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7 November 2009

## **SWIFT ROOKIE GIBSON WINS ON DEBUT**

- **Wanganui's Gibson wins first race of the season from third row of the grid**
- **McMaster and Bamber penalised for jumping the start**
- **Castrol's Suzuki Swift Scholarship picks a winner**

Wanganui young gun Matt Gibson, driving the Castrol Scholarship Suzuki Swift Sport, has won the first race of the 2009-2010 Suzuki Swift Sport Cup at Pukekohe today.

Starting off fifth position on the grid, he pushed the leading cars harder and harder as the race progressed.

Both two-time winner Cody McMaster (Christchurch) and Wanganui's William Bamber had qualified ahead of rookie Gibson, who is the recipient of the Castrol Suzuki Swift Scholarship, a package worth more than \$50,000. They set the pace in the race, but were judged to have jumped the start and relegated down the race finish order, leaving Gibson a clear winner

In qualifying this morning, McMaster took pole with a 1:13.673 lap time on the fast 2.841 Pukekohe circuit.

Rising star William Bamber was second to McMaster in the series last year and was close behind him in qualifying with a 1:13.768.

The race lap record is a 1:13.184 set by William Bamber last year.

The Suzukis kicked off the "tier one" season, first race of the day, weekend and summer season of motorsport.

Sixteen cars took the start line for the race, with pole-man McMaster and Bamber locked in a drag race for the first corner when the flag dropped.

Bamber was slightly ahead of McMaster, and the pair went through Stables corner side by side, neither willing to give way. The following left hand turn into the esses feeds into the right hand Castrol corner onto the back straight and should have given McMaster the advantage, but Bamber clung on alongside and edged into the lead as the field emerged onto the long back straight.

McMaster harried the younger driver mercilessly, even tapping the rear of his car late in the race, but could not overtake.

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A momentary indiscretion even allowed Gibson through from third to hold second place for most of a lap.

Behind them, Sam Robinson had started directly behind Gibson but spun off through the esses and hit the tyre barrier at Castrol, rejoining in last place and almost a lap down on the leaders.

In the closing laps McMaster tried everything he knew to overtake Bamber, but could not get past. The on-track finish order was a flying wedge of three swift racers: Bamber and McMaster nose to tail and Gibson just 2/100<sup>th</sup> of a second behind.

Once the front two had been handed a five second penalty apiece for their start-line transgression, the official results showed Gibson the winner, 2.503 seconds ahead of 2008-2009 Castrol Scholarship recipient Ben Dallas who crossed the line neck and neck with another Auckland racer, Alan Dunkley, third. Just 6/1000ths of a second separated the Dallas and Dunkley.

Gibson also recorded fastest lap time of the race, a 1:14.314 on lap three at a best speed of 137.627 km/h.

## **Fast, competitive one-make racing, a showcase for new talent**

The Suzuki Swift Sport Cup, the most successful one-make class in New Zealand motor racing, has been elevated to full championship status for 2009-2010. Motorsport New Zealand has confirmed the Cup will have full championship status in the premier "tier one" summer motorsport season.

Now entering its third year, the Swift category is fast becoming the rising star of the New Zealand motorsport scene. Category head Paul Burborough says promotion to a fully-fledged championship is official recognition of the popularity and success of the close-fought competition.

As a stand-alone one-make motor racing championship, the Suzuki Sport Cup is now one of the most competitive series on the New Zealand motorsport calendar. The race-modified 1.6-litre Suzuki Swift Sport cars used in the category are affordable and identical, meaning racing is close and exciting and emphasis is placed on driver ability.

The championship races at every round of the "tier one" summer motor race series, but does not contest the stand-alone Hamilton 400 street race. The season wraps up with an endurance race at the soon to be completed Hampton Downs race track in the northern Waikato.

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## **The scholarship: picking winners**

Each year, the Castrol Suzuki Sport Cup Scholarship has attracted the fastest rising talent to the series, including two-time series winner Cody McMaster and 2007-2008 scholarship winner Ben Dallas.

For the coming season, up and coming Wanganui racer Matt Gibson receives a valuable boost to his motor racing career as the recipient of the 2009 Castrol Suzuki Sport Cup Scholarship, a package worth more than \$50,000.

From a start in karting at age 12, Gibson moved to Formula First at just 16. Success in this field led to several podium finishes, a class lap record at Pukekohe, and pole position at every circuit, finishing fourth in overall in the national championship last season.

Winning the coveted Castrol scholarship gives Gibson an assisted drive in the coming season's Suzuki Sport Cup Championship, boosting his profile and taking him one step closer to fulfilling his dream to become a world touring car driver.

Two-time champion and inaugural scholarship winner Cody McMaster returns to defend his past championship wins in his Winger-backed car, which was driven last year by Scott Downes. Ben Dallas, the 2008-2009 Scholarship recipient, also returns to the series with the title in his sights.

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## Results, Suzuki Swift Sport Cup Race One Fujitsu 200 race meeting, Pukekohe

Pos	No.	Name	Laps	Total time	Diff	Best time	In lap	Best speed
1	88	Matt Gibson	10	12:36.431		1:14.314	3	137.627
2	98	Ben Dallas	10	12:38.934	2.503	1:14.447	4	137.381
3	21	Alan Dunkley	10	12:38.940	2.509	1:14.465	3	137.348
4	2	William Bamber	10	12:41.057	4.626	1:14.496	4	137.291
5	1	Cody McMaster	10	12:41.211	4.780	1:14.506	4	137.272
6	5	Scott Harrison	10	12:42.099	5.668	1:14.810	3	136.714
7	23	Mike Turley	10	12:44.955	8.524	1:15.010	7	136.350
8	87	AJ Lauder	10	12:45.383	8.952	1:14.888	6	136.572
9	11	Grant Ryan	10	12:46.311	9.880	1:14.845	6	136.650
10	89	Marc Spring	10	12:46.513	10.082	1:14.546	9	137.199
11	14	Shaun Lawrence	10	12:46.752	10.321	1:14.713	6	136.892
12	6	Craig Innes	10	12:47.035	10.604	1:14.946	4	136.466
13	81	Bramwell King	10	12:47.169	10.738	1:14.755	4	136.815
14	95	Katherine Collins	10	13:01.890	25.459	1:16.710	6	133.328
15	22	Michael Paaymans	10	13:02.204	25.773	1:16.427	5	133.822
16	7	Sam Robinson	10	13:14.456	38.025	1:15.869	10	134.806

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## 2009-2010 Suzuki Swift Championship dates

Round	Date	Venue
1	6-8 November 2009	Pukekohe
2	27-29 November 2009	Ruapuna
3	15-17 January 2010	Teretonga
4	22-24 January 2010	Timaru
5	12-14 February 2010	Manfeild
6	19-21 March 2010*	Taupo
Endurance event	TBC May/June 2010	Hampton Downs

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