



Suzuki Swift Sport Cup 2009/10
Round Two: Ruapuna
27-29th November, 2009

After being greeted by hot and sunny Christchurch weather on Thursday, it turned out to be a wet and wild weekend for Round two of the Suzuki Swift Sport Cup at Powerbuilt Tools Raceway, Ruapuna.

We spent Thursday in the warmth of the sun setting up and my team mate Matt Gibson, Jono Lester and I took a track walk to scope out the finer points of the circuit.

It was a windy, but warm day that greeted us on Friday morning for Practice One.

Having never seen Ruapuna before our primary focus for the opening session was to learn the circuit. I finished the session seventh fastest and we were quite happy with our start to the weekend.

After a discussion with Matt and Jono we had a few new techniques to try driving-wise for Practice Two. Running on old tyres and old brakes we had another productive session finding what we could and couldn't do around the 3.3km circuit, finishing up in ninth spot.

Both runs were just a shade over a second off the quickest overall car.

We put on some new brakes and tyres to bed in during the hot laps session as the pads that came out of the car didn't look too good. The improvement was significant which left us feeling confident for qualifying on Saturday morning; however it was to be a different story completely.

We awoke on Saturday and the rain had hit Christchurch. It was bitterly cold and wet at the circuit when we arrived, so we converted the car to a wet set up, bolted on our four best tyres and ventured out into the rain. The track was very wet especially in the run into the fast turn three 'pothole', and the car was difficult to drive and our lack of pace was very puzzling, as we only set the sixteenth quickest time.

An inspection of the car afterwards brought to light an issue with one of our rear shocks. Problem solved, we looked ahead to race one, with the rain still falling.





The Race One start was eventful with an accident on the first lap cleaning out nearly half the field. I was able to weave my way through unscathed, but the carnage split the field in two and I lost the slipstream from then on.

I kept the car straight and managed to bring it home in eleventh place, with the Race Two grid decided on fastest lap times from either Qualifying or Race One, it meant I lined up tenth for the second race.

Sunday appeared to be a dry day, and the wet weather managed to stay away for Race Two where I was confident of being able to move up and score some good points.

I made a bad start and slipped right back through the order to the rear of the field, and made slight contact with Bramwell King at the final sweeper as I was regaining my positions a few laps later.

We inherited a fifty second time penalty for this incident, which moved me from down to fourteenth position in the results for Race Two, and unfortunately pitched me off the rear of the grid for the reverse-grid finale by way of my penalty.

Race Three was again dry with the pending run just holding off, and I made a good start and followed Willy Bamber through the first corner.

There was action aplenty on the first lap and I found myself locked in a battle with Mike Turley and Bramwell King, changing positions a few times over the course of the race. I kept the car straight once again to eventually come home in twelfth place yet again.

Although it wasn't the result we were looking for we still managed to finish all three races and bank some points in what proved to be a difficult weekend for Team Triangle in the LG Teams Championship.

We're looking forward to the next round at Teretonga in Invercargill on what I'm told is another exciting track. I'm feeling confident that after the struggles of this weekend we'll come back fighting stronger, having learnt a lot during a tough weekend of car problems, weather and learning a new circuit in Christchurch.

A big thanks to all of our sponsors and supporters for their assistance leading into the Christchurch round, and to our new partners "Just Rust" in Tawa for getting the car all straightened out and





looking nice again for the event. A big thanks to PJ and the team for turning it around so quickly, and also to Mark at Henshaw Signs who got the car stickered and ready in the short space of time we had available.

Many thanks again to Jono Lester for his hands-on assistance during the weekend to set up not only the car, but also the driver, with assistance over the phone from Richard as well. It's all greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your continued support and I look forward to getting back behind the wheel at Teretonga on the 15-17 January 2010.

Have a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

Sam Robinson

