



MOTORSPORT

NEW ZEALAND



CRC 200 Teretonga

Winning the weekend's third round of the 2009/10 Battery Town Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Melbourne's David Reynolds led home Porsche team-mates Craig Baird and Daniel Gaunt for a one-two-three finish in the final race at Invercargill's Teretonga circuit.

The Auckland five-car Porsche camp were aiming for a podium lock-out in the weekend racing that also included the team running three Toyota Racing Series cars and the Suzuki Swift.

Following Saturday's arduous Mad Butcher 100 kilometre race for the Porsches, David Reynolds made a last lap lunge for the chance of victory having started from pole position.

Race one victory also fell short for Earl Bamber in the VnC Cocktails Mad Butcher Toyota F40 wings and slicks car. Having set fastest times in practise, the 19-year-old from Wanganui had gearbox woe that left him languishing in sixth place.

However, fortunes changed on the Sunday when Reynolds in the #8 Hampsta Indians bar Porsche 997 won two of the weekend's three races in the six round series, moving him to fifth in the overall standings – behind series leader and defending champion Craig Baird in the sister Mad Butcher ZM car.

"It's been a good weekend – we've got good cars with good race pace. Unfortunately losing one second the pit-stop in the first race cost me the triple victory," said Reynolds.

"Everyone drove very well in the last race and drove hard - and that's what I like doing."

Baird's 86-point lead at the head of the standings has him ahead of rival Matt Halliday and Triple X Motorsport team-mate Daniel Gaunt – driving the #3 Placemakers Hampsta Porsche 997.

With all of the team's five cars finishing the three races, the picture perfect fine weather was a welcome return to Auckland's Courtney Letica following his serious crash at the previous round near Christchurch.

However his final race was dealt an early set-back when he clashed with Matt Halliday during the warm-up lap. With both cars puncturing the pair started from pit-lane with Letica finishing fifth overall for the final race.

Also dealt an early-race blow, team principal Shane McKillen was hit and spun, rejoining the rear of the field to eventually finish in 12th position.

Bamber in the Toyota, also had good fortune in the final race, starting from pole by virtue of the top-six reverse grid sequence. The first round of five for the open-wheel cars, Bamber's leading position was short-lived when he nearly followed the car alongside him that jumped the start.

"It was mistake on my behalf at the start – the guy on the next row went and I followed, then stopped as I realised he was a bit early, then nearly stalled the car. So that was a distraction – but I take the blame for that," said Bamber.

Looking back at his return to New Zealand's premier wing's and slicks race category, Bamber says the cars are so close there is little opportunity for overtaking – leaving one key to race success: "We have to put it down to qualifying at the start of the weekend. So I'm looking forward to Timaru next weekend – as we have a car that has improved ten-fold over the weekend with help from the fantastic team."





CRC 200 Teretonga

Behind Bamber in the three-car Triple X Motorsport Toyota team, 21-year-old Stefan Webling of New Plymouth says his first championship round was a great learning experience.

"Obviously it was tough. We started out with a nice car and the pace was good. In these cars you have to qualify well to race well – which was evident in the last race when I had a fast car but a slow guy in front of me and I just couldn't get past."

Brisbane's Chris Wootton introduction to racing in New Zealand has been challenged by a car that was assembled late on Thursday after damage to the monocoque tub.

"It's a very professional series – and the cars are fun when they are running right. If it's not running so well it's not fun to drive," said the 21-year-old.

Whangarei's Scott Harrison turned his previous two race weekend's in to a beneficiary with lessons learned allowing the carpet layer to outright challenge the leaders in the Suzuki Swift Sport Cup class. Struggling to match the shoot-out pace driving the #5 Carpet One Suzuki in qualifying, Harrison was able to hold his line in race traffic for a best result of fourth in the second and third races.

With a quick lay-over in Queenstown, the team re-establish their race base at Timaru on Wednesday to prepare for the weekend racing (23-24 January) at the Levels International Raceway.

Battery Town Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge 2009/2010 points after round three (of six) - top-nine.

- 1 1 Craig Baird Queensland (Triple X) 793
- 2 21 Matt Halliday USA 707
- 3 3 Daniel Gaunt Auckland (Triple X) 666
- 4 9 Jonny Reid Auckland 619
- 5 8 David Reynolds Melbourne (Triple X) 584
- 6 82 Andrew Bagnall Auckland 447
- 7 96 Anthony Pedersen Rotorua 394
- 8 5 Courtney Letica Auckland (Triple X) 394
- 9 2 Shane McKillen Auckland (Triple X) 388

