

RICHARDS TEAM *MOTORSPORT*

TEX Onsite team rebound into the positive

It's all smiles for the TEX Onsite team as they travel back to the North Island, in a top ten championship position in the BNT V8s championship. After completing round five at Teretonga Park, Invercargill, team driver Michael Bristow is still within striking distance of a top five finish with two North Island rounds left to conclude the series.

Team spirit was high after qualifying ninth on Saturday afternoon at the twilight meeting. Bristow had made steady progress through practice the previous day with a new setup introduced at an earlier round. This gave them confidence for a top result in race one in the early evening. This race preceded the GT3 enduro that was to start at 7:40pm.

Torrential rain duly interrupted proceedings, delaying racing which eventually got underway on a wet track. Unfortunately within the first lap Bristow was punted off into the sand trap at Castrol (turn 2) becoming stuck and registering his first retirement for the season. This was the low point for the team who had taken pride in finishing every race and would mean starting from the rear of the field in Sunday mornings race two.

Eventual round winner Andy Booth won the race from Craig Baird and Paul Manuel.

The second race of the weekend can only be described as extraordinary. While most teams elected to start the race on dry tyres, rain on the warm up laps sent many teams scrambling into the pits to change onto wets. A bizarre situation arose when the pits were closed leaving only nine of the twenty-three teams actually on the grid, the others still in the pits changing their tyres. Those on the grid either were gambling that the track would dry, therefore staying on dry tyres or had managed to change and get out of the pits. Those in the pits would have to wait until they were released once the race started.

This peculiar situation was a positive and played into the TEX Onsite team's hands as they had quickly changed and lined up at the pit exit ready to join the field. When they did take to the track they were immediately in thirteenth position and not starting from the rear of the field. The track would eventually dry but not until Bristow and others were able to gain on those that had dry tyres. Bristow moved up to eighth, where he would finish but explained that it was not easy at the end, "It was like driving on ice at the end when the tyres went off but it was a good call to change tyres at the beginning"

Eventual race winner Craig Baird had been able to change his tyres and get out before the pits closed, therefore starting second on the grid and maximising his wet tyre advantage.

Could the weekend get better for the TEX Onsite team?

The third race full reverse grid also worked in the teams favour. Starting fourth on a dry track, this was a great opportunity for Bristow to achieve his best result of the season. This he did finishing fifth, with a strong and fast car that now gives the team even more confidence as they head north.

“We’re very happy with that (race 3). It was a good positive result for the team. The car is going great, the motor has got plenty of grunt, and we had plenty of speed at the end of the weekend,” was how a smiling Bristow described the end of the round.

Angus Fogg went on to win race three but it was the Holden of Andