepted by his daughter Emily



CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS
Donald McIntyre



Dinner was next on the agenda, as always of the highest quality from the CHM kitchen.

Prior to the MCC Awards a very significant gift was presented to the club by our photographer Jarod Carruthers. It was a crash helmet signed by many of the top drivers who raced in the Nissan-Mobil 500's on the Wellington waterfront circuit in the 1980's and 1990's. The Manawatu Car Club was heavily involved in those events, officials, volunteers and drivers, also many of the names competed at Manfeild during their careers, President Richie Aber accepted the gift that is now included in the club's archives.



MANAWATU CAR CLUB VOLUNTEER AWARDS

MIKE WEBSTER MEMORIAL TROPHY

Dedication and Excellence in Flag Department
Presented by Section Head Shaun Thompson
Award Recipient: Colin Hamilton



V FORCE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Presented by Crash/Rescue Section Head Bob Higginson

Award Recipient: Felesha Peters



ALWYN DAVIES MEMORIAL TROPHY

Rescue Marshal Award

Presented by Crash/Rescue Section Head Bob Higginson

Award Recipient: Mitchell Miller



KIRK TROPHY

Helper's Award

Presented by Crash/Rescue Section Head Bob Higginson

Award Recipient: Thomas Bingley



BLAIR TENNENT MEMORIAL TROPHY

Outstanding Club Participation

Presented by Crash/Rescue Section Head Bob Higginson

Award Recipient: Hokimoana Tawa and Manu Jensen





ROSS TILSON MEMORIAL CUP

Long Service Award

Presented by Crash/Rescue Section Head Bob Higginson

Award Recipient: Noel Beale



A member of the crash/rescue team, Felesha's award was met with the volunteers standing in respect before making her way forward on crutches (wearing a moon boot) to receive the V-Force Rookie OTY trophy.

The success of the night was due to the assistance and support of CHM manager Piki Fairbairn and her volunteers, chef Adele Parker and her team, Jill Hogg who led the organising group and club photographer Jarod Carruthers.

Also acknowledged were the V-Force volunteers together with the competitors who attended with family/friends, particularly those who travelled from outside of the region.

The evening concluded with President Richie making a presentation to Andrew Stewart in appreciation of the ongoing support of the Summer Series by Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega in Palmerston North, it was revealed that their sponsorship began 8 years ago in 2016. Two years earlier the series was first run with Road Marking Services having the naming rights.



RH

MX-5 HERITAGE CUP

It's approaching 15 years since a small group of club members formed the popular Mazda MX-5 racing category for the 2010/11 season. Their purpose was to create a cost-effective class running the 1.6 litre MX-5 Mk1 with specific limited modifications allowed and running control tyres. The cars were and continue to be crowd pleasers thanks to big grids and close racing.

The category was a late starter in the South Island, but a breakthrough took place in 2022 when their top drivers participated in the FAE Winter Series with Benny Yan and Everard Petrie proving to be extremely competitive against their much more experienced rivals.

Creating the Heritage Cup was the culmination of efforts involving Waimate based enthusiast Sam Murray and others to bring MX-5 racing in both islands closer together while offering the opportunity to race at different circuits. 2024 saw the concept become reality when eight North Island cars were transported to Timaru's Levels Raceway for the first of the three southern rounds in what was effectively a north versus south challenge. Next stop was Teretonga with wind and rain that comes directly off Foveaux Strait, then heading up SH1 to Ruapuna Park on the outskirts of Christchurch for Round 3 - the racing wasn't over consecutive weekend's, so the drivers returned to their respective home towns while their cars were moved together on a transporter.

The cars and quality of the racing created significant interest on the Mainland with positive feedback from track officials and spectators that will hopefully lead to an increase in competitor numbers. At the end of the three rounds Benny Yan (784 pts) topped the standings from Shane Hayter (700 pts) and Dean Evans (691 pts). The group's camaraderie was shown at Round 2 when Dean Evans' car suffered an engine problem (head gasket?) which would sideline him from the racing, fellow motoring journalist Richard Bosselman generously stepped in by sacrificing his own wheel time on the track, leasing his #89 to 'Dean the Machine' who showed his gratitude by winning three of the four races!



