

Press Release



Christchurch's turn for Suzuki Swift race car round

This weekend's 10-11 December contest for the six round 2011/2012 Suzuki Swift Sport Cup title heads for South Island soil as the championship field lines up at Christchurch's Powerbuilt Tools Raceway at Ruapuna.

The second and final for the 2011 leg of the summer car race series will be one of the tougher events on the nationwide championship calendar. The technical nature of the 3.33km course traditionally splits the competition field, with some revelling in the conditions while others struggle to bridge the lap-time divide.

"It's always a great weekend at Ruapuna," says Suzuki's motorsport manager Darren Stevens.

"Everything about the place brings out the true character of the individual behind the wheel – it makes or breaks them. Plus it's the South Island hospitality, and for many, a chance to support the city by visiting and contributing to the local economy."

Just over a month since the season's opening round at Pukekohe, the field drops to 12 cars for this weekend's three-race programme. And while Taupo's Mark Gibson took an early lead in the championship, series co-ordinator Paul Burborough says the chasing pack will be keen on reeling in the advantage, especially Rangiora's Chris Cox.

"Following his first win in the latter stages of last season Chris Cox has proven he has what it takes. I'd really expect him to pour pressure on those around him to catch a break and leap ahead," says Burborough.

"It's hard to gauge when you've got the field in identical 1600cc cars but Chris is one who's got both some local knowledge and racing nous – so it'll be interesting to see how close the times are again this year."

Burborough's comment is backed by last year's top-12 fastest cars being separated by less than a second in qualifying at the circuit:

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“If you consider over 3.3km of race track that 12 cars could all set a lap time within a second of each other you can appreciate how incredibly close the competition is. They’re no wood-ducks, they’re all young yet incredibly mature and professional racers – it makes for fantastic spectating.”

Oamaru’s Joseph Paton is the only other South Island resident driver in the series and arrives for the weekend fresh from contesting a club weekend of racing two weeks prior.

Formerly from Nelson, Castrol Scholarship winner Kent Yarrall has raced the Ruapuna circuit many times, although not yet in the supplied Suzuki Swift Sport Cup car.

Allowed two test sessions on the Friday in preparation for the racing, the day concludes with hot-lap rides for promotion winners and guests.

Saturday morning’s 20 minute qualifying session will set the start order for the afternoon eight-lap race, with three additional points on offer for setting fastest time in the session.

A race win carries a further 75 points.

Sunday morning’s eight-lap race is a full reverse grid from Saturdays result with the afternoon and final ten-lap race starting order a combination of the two. The three drivers with the highest points’ accumulation for the weekend then partake in a podium ceremony late in the afternoon.

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