

SUZUKI NEW ZEALAND LIMITED

Private Bag 3008, WANGANUI 4540

NEW ZEALAND

HEAD OFFICE: 1 Heads Road

WANGANUI

NEW ZEALAND

TEL: +64-6-3491222

FAX: +64-6-3491212

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2 December 2009

2009/32



THREE ON THE TROT FOR BAMBER AT RUAPUNA

Wanganui youngster William Bamber is marking himself out as a motor racing champion in the making after sterling performances in the early rounds of the Suzuki Swift Sport Cup series.

Following an opening season victory at Pukekohe in early November, Bamber consolidated his points lead by taking out all three championship races at Ruapuna near Christchurch on November 28/29.

William showed his maturity and will to win by overcoming challenging conditions and tough opposition to score maximum points and boost his two-round score to 421 points.

In his Suzuki Swift Sport debut championship last summer Bamber finished second overall, but has become the driver to beat this season. He set the pace right from the start of a wet qualifying session on the Canterbury circuit, clocking the fastest practice time.

Bamber then won the first qualifying race and, on the following day, not only celebrated his sixteenth birthday, but crossed the finishing line first in the subsequent two Swift Sport events.

If William made it sound easy, then quite the reverse was true. In qualifying a mere 1.85 seconds separated the top five Suzukis, with promising Aucklander Ben Dallas finishing runner-up and two-times Swift Sport Cup Champion Cody McMaster third. Christchurch driver McMaster, racing on his home turf, was always going to be a major threat. Fourth top qualifier was Grant Ryan, followed by AJ Lauder and Craig Innes. After being the fastest in Friday mornings testing session, new entrant Hamish Cross driving ex Thurpps 08/09 car showed this class comes down to the driver and the set-up. Where Cross set the seventh fastest practice time ahead of 18-year-old Castrol Scholarship winner Matt Gibson. Cross finished in the top four in all three races held over the weekend.

Dallas made a good start in the first race but was overcome by the identical 1.6-litre Swift Sports of Ryan, McMaster and Bamber, all battling for the lead. Cross, who was third on the fourth lap, moved up to second soon after and then took the lead on lap 6, only to be beaten to the flag by Bamber in the eight lap event. Hamish set the fastest lap of 1 minute 44.457 seconds and finished less than two-tenths of a second behind the winner, with McMaster hot on his heels, and Dallas back in fourth.

Cross made a great start in the second race, with Bamber second and Gibson third. This round quickly developed into a race-long struggle between Cross and Bamber while McMaster fell back after running wide and snagging a marker cone under his car. Cody even put his Swift onto two wheels in an effort to dislodge the cone, set the fastest race lap of 1 minute 43.579 seconds, and managed to finish sixth.

Just when it seemed Cross would take top honours, a frantic last lap battle saw Bamber and Dallas sneak through for first and second positions respectively. Cross missed a gear change and swept home third ahead of Gibson and Alan Dunkley. It was a great end to a nail-biting race.

Young AJ Lauder's Swift had been damaged in the opening race the previous day, but an overnight repair saw the car return to the grid for Sunday's racing. The series also welcomed back Whangarei Triple-X Team Motorsport driver Scott Harrison who had badly damaged his car after a spectacular roll-over at Pukekohe. Harrison was rewarded by a fine drive in the final reverse grid race when he took an early lead from fifth on the grid to eventually finish runner-up, less than a second behind winner Bamber. McMaster suffered a drive-through penalty and finished in 14th position, while Cross was third ahead of Dunkley and Hamilton's Shaun Lawrence. Bamber set the fastest race lap time of 1 minute 43.897 seconds, slightly slower than McMaster's best lap in the second race.

The series heads for the Southland circuit of Teretonga for round three on January 15-17 with the three top contenders - Bamber, Dallas and McMaster - locked in battle for the championship lead. Dallas is 58 points behind Bamber with 363 points, followed by McMaster (315), Dunkley (296), Gibson (289) and Aucklander Mike Turley (243).

...ends...

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Automotive Marketing Team
admin@suzuki.co.nz