The fourth and final round of the Heritage Cup series took place at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon as part of the Stewart's Mitre 10 Mega Summer Series finale. Unfortunately, Yan and Petrie were unable to attend, the south's sole representative being rookie Mick Toll from Mapua near Nelson, Josh Donohue and Connor Cleland joined the grid to create a 12-car field. Dom Fransen topped the 'Q' session from Matt Dilly and Alex Corpe, the trio covered by 0.481, with 6/10ths back to Shayne Hayter, however Fransen was given a three-grid position penalty for causing a red flag.

The Scratch race began dramatically when Evans and Hayter tangled in Turn 1 on the second lap which handed the lead to Donohue who started from the back row followed by Corpe, Dilly and Fransen, Donohue convincingly beat Fransen by 6.7 seconds with 0.745 to Matt Dilly who edged Corpe by 5/100ths.

The Reverse Grid had Toll and Taupo's Darrell Harris on the front row, Guy Brandon and Mike Dunn formed the second row with Donohue and Cleland starting at the back, the pair making immediate inroads into the pack ahead of them. Donohue was chasing the double but retired after five of the 8 laps while Cleland was in the mix starting the final lap that produced the closest finish of the weekend with the first four covered by half a second in a desperate run to the flag, Fransen headed Dilly by .603, Corpe was +.206 and Cleland +.583 with a big gap to Evans and Hayter who rounded out the top six.

The grid for Race 3 was set by accumulated points from the previous two races which put Fransen and Dilly on the front row with Corpe and Shane Hayter behind them. Donohue started from P8 on Row 4 and took the lead on Lap 2, crossing the line 3.41 ahead of Fransen and Dilly, behind them were Corpe, Cleland and Evans covered by 0.435.

At the end of the day Dom Fransen and Matt Dilly headed the round points, however the first name to be engraved on the MX-5 Heritage Cup was Shayne Hayter from Bunnythorpe with Dean Evans and Alex Corpe second and third respectively. The prizegiving took place in their 'garage area' following their racing where Taupo's Darrell Harris was named winner of the series prize, a set of new tyres. She raced in the NZ Six class before switching to a Mazda MX-5, becoming the first woman to race in the category. She travelled over the Strait for the three South Island rounds and like the other 'northerners' enjoyed a great first-time experience on three different circuits.

Proudly supported by Geartech, H.E.L., Garage 5 and Sam Murray's Route 66 Gilligan's Tours, the MX-5 Heritage Cup has a guaranteed future that will certainly increase interest in the category, particularly in the South Island...

RH

HARTLEY FILE

Fully recovered from the foot injury, Brendon's 2024 campaign began in America with the Rolex Daytona 24 Hour on the road course at the famous Florida speedway.

Brendon and his co-drivers finished second last year in an Acura one-two result, the Wayne Taylor Racing with Andretti entry lined up against eight other GTP spec cars on this occasion including the new V8 powered BMW M Hybrid for the traditional 'Roar Before The 24' that ends with the setting of the grid for the big race.

The time sheets looked different after each of the six practice sessions with the new Cadillac V-LMDh cars looking very strong throughout the week before locking out the front row of the grid and Pipo Derani setting a new track record, the leading Penske Porsche 963 and BMW M would share Row 2 with the two Acuras together on Row 3, the six cars covered by under 7/10ths of a second.



Three New Zealand drivers were in the six-pack, the cars of Tom Blomqvist and Scott Dixon were front rowers with Brendon Hartley's Acura starting from P6. Scott McLaughlin's team were 13th fastest in the LMP2 class and started from P22 while Earl Bamber was 21 places further back sharing the Corvette Racing Z06 GT3.R entered in the GTD Pro class.

Brendon's #10 Acura was troubled with both powertrain and electrical issues that kept the car out of contention, it was eventually retired from the race after covering 601 laps, classified 9th in the GTP Category and 43rd overall, a very disappointing start to the year. Fellow countryman Scott Dixon feared worse, starting from the front row his new Cadillac suffered similar problems and was retired earlier in the 15th hour with 423 laps completed for P10 in class and 47th overall.

At the front of the field a battle raged involving four Porsche 963s, a Cadillac, an Acura and the two Hybrid BMWs that were the first to drop off the pace with nine hours to run. The lead changed frequently as strategies and fuel consumption came into play, five cars were on the lead lap going into the final hour, after the final refuelling stops it became a duel between a Penske Porsche and Tom Blomqvist who drove the final three hours in the remaining Cadillac, the Porsche leading thanks to a quicker pit stop as it required less fuel. When the flag fell at the completion of 791 laps the margin was 2.112 seconds, 15 seconds behind the pair was the sole Acura that made the podium by only 4/10ths with a trio of Porsche 963s rounding out the top six finishers, the first five cars covered by 44 seconds after 24 hours racing - for Roger Penske the victory marked 55 years since he triumphed in the 1969 race sharing a Lola T70 Chevrolet.



