

Burges Too Strong in NSW Formula Ford 1600 Championship Opener:

If the performance of Leigh Burges in the opening round of the 2009 NSW Formula Ford 1600 Championship at Eastern Creek Raceway last weekend is of any indication, then the Anglo Australian Motorsport team look at short odds to clinch their third successive NSW Championship.

Burges, driving the Anglo Australian Motorsport Comtec Spirit K08, was a in a class of his own throughout the weekend after he topped the time sheets in qualifying and won all three races in convincing fashion. Not even a safety car period during the third and final race could prevent Burges from taking out a clean sweep of the opening round of the NSW Championship.

The NSW Championship is not foreign territory to Burges after he contested the 2006 NSW Championship and ended up finishing fifth in the final point standings and last year he made a cameo appearance during a round at Goulburn's Wakefield Park Raceway.

As one would expect Burges was thrilled with his start to this year's NSW Championship, but he is not getting too carried away and is already turning his focus to the second round that is to be held at the Wakefield Park Raceway circuit next month.

"I couldn't have hoped for a better start to this year's NSW Championship and I am not going to get too far ahead of myself and I am now looking forward to the next round where I hope to continue my success," said the very pleased 24-year-old. "To go through the whole weekend undefeated was great and full credit must go to the Comtec Spirit and the entire Anglo Australian Motorsport team. My car never missed a beat all weekend and we were finding more and more speed each time I went out and it's very valuable to have such an experienced team in my corner. It definitely makes things that so much easier."

Finishing second behind Burges in the third and final race (trophy race) was Daniel Lewis. Lewis, who is one of the favourites to challenge for this year's NSW Championship suffered a major blow to 2009 campaign when he broke the rear end of his car during Friday's practice. It looked as though Lewis would have to sit out the weekend but the Anglo Australian Motorsport team were able to lease one of their spare cars, a Van Diemen RF92 Stealth, to him to use for the weekend. In an unfamiliar car, Lewis achieved great results by qualifying third and then finishing both race one and two in third and he then worked his way up to finish the final race in second place.

"When I broke the rear end in my car on Friday I thought the weekend and in fact the NSW Championship hopes were gone and that was when the Anglo Australian Motorsport team were able to lease me one of their spare cars and I cannot thank them enough," Lewis

explained. "With the car being unfamiliar to me I was never really comfortable in it [the car] but I still managed to score some good results and points towards the NSW Championship and that was the main thing."

Formula Ford debutant Adam Leung capped off a great weekend by finishing the final race in third place and managed to bring home a trophy for his efforts in what was memorable debut. Earlier in the weekend Leung, driving a Van Diemen RF94 Stealth with the support of the Anglo Australian Motorsport team, qualified fourth and finished both race one and two in fourth place too. Leung showed a big growth in confidence during the third race battling with his more experienced rivals to finish in third place.

One of the hard luck stories of the weekend was second year Formula Ford driver Russell Newell driving a new car, a Van Diemen RF01. Newell was on the pace of the front runners all weekend by qualifying and finishing race one and two in second place. In the third and final race Newell was running second only to run off the circuit during the middle stages of the race and he ended up just missing out on the spot on the podium by 10/100ths of a second in fourth place.

"In the third race I went the wrong way with the setup of my car, as it was way too free in the rear end of the car and that resulted in me running off the circuit," explained Newell. "All in all, it has been a great weekend and a huge learning experience. Last year I was running towards the back of the field and now I am running at the front of the field. It's a whole new ball game, but one I am enjoying every minute of."

The safety car during the third and final race was brought out by rookie David Chitty, who had spun and then stalled, the former Bruce McCabe Van Diemen RF98 in turn 11 during the middle stages of the race. Apart from that mistake, Chitty enjoyed a good weekend and built up more speed as the weekend wore on.

In what was their best performances in the NSW Championships; Jason Liddell (Swift SC93F), Don (Reynard FF89) and David (Reynard FF89) Holland battled amongst one another for fifth through to seventh and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The Historic class resulted in defending NSW Champion Cas Galjaardt (Elymn 004) winning the third and final race. Galjaardt didn't have the easiest of weekends after he failed to finish the second race due to suspension damage. Both Norm Vesty (Zink Z-10) and Bill Vesty (Merlyn MK24) kept Galjaardt honest over the course of the weekend.

The NSW Championship now heads to Wakefield Park Raceway on the weekend of April 18 and 19 for the second round.

For more information about the NSW Formula Ford 1600 Championship or Eastern Creek Raceway visit: www.ff1600.org.au or www.eastern-creek-raceway.com

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