

HSRCA Spring Festival

Wakefield Park.

This race meeting was re-scheduled, having been postponed due to COVID restrictions. With a contingent of Group N having raced two weeks before at the Supercheap Auto 1000, it would be interesting to see how many cars returned for this meeting. As the meeting drew nearer, I'm sure many were keeping track of Goulburn's weather, with the forecast of rain for both days.

Qualifying

In wet conditions, qualifying produced an unusual grid with the first four cars being Nb, Nc, Nb and Nc. Known for their effective wet weather ability when well-driven, the Morris Cooper S of Andrew Bergan was fastest followed by David Noakes driving his Escort RS1600. The second row was Jamie Tilley in his Nb Mustang with Adam Walton's Nc Mustang in fourth place. The third row were another two Mustangs followed by Steve Page in his BMW 2002.

Race 1.

The first race was divided into two events, under three litre and over three litre, both scheduled to be six laps.

In the under three litre race Andrew Bergan was on the front row of the grid beside David Noakes. Bergan made the best use of his position on the front row by winning the start. This became an excellent contest with Bergan remaining in front for several laps while Noakes appeared to be determining his best opportunity to take the lead. Noakes showed intent when he took a late apex onto the front straight and passed the leading Mini. However Bergan didn't give up, pulling his car beside Noakes through turn two. However up the hill, the Escort opened the gap and wasn't headed at the finish. A spin by Roberts at turn two placed him down the order with the Minis of Battersby and Pike in third and fourth followed by Dubois in his 1300 Escort. Fastest lap was David Noakes 1:14.5

This race was followed by race one for the over three litre cars.

Jamie Tilley in his Nb Mustang was beside Adam Walton's Nc Mustang with Stone and Bargwanna in their Mustangs holding positions three and four. They were followed by four Toranas, led by Alf Bargwanna and Noel Roberts on row three.

On a wet track, Walton made the best of the start leading Tilley away as the field headed to the first two corners. Water streamed across the track at the first turn, remaining so throughout the day. It wasn't long before Tilley took the lead and opened a small gap over Walton. Having started in sixth position, Noel Roberts was the standout Torana, carving his way through the field. He passed Walton's Mustang and set out after the leader. Tilley was driving a controlled race, leading Roberts by seven seconds at the end. However Roberts' set the fastest lap, 1:28.4.

Race 2.

Race two saw the under and over three litre cars in a more traditional combined field for a five lap event. This provided an interesting grid with Jamie Tilley on the front row beside David Noakes in the RS1600 Escort. When the lights went out, Noakes had the initial advantage as he and Tilley led the rest of the field. From the second row, Walton surged towards the leaders seemingly intent on driving through what became a reducing gap between them. David Stone led David Noakes and Alf's Torana led Harry Bargwanna's Mustang. In seventh place was Peter Ferguson in his nice Lotus

Cortina. As the field completed the third lap, racing was close throughout. However as a close group approached turn two, Steve Page's BMW 2002 was off the circuit and deep into the sand trap. Shortly after, the race was red flagged.

Race 3.

Sunday morning was the eight lap Trophy Race. The weather was dry and remained so throughout the day, however after considerable overnight rain, there were a number of areas where water run-off made conditions difficult or interesting depending on your perspective.

The first two rows of the grid saw Andrew Bergan in his Nb Mini on pole position beside David Noakes' Nc RS 1600 Escort. Row two was Jamie Tilley and Adam Walton in their Mustangs. When the lights went out Noakes and Walton made the best starts with Noakes taking the lead and Walton second. Bergan rapidly dropped back, although he made forward progress during the race, eventually finishing in twelfth place. Walton passed Noakes on the back straight with Tilley passing on the front straight. By lap three it appeared Tilley was closing on Walton, while David Stone passed Noakes. Noel Roberts was unable to repeat his Saturday performance and retired from the race. Further back, Geoff Pike and Paul Battersby were battling in their Minis. However Pike spun and turn two.

The black flag was displayed near the start/finish line for number car 97. Whilst leading, Adam Walton glanced at the number, believing he saw his number 57 and headed to the pits. Meanwhile, Chris Debois and Francis Meier were battling hard. At one point they came down the straight side by side, with Meier remaining in front. Likewise, Peter Ferguson in his Lotus Cortina and Steve Page in the BMW 2002 staged a good contest until the finish.

At the chequered flag it was Jamie Tilley who finished first, ahead of Stone, Harry Bargwanna and Noakes. Fastest lap was Tilley 1:12.5.

Race 4.

The second Sunday race was six laps. Jamie Tilley was on pole position beside David Stone with Harry Bargwanna and David Noakes on row two. Adam Walton and Noel Roberts started rear of grid in a field of seventeen. After inadvertently retiring in the last race, it was likely Walton would be out to make amends. When the race was underway, it was Noakes who made the best start. Tilley and Stone were the leaders as they completed the first lap with Walton up to seventh place. Some good racing further back included Bergan who closed the gap to Battersby's Mini, these two finishing four tenths apart. Also having a good battle were Meier, Pike and Dubois although the latter retired on the last lap. The dice between Ferguson and Page was resolved with the Lotus Cortina leading the BMW at the end of the event. The first Torana was Alf Bargwanna in fifth position. Walton continued his progress towards the front. As the three Mustangs completed the final lap it was Tilley followed by Stone with the fast-closing Walton a mere one tenth behind.

Fastest lap was Walton, 1:09.3.

Race 5.

The final race was five laps. Across all categories, many had packed up including many of the Group N competitors. As a result, seven cars formed up on the grid to take the start. Pole position was Jamie Tilley with David Stone alongside. Adam Walton and Peter Ferguson were on the second row. Although Walton made the best start, he was unable to pass Tilley and Stone as they headed up the hill for the first time. Ferguson was passed by Page however before the completion of the first lap, the positions were reversed. Walton passed Stone who later retired from the race. Walton closed

on Tilley and passed into the final corner. Soon after, on the back straight Walton went off onto the grass on the left side, however only reduced speed sufficiently to resume the track, albeit it behind Tilley. Into the final lap, Walton reduced the gap to Tilley and into the fish-hook, took a tight line and ranged alongside. Approaching the right hand kink in the back straight, Tilley appeared to lift slightly to avoid potential contact and Walton was past.

Walton crossed the line first, followed by Tilley, Ferguson, Page, Pitman and Zochling. Fastest lap was Walton, 1:09.4

The next meeting is the HSRCA Summer Festival at Sydney Motorsport Park on 28 & 29 November 2020.