Two other New Zealand drivers finished, Scott McLaughlin's car was 5th in the highly competitive LMP2 class and 13th overall, Earl Bamber's Chevrolet Corvette was a strong contender for GTD Pro honours before a power steering issue in the final six hours dropped them back to 8th and 37th overall, completing 715 laps.

Following the Rolex 24 Brendon's attention immediately switched to defending his FIA World Endurance Championship title, the 12th season has been expanded to eight rounds in eight countries and includes four new venues in Qatar, Italy, USA and Brazil.

Round 1 took place on 02 March at Qatar's Lusail International Circuit, round 2 is in Italy at Imola that replaces Monza, Round 3 the 6 Hours of Spa Francorchamps followed by the 24 Hours of Le Mans that carries double points. From Europe it's across the Atlantic and Brazil for the new 6 Hours of Sao Paulo then to Texas where Round 6 will be run at the Circuit of the Americas, a move from Sebring in Florida. The final rounds remain the 6 Hours of Fuji which is Toyota's home race and the 8 Hours of Bahrain that takes place on 02 November.

It's an interesting schedule for our man in a championship that will be raced on a blend of familiar and unfamiliar circuits taking the WEC to new countries and new markets with more than double the number of Hypercars (19) on the grid.

GT3 is the only other category this year (the LMP2 cars will only compete in the Le Mans 24 Hour) and has attracted nine manufacturers with each allowed a maximum of two entries - Aston Martin, BMW, Chevrolet, Ferrari, Ford, Lamborghini, Lexus, McLaren, Porsche

The State of Qatar is located on the Persian Gulf in the Middle East and has great wealth through its oil and gas resources. The newly sealed 5.38-kilometre 16 turn Losail International Circuit has both FIA Grade 1 and FIM Grade A ratings allowing the track to stage both two and four wheel racing at the highest level. The race's title, Qatar 1812 KM acknowledges the national commemoration of the country's unification in 1878 that's celebrated each year on 18 December, the 1812 is the race distance in kilometres with a 10-hour time limit.

Round 1 traditionally hosts the Prologue, the final pre-series testing sessions, the start being delayed by two days because of shipping problems. The Hypercar entry list made impressive reading - Porsche 5, Ferrari 3, Toyota 2, Alpine 2, Peugeot 2, BMW 2 with single entries for Cadillac, Lamborghini and Isotto Fraschini.

The pair of Toyota GR010s appeared with in a striking new matt black livery with the #7 car having a change in the driver line-up, former test and reserve driver Nyck De Vries replaced the long serving José Maria Lopez while both cars were carrying 9 kgs more Balance of Performance weight than last year and also a 4Kw (5.3 bhp) reduction of maximum power, that 9 kgs made the Toyotas the heaviest cars on the grid.



Brendon - "I'm so excited about this season. We expect our competitors will be tough and we can expect some good fights. Qualifying will be more important than ever and every point, every overtake, every position will be significant. We need to make no mistakes, work closely as a team, and put all the pieces together to reach our full potential. As World Champions, there is a target on our back again and a bit more pressure, but this is an amazing team with a lot of experience, so we feel ready for the challenge".

Despite the delay the Prologue programme was completed with four sessions, teams could only take part in three of the tests with the second and third sessions being mandatory. Not surprisingly each session produced very interesting time sheets.

Only three Hypercars cars took part in FP1 where the Hertz Team Jota Porsche 963s head the Isotta Fraschini by 4½ seconds, FP2 saw the Hertz cars split by a Ferrari with the Toyota's well down the sheet, #8 13th (+1.911) and #7 three places back (+2.195). The two Penske 963s were separated by a Peugeot in FP3, the #7 Toyota improved to 6th (+.566) while Brendon's #8 car fell to 14th fastest at +1.47 seconds. FP4 completed the Prologue, Penske again topped the sheets with the quickest lap of the four sessions (1.40.404), there was a 0.054 gap to the Cadillac with the three Ferraris next ahead of both Peugeots, Toyota were again off the pace in 12th, #8 +1.693 with the #7 0.141 slower and one place back.

