



2009/10 Suzuki Swift Sport Cup Round Six: Taupo (Final) 19-21 March, 2010

The final championship round of the 2009-2010 Suzuki Swift Sport Cup was held at the Taupo Motorsport Park. After checking the weather forecast and seeing what we saw on the Thursday, it was evident we were in for a dry weekend, however with a lot of wind and dust to contend with!

Team Triangle, consisting of myself and Matt Gibson were locked in a battle for 3rd in the LG Teams Championship against AJ Lauder and Shaun Lawrence, adding an extra dimension to the weekend's activity.

Friday testing was average at best, finishing both sessions in P11. I did struggle to get my head around what was causing our lack of pace, however a good night's sleep and a good think about the days happenings would leave us in a better position going into Qualifying on Saturday morning.

Qualifying wasn't what we expected with another difficult session, in which we were once again 11th quickest of the 16 entrants. Qualifying is one thing but the race is another, and we looked to Race One of the weekend to improve our performance, and hopefully end a session on track in something other than P11!

Race One saw me line up next to my main rival for the Teams Championship, Shaun Lawrence. Ahead on the grid Matt had out-qualified AJ Lauder also, so we were confident of beating our rivals in the race. After an average start I found myself behind Shaun and Grant Ryan, however on lap two some dust was whipped up over the circuit, leaving myself, Grant and Shaun blinded as to where we were going through the final corner. Contact was made between myself and Grant in the dust, sending the car into a slide, and I dropped a few positions to 13th.





However we kept soldiering on and I managed to take pass a few cars to finish up in ninth. Unfortunately for the Teams Championship, Matt Gibson was one of the cars to go off after being hit by another competitor, with AJ and Shaun having both finished in front of Matt and I, it left us with two races to play catch up.

Race Two and once again Shaun and I lined up next to each other on the grid. Matt's focus was to beat AJ; mine was to beat Shaun Lawrence, and after a furious eight laps Matt came home ahead of AJ. Shaun Lawrence and I left the final corner side by side for a drag race to the line. We didn't know who had crossed it first and when we got back to the pits, we went to the circuit office to wait on the result. I had beaten Shaun by 0.014 for P11 (again!) – about as close as it could possibly get! This left us trailing Shaun and AJ by just three points going into the final race.

The final race once again saw myself and Shaun line up next to each other, with Matt and AJ not too far behind. After the first corner I was behind Shaun, but amped to make progress and get past.

After playing it safe and making no mistakes in the opening few laps, I eventually worked my way past Shaun. Matt had managed to get past us both and ran away into the lead, while I had AJ Lauder closing in on me fast.

I was confident I could hold him off, no worries at all and with two laps to go began to pull away. With Matt leading the race, and myself being in fourth spot, we had one hand on the 3rd place Teams Trophy. I was repeatedly on the radio to Jono getting quite excited at the prospect, with Matt taking a dominant win, while I crossed the line in 4th.

It was one of the best races I had all season. With the car still being tricky to drive, I felt very satisfied afterwards, quite convinced I couldn't get much more out of it during that race, as we were on the limit from start to finish.

Finishing the weekend and the season on a high leaves me and the team looking forward to taking to the streets of Hamilton in support of the V8 Supercars in less than a month. With some 50,000 people turning up to the circuit each day, it leaves us with the exciting prospect





of turning it on in front of a very good crowd, on what will be a very tricky circuit to be quick on!

Well and truly looking forward to the challenge, bring it on!!

Sam Robinson

