

HSRCA Summer Festival
Sydney Motorsport Park
28-29 November 2020

The HSRCA went to great lengths to organise this event, which had, like others, been the victim of the strange COVID-19 year. For some competitors, the weekend commenced on Friday with many taking advantage of the opportunity to practice. Graham Loughnan stopped during one session and was towed in but the Corolla was soon active again. Michael Rose debuted his just-acquired Mustang. Unfortunately his track time was short-lived when he smelt oil in the cabin. This was found to be a cracked transmission casing and he was out for the weekend.

A respectable number of twenty-eight Group N competitors turned out for the event, in a great representation of vehicles – from Ford Escorts, a Toyota Corolla, a Mazda RX2, a Lotus Cortina, Minis, an Alfa Romeo GTV 2000, a BMW 2002, Holden Toranas and the usual suspects in Ford Mustangs.

It was wonderful to see the “newer” competitors were there – Hugh Zochling (Holden Torana) competing at his second race meeting, Stephen Page (BMW 2002), Craig McLatchey (Alfa Romeo GTV 2000), and Peter Ferguson, in the ex Matt Windsor Lotus Cortina.

Greg Luca (Holden Torana) and John Burke (Valiant Charger E49) had also taken the opportunity to show themselves and their magnificently prepared vehicles.

Qualifying

First qualifying was on the Gardner circuit and saw vehicles from the Tilley Racing camp dominate. Brad Tilley set a pace of 1.45.1156 in his Group Nc Ford Mustang, followed by Jamie Tilley in his Group Nb Ford Mustang. Adam Walton was third fastest in his Group Nc Ford Mustang, closely followed by Ben Wilkinson's Mustang, posting 1.48.0871.

John Burke, in his immaculate Valiant Charger E49 then followed, with evergreen Steve Land in his Ford Capri, and David Noakes Jnr in the Ford Escort RS1600.

Chris Collett in his Morris Cooper S was second fastest in Group Nb, then Greg Toepfer (Ford Mustang).

Race 1.

Saturday dawned at Sydney Motorsport Park as a fine and clear day. By the time Group N rolled out, record temperatures had been set.

The race, reflected practice. Brad and Jamie Tilley led in positions one and two respectively until Adam Walton and Jamie began a battle which continued until the chequered flag, with Walton narrowly taking second place while Brad finished in first place in his Mustang, with a fastest lap of 1.47.3596. Adam Walton's performance proved the old adage that practice makes perfect (he competes at every event, and his on-track performances just keep improving). Jamie Tilley was the first Group Nb car home, and posted a Group Nb lap record of 1.48.0184, just pipping the record time previously held by Brad Tilley of 1.48.1690. Ben Wilkinson was fourth in his green-eyed Ford Mustang with John Burke in fifth place. Steve Land was sixth in his Capri with Greg Luca next, returning to the track in his Torana after an absence, ahead of Greg Toepfer. The first of the four-cylinder cars was David Noakes Jnr, (Ford Escort RS1600), with Andrew Bergan (Morris Cooper S) next, Craig McLatchey having a good run in his first Group N race (Alfa Romeo GTV 2000), Peter Ferguson (Lotus Cortina) and Stephen Page (BMW 2000).

Ben Wilkinson broke a leaf spring and didn't take part in the rest of the meeting, Hugh Zochling blew a right front tyre, Robert Munday and Matthew Sullivan failed to finish. Greg Toepfer reported on

the effect of the extreme heat for drivers and their cars. Andrew Bergan was the first Mini, despite experiencing a fuel supply issue on the straight.

This race was determined as the Trophy Race for the weekend and awards went as follows:

Group Nb First Place	Jamie Tilley
Group Nb Second Place	Greg Toepfer
Group Nb Third Place	Andrew Bergan
Group Nc First Place	Brad Tilley
Group Nc Second Place	Adam Walton
Group Nc Third Place	Ben Wilkinson

Race 2.

Race 2 was split into Group N Over 3 litre and Group N Under 3 litre events.

The Over 3 litre event was run late in the day and the temperature had continued to climb.

The race saw eight cars take the start with Brad Tilley on pole position beside Jamie, Adam Walton on the second row beside John Burke's Charger. Jamie Tilley got the initial jump when the lights went out, but was soon passed by Brad as they headed to turn one. By lap three Walton had passed Jamie Tilley and set out after Brad. In the end it was Brad Tilley first with Walton sixth tenths behind, followed by Jamie Tilley John Burke gained fourth place, his Hemi six cylinder sounding magnificent each time it came down the front straight, with Greg Luca securing fifth position, having resolved a gearbox issue in his Group Holden Torana.

The Under 3 litre event, was the final event of the day. Steve Land was on pole position alongside David Noakes. It was Noakes who made the best start although the V6 Capri was soon in the lead. The Minis of Bergan and Collett were having a good battle behind until Collett slowed and parked off the circuit out of turn three.

Steve Land secured first place, David Noakes Jnr in second, and Andrew Bergan third place and first Nb finisher.

Sunday Practice.

Sunday dawned with the same intense heat and later forty-kilometre winds. With the Group S endure the first event on the schedule, it was announced attrition amongst the hard-working flag marshalls and other track staff meant the meeting couldn't continue on the Gardner circuit and the shorter Druitt circuit would be used for all events. This required a ten minute practice session for each category prior to commencing the first event.

Race 3.

Seventeen competitors faced the first Sunday Group N race, with intense heat and wind. Adam Walton made the most of the start after Brad Tilley selected fourth instead of second, yet maintained second position as the field headed to the first turn. At the end of the first lap, Tilley passed Walton to take the lead. Other battles throughout the field included Steve Land and Greg Luca and David Noakes and Greg Toepfer. The latter showed the handling advantage of the Escort versus the power of the Mustang with Noakes able to gain ground only to have the gap extended each time the Mustang was on the straight.

Fifteen competitors finished, with Brad Tilley winning, ahead of Adam Walton, closely followed by Jamie Tilley. John Burke came in fourth and Steve Land (Group Nc Ford Capri) in fifth place. David Roberts and Chris Dubois failed to finish.

Race 4.

The final Group N race was held late in the day. The weather had taken its toll on many competitors, with most determining that a cooler pastime was preferred. Many packed up after race three and headed home to a more comfortable environment.

Only four starters for the final race over five laps. Greg Luca made the best of his starting position to lead the other four cars. He slowly opened the gap to finish first by four seconds. The race for second place was intense between Steve Shepard's Mazda RX2 and Steve Page in his BMW 2002. The BMW was faster through some corners but couldn't match the Mazda on the straights. The pair finished with the Mazda in second place by one tenth over the BMW with Hugh Zochling fourth and enjoying the conclusion to his second race meeting in his Torana.