How much can be read into the Prologue times is debateable as it was the WEC's first time at the circuit and all the teams would have run different programmes in preparation for the actual race practice and qualifying over the following days.

In the first of the pre-race sessions a Penske Porsche headed the times .046 ahead a Ferrari with the balance of the top six reading Porsche, Cadillac, Porsche, Porsche, the Toyotas sat 8th (#7 +.716) and 12th (#8 +1.041), slowest was the Isotta Fraschini, 1.84 down on the best time. The #6 Penske car also topped the second session .782 quicker than a Peugeot, again the Toyotas were unable to match the front runners pace finishing P8 (#7 +1.549) and P13 (#8 +2.118). Session 3 saw both Toyotas still struggling for pace with #7 9th (+.863) and the #8 a lowly 17th more than two seconds slower than the sheet topping Cadillac.



The signs looked ominous heading into qualifying before De Vries clocked the second fastest lap .423 behind the Penske #5 in Q1, Brendon in the #8 car was sitting 10th as the clock ran down but with the checker out was bumped by 0.017 in the final seconds, he would start the race from Row 6. In the top 10 Hyperpole four of the five Porsche 963s made it through, Aussie Matt Campbell snatched pole position in the #5 Penske car by 0.164 from De Vries with a Hertz 963 and Ferrari 499P sharing the second row of the grid, the Earl Bamber co-driven Cadillac qualified 7th. The fastest five cars lapped under 1.40 with Campbell recording a 1.39.347 flyer in securing the first WEC pole for the Porsche 963 and a LMDh spec car.

“It was a tricky day for us in car #8. I grained the left-hand side tyres within a couple of laps and didn’t get to do a representative lap time. It came as a bit of a surprise. Unfortunately, we start 11th and we are down a set of tyres because they are completely destroyed. We have to analyse and understand what happened to our tyres and why we couldn’t do a proper lap. Overall, it is positive from a team perspective because Nyck did a great job. Second was unexpected but they really maximised the performance of the car”.

From the noon rolling start came the first indication that it wasn’t going to be Toyota’s day when both cars lost track position at the first corner, #7 went from the front row to 7th while the #8 car fell three spots to 14th, from the second row a Ferrari emerged as the leader before being overtaken by a Peugeot after 30 minutes, the Cadillac also got involved with an impact causing left front damage and later in the race incurred a 10 second time penalty for contact with a BMW GT3.

Hour 1 ended with a Peugeot leading four Porsches, the three Ferraris with the #7 Toyota next. Brendon took over the #8 approaching the Hour 2 mark and had a difficult stint as the team continued to struggle with tyre degradation, by the end of Hour 4 he had moved forward to 10th before Hirakawa took the wheel for the final stint under lights, the running order being Porsche 963, Peugeot, 963, 963, Ferrari, #7 Toyota.

As the clock ran down fuel strategies were playing out, the Penske #6 Porsche leading the Peugeot before the drama unfolded. With less than 10 laps to run the leading car made an unscheduled stop to have its missing left side number panel replaced before the French team were dealt a cruel blow going into the final lap when the wingless 9X8 ran out of fuel and limped over the line on hybrid power only, allowing Porsche to make a clean sweep of the podium, 30 seconds separating the first two cars, a lap down were the Cadillac, #83 Ferrari, #7 Toyota and #93 Peugeot, the Toyota of Hartley, Buemi and Hirakawa crossed the line two laps down in 11th place, however the drama wasn’t quite over as the Peugeot was disqualified for the breach of a technical regulation. As a result, the finishers behind the Peugeot moved up one place, promoting the Toyotas to 6th and 10th to put both cars in the points. It was dominant victory for Penske and the team’s first in the WEC, their #6 car took the lead on lap 54 and over the next 282 laps was only headed in the pit stop sequences.



Brendon - “It’s been a challenging day, at the end of a challenging week, particularly on our side of the garage. Neither car had the speed to fight for the podium. Nevertheless, we salvaged points on both cars, and we all fought really hard for them. I am proud of all the team for the way we responded and kept fighting, we raced as hard as we could and now we will focus on fighting back at the next race”.

The Qatar 1812KM marked a number of firsts - the longest 'regular' WEC race outside the Le Mans 24 Hour (the 1812 kilometre distance was completed in 9 hours 56 minutes, four minutes under the cut-off time), the first time that Toyota had not been on the podium since Silverstone in 1981 and the first WEC victory for Porsche since 2017 at Austin, Texas, when their winning LMP1 919 Hybrid was driven by Brendon Hartley, Timo Bernhard and Earl Bamber.

