

## **DAMON LEITCH THIRD IN TOYOTA RACING SERIES**

Damon Leitch has finished a highly impressive third in the 2014 Toyota Racing Series. Twenty-year-old Leitch from Invercargill, who is now working in Cromwell, had another superb weekend in the final round of the series at Manfeild this weekend snaring a second and a third in the first two races before a problem sent him off the track in the feature race, the New Zealand Grand Prix.

However his fast and consistent form throughout the series was good enough to secure third in the classy international field, equalling his effort in the 2012 series.

Damon was again on the pace throughout qualifying on a wet track on Saturday morning, recording times good enough for sixth and eighth in the two qualifying sessions. In the first race on Saturday afternoon for the Dan Higgins Memorial Trophy Leitch scored second place behind championship leader Andrew Tang of Singapore after a charging drive. The result moved Damon into second place in the championship on the same points as UK driver Jann Mardenborough, just 37 points behind Tang.

The following morning Leitch was third in a fifteen lap race behind Steijn Schothorst of the Netherlands and Mardenborough in a result that closed up the championship points with Leitch going into final race of the series a very close third behind Tang and Mardenborough.

The New Zealand Grand Prix began well for Damon and he climbed from eighth to fourth early in the race, very much in contention. Unfortunately his Post Haste Couriers Toyota received some front suspension damage at a restart and from then on in Damon's words it became "hard work." He battled on but then the gearbox malfunctioned, chopping down two gears which locked up the back of the car, pitching it off the road and out of the race. Despite that Leitch still took third place in the series after five intense rounds, battling some top class international competition.

"I'm pretty happy with the weekend but disappointed to not finish the Grand Prix," said Damon on Sunday evening. "It is a shame we couldn't have a good finish in that race." However third place in the ultra competitive series is another top result for the kiwi who has few racing outings each year.