

Press Release



Lauder wins Suzuki race at blustery Teretonga

Thames teen AJ Lauder took a narrow victory in today's 30-lap Suzuki Swift Sport Cup race around Invercargill's Teretonga circuit, battling changing weather conditions to deny Rangiora's Chris Cox the win by a mere 0.3 of a second at the chequered flag.

The third round of the 2011/2012 summer race season, bleak weather has added to the weekend's challenge with heavy rain early in the weekend bringing respite to the recent Southland drought. Although the Saturday afternoon race was held under clearing skies, high winds buffeted the small 1600cc cars along the main straight.

Led from the start by Nelson's Kent Yarrall, who set fastest time in the morning qualifying, he lost the advantage just after the first lap when Lauder sling-shot past. Assisted by a slick pit-stop compulsory for all teams', Lauder held his advantage but came under mounting pressure from Cox who was close to snatching the win.

"It was a long race," said the 17-year-old Lauder. "Although to lead it from pretty much begin to end was a highlight and the result is really important for my championship.

"The team pulled together and we had a really good pit-stop, even for my brother," added Lauder, whose 15-year-old brother finished third overall for the race.

Yarrall finished fourth with Hamilton's Shaun Lawrence fifth.

"It was a great effort from all the drivers' and teams'," said category co-ordinator Paul Burborough.

"As well as AJ Lauder setting a new lap record right at the end of the race, his win was hard fought. The competition was incredibly fierce during the pit-stop and that helped keep the on-track racing close. But also that everyone finished, that's a great result in itself."

The new record for a Suzuki Swift Sport Cup around the 2.62km circuit is 1min12sec643.

Suzuki New Zealand's motorsport manager Darren Stevens said the race was a real test for

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more than just the cars': "It was a great result for AJ after such a long race and it was great to see the likes of Chris Cox back up there. Even Brad Lauder – that was fantastic for him finishing third at such a challenging circuit.

"Having all the cars finish and in one piece was another achievement and a credit to the drivers' and teams'."

Takapau's Sam Barry had a heavy impact in Friday's first practise session, slipping from the circuit in the wet conditions. While team-mate and panelbeater Glen Collinson assisted in repairing the car its appearance exceeded its performance.

Despite hail and westerly gales being predicted for the Sunday, the drivers' have two races to complete, starting with a ten-lap reverse-grid race at 11am followed by a 12-lap race at 2:45 in the afternoon.

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