An interesting point was that both Kamui Kobayashi (#7) and Brendon (#8) each only drove a double stint of less than two hours.

Obviously, Toyota Gazoo Racing have a lot of things to work on to improve the pace of the GR010 after neither car finished on the lead lap, as well as overcoming the degradation of the Michelin tyres that may have been caused by the additional BOP weight.

In late March Brendon and the Toyota team were involved in a 36 hour endurance test in Portugal. Throughout there were periods of rain which added to the challenge but there were very few issues. Following the troubled race in Qatar, round 2 takes on a new importance.

A month following the Qatar race it was announced that the fourth placed Cadillac had been disqualified for non-compliant bodywork which elevated the Toyota entries to 5th and 9th in the revised result.

The 6 Hours of Imola on 21 April saw top-level endurance racing return to the grandly named Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari in Northern Italy for the first time in 40 years, it's one of the few international circuits that runs in an anti-clockwise direction.

Between Qatar and Imola officials addressed the controversial Balance of Performance, perhaps surprisingly Peugeot were hit with 13 Kgs additional weight and a power reduction of 10 kW (13 bhp) while the other eight Hypercar class makes had their weight decreased and power increased! Toyotas and Ferrari benefited most with the GR010 Hybrid losing 29 kg with a 6-kW gain, Ferrari dropped 34 kgs and had its maximum power raised by 7 kW.

For Brendon it was a return to the circuit after 11 years - "The Italian passion for motor racing is legendary, and we are heading to home territory for Ferrari, so the atmosphere at Imola should be amazing. I'm expecting a special weekend and a particularly tight battle at the front. No one can afford to make even the smallest mistake in qualifying or the race itself with such close competition, you can lose a lot of positions. We all need to be on top form to challenge at the front." His words would prove to be prophetic.



The first practice sessions proved a point, in FP1 Ferrari AF Corse were 1-2 on the time sheet with the new version of the Peugeot 9X8 third quickest, the only three cars to post sub 1.32 laps, the Lamborghini SC63 led the other runners while the two GR Toyotas were 9th and 10th split by 3/10ths but 1.2 seconds off the pace. The benefits of the revised BOP became more evident in FP2, two Ferraris were split by a Penske Porsche while the #8 Toyota improved six places to be 4th fastest in the hands of Buemi, 0.772 behind the lead Ferrari that had a best lap of 1.30.957, a 4/10ths improvement on the morning session, the Peugeot dropped down the order.

Brendon - "We had a drama free day and were just discovering the track because it's a long time since most of us drove here. It was so nice to drive the GR010 around here, particularly after the race in Qatar which is so different. It was fun to have no run-offs, a bumpy surface and kerbs you can use; it was such a pleasure to drive. Ferrari looked incredibly quick, but we are doing everything we can to close the gap and it's been productive."

Day 2's FP3 saw Ferrari complete a clean sweep of the practice sessions but there was a very different look behind the front runners, both BMW M Hybrids (+.034), the 'privateer' AF Corse Ferrari and a Penske Porsche that were all within 0.433, the Toyotas were 7th and 9th on the sheet leading into qualifying.

Qualifying had the crowd in a frenzy as Ferrari topped the times, all 19 Hypercars were on the track for the 12-minute session, so traffic became a problem, Brendon waited until the final minutes to secure P3 (+.381), one place ahead of Kobayashi in the #7 (+.440) to put both Toyotas into the hectic 10 minute Hyperpole shootout. The Jota Hertz Porsche, Cadillac, Lamborghini, Isotta Fraschini, the Peugeots and Alpines were on the wrong side of the cut-off.

The Ferrari trio upped their pace to be 1-2-3 and the only cars lapping under 1.30, the quickest Porsche was P4 but 9/10ths off the pole time, Brendon had a spin at Turn 7 on his hot lap which dropped him to 8th (+1.186), the sister car was two places ahead (+.944). "I loved driving the car around here with low fuel and new tyres. It's a great old school track so it's a lot of fun. I think we had the pace for the top six but had some traffic on my fastest lap, I also had a spin in Hyperpole so it didn't quite work out. I think 4th was potentially the best we could have achieved today but it wasn't to be".

