



2009/10 Suzuki Swift Sport Cup Hamilton 400 Trophy Event April 16-18, 2010

For me taking to the streets of Hamilton was always going to be a huge challenge – being surrounded by concrete walls and with many uncharacteristic bumps to upset the car. It was never going to be a easy task.

I did however really look forward to the biggest event of the motorsport year in New Zealand.

Just a day before leaving for Hamilton my excitement turned to tragedy when my close friend Logan was killed in a car accident just out of Hamilton. This hit me even harder as he was looking forward to assisting Jono in working on Taylor the Swift throughout the Hamilton 400 weekend.

It was great to get to Hamilton on Thursday and get my mind on the job with an in depth track walk with Jono Lester learning the ins and outs of the streets of Hamilton. This was a real advantage come practice on Friday, especially as the damp morning dew on the track made it even trickier to spot some of the key points on the circuit.

Practice went well, starting off wet but steadily drying throughout the session as I improved my lap times with every lap. We kept the hammer down constantly and remained in the top seven or eight cars, finishing the session in fourth spot.

Qualifying was completely dry, and going into the session I felt more than capable of a top qualifying result. However, with my first few runs being held up in traffic and the circuit being tough on brake temperatures, I was unable to brake as late as I could earlier on, and we had to make do with eighth.

In race one I was hungry for improvement. On the opening lap I made my way past one car, and set on moving up through the next few. This was put on hold when the safety car came out for quite some time, leaving us with two laps to race at the end.





On the restart I was able to get a good run and somehow made room on the inside into turn one as four of us battled for the same piece of road. I came out best in this and managed to drive away from the pack behind, coming home in fourth position.

Race Two later in the afternoon saw me starting in fourth, and at the start I was under attack from behind, however once that settled down I got into a race on my own behind Matt Gibson in third.

Given the brake temperature issues we had been having around the tight street circuit, I spent this time trying to take it easy on the brakes to launch an assault on Matt at the end, hoping his brakes would be shot. However when we put hammer down two laps from the end, my brakes certainly were not up to the task, and I had to settle for fourth once again.

With the brake issues in mind I changed my plan of attack in Race Three. The idea was to attack as hard as I could in the beginning. After managing to hold off the charging pack behind on the opening lap I set about chasing down Matt, having gained some good time through the opening sectors of lap two until I ran wide at turn ten and slapped the outside wall, taking my mirror with it and damaging the steering of the car.

We soldiered on with the now less-than-ideal handling Swift Sport Cup Car, struggling to get it to turn in and get the power down, which saw the guys behind close in and work their way past.

I finished in eighth spot, which came as a welcome relief as inspection on the car upon return to the pits saw the left rear tyre had put up a good fight to stay inflated.

All in all despite a mentally tough weekend, and having our eyes on the third place trophy, I felt a lot of relief to get to the end in fifth overall for the weekend.

Having had to miss Logan's funeral to take the streets of Hamilton, I felt there was no better way to say good bye to a lifelong friend than to finish what we had planned for the weekend, and I would like to say thanks to everyone who offered their support throughout.





The Hamilton 400 wouldn't have been possible for us if it hadn't been from the generous support from a number of existing sponsors and some new ones too.

A big thanks must go out to Kelly from HMC Kapiti for not only being the first to jump in and help for the 400, but also for this season!

Thanks must go out to **Pos Technology** and **Office Products Depot Waikato** for their support for the weekend.

I most certainly look forward to doing it all again next year with you all!

Until then, stay safe and I look forward to being in touch soon with some news on my next exciting challenge I have in the pipeline with a few of my motorsport friends!

Sam Robinson

