

CLOSE COMPETITION OPENS SEASON AT TERETONGA PARK

Competition was close when the opening race meeting of the season took place at Teretonga Park on Saturday.

The event, presented by Downer, had been rescheduled after snow forced a cancellation on the original date in September.

The victory spoils were shared in the Noel McIntyre Drainage Clubmans Saloon races while Damon Leitch dominated all but one of the Sports & Racing Car events.

Robert Ralston of Invercargill was the fastest qualifier in the saloon class in his turbocharged Nissan Silvia ahead of Brent Cross of Winton. However it was Cross who won the opening race in his Mitsubishi EVO 3 from the modified Ford Capris of fellow Winton driver Pierre Neame and Tony Mann of Dunedin after Ralston had an intercooler hose blow off. Cross was forced out of the second race, ending his day and leaving Neame to take victory from Ralston and Andrew Brown of Invercargill in a turbocharged Honda Civic. Both Ralston and Brown made stunning drives through the field to gain their placings. Neame also won the class race overall, taking the 2501cc & over section in the process. Ivan Harvey secured Class 3 honours (1601-2500cc) in his Toyota Levin while Jeremy Dawson took Class 2 (1301-1600cc). Brown went on to take out the Flying Farewell from Mann and Dawson.

Meanwhile Leitch qualified fastest and won three of the four races comfortably in the Sports & Racing Car class, withdrawing from the other with a minor problem while in the lead.

Driving a Tatuus Formula Renault, in preparation for the Toyota Racing Series later this summer, Leitch won the first two races comfortably from Don Nelson of Riverton in a Reynard. Steve Heffernan of Invercargill was third on both occasions in his less powerful Van Diemen Formula Ford. Nelson took victory in the third race after Leitch pulled out, leading home Jamie Conroy in a Formula Renault and Heffernan. Leitch came back to win the Flying Farewell after starting from the back of the grid. The young Southlander got through to the lead on the opening lap, briefly lost it after running wide, before hitting the front again soon after. Conroy came through to second after a spin on the opening lap with Heffernan again third after a great battle with Brendon Leitch who was fourth, capping off a series of impressive drives throughout the day.

The next race meeting presented by Downer at the circuit takes place on Sunday 7 November.

Full information on the Southland Sports Car Club 2010/2011 season can be found at - www.teretonga.org.nz

Lindsay Beer
Publicity Officer
Southland Sports Car Club
021 351 499