Overtaking proved difficult on the narrow Imola circuit, Toyota gained positions with smart strategy and fast efficient pit stops that had the cars 3rd and 5th by the first driver change at the end of Hour 2. The race scenario changed dramatically when rain arrived in Hour 4 to throw the race wide open, it intensified during a Safety Car period so when the race went green the Toyotas immediately pitted for 'wet' tyres, poorly advised and on a different strategy the Ferraris stayed out and their challenge effectively ended.

The #7 car quickly built up a 20 second lead while Brendon also capitalised on the extra grip to be P3 before the other cars were able to pit, at the Hour 5 mark the GR010 Hybrids stopped and reverted to 'slick' tyres, Brendon's stop being slower because of the pit lane traffic. Kobayashi continued to lead while Hartley struggled to get his new tyres up to temperature on the still damp surface (tyre warmers are not allowed this year) and twice crossed a gravel trap but when the heat penetrated the rubber compound, he put in a series of fast laps to move into 4th place.

The final 30 minutes were tense as both Toyotas were forced to drive more efficiently to maximise their range with less fuel, Kobayashi coming under intense pressure from the leading Porsche before taking the flag 2.081 seconds ahead, the Penske car had earlier incurred a five second time penalty so the official margin was 7.081, a second Penske 963 (+25.626) completed the podium. For TGR the drama wasn't over as Brendon locked a brake at the Tamburello chicane on the final lap, was overtaken by the lead Ferrari and had to settle for P5, 2.31 behind the Italian car and 33.777 seconds behind the winning sister car - "Massive congratulations to the team for taking a victory on Ferrari's home turf. They were clearly faster but car #7 played the right cards at the right moment to finish on top. It was a tougher day for us in car #8. We were very closed to the podium placed

and I loved driving around here. In the final stint we had to save energy and lost a position on the last lap that was frustrating. In the end it wasn't the result we wanted but it was an amazing team performance".

The result saw Toyota Gazoo Racing move to second in the Manufacturer standings, nine points behind Porsche and 17 ahead of Ferrari with newcomer BMW M Team WRT next on 10 points. In the Driver Championship the Penske Porsche trio of Lotterer/Estre/Vanthor currently lead Toyota's Kobayashi/Conway/De Vries by 16 points with a single point to the second Penske entry, defending champions Hartley/Hirakawa/Buemi are seventh, 40 points off the top spot after two of the eight rounds.

The next stop is Belgium with the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on 9-11 May, then the iconic Le Mans 24 Hour classic that carries double points...

RH

RUSTY SAYS THANK YOU

In my life I have been privileged to have a number of very special flights in RNZAF aircraft, rides in super-fast jet boats, exotic road cars, hot laps in Greg Murphy's V8 Supercar and a W12 Bentley Continental but what I experienced at Manfeild Circuit Chris Amon during January's Super Sprint meeting took my emotions to another level.

I was aware of the ride with long-time friend Brian Green in his GT4-spec McLaren, but nothing other than what time to be at the circuit. Dressed in the required race suit complete with HANS device and helmet, 'loading' me into the car was something of an experience in itself as I wasn't born to be a contortionist, safety harness tightened before the turbocharged vee-eight was started to head to the dummy grid in readiness. I noted the people standing alongside the grid but nothing clicked in my mind, I didn't know about rally star Emma Gilmore doing an interview for the TV coverage either, I did note Brian turned on the windscreen wipers.





What happened next was so humbling and unexpected, slowly driving down pit lane between two lines of clapping Manawatu Car Club officials and Manfeild V-Force volunteers, my people. It was a moment neither Brian or I had previously experienced with emotional tears forming.



With the combination of a damp track and slick tyres the ride itself will always be remembered, a story in itself. Back into pit lane, a reaction interview, into the 'garage', unstrapped, helmet and HANS removed, exiting was much easier and a surprise greeting from Murph, Greg and I go back to 1990 when he won the inaugural Shell Formula Ford Scholarship as an 18-year-old.





Changing into 'civvies', the enormity and meaning of what had taken place began to hit home. I will forever be grateful to Brian, Richie Arber, and Lance Hastie who were key in the planning, the mechanics for getting me in and out of the car and those who formed the guard of honour - it was an experience like no other that involved my people.

For those watching on television, the footage would have clearly illustrated that the spirit of our club is very much alive and well.

The ultimate tribute make the words 'thank you' seem so inadequate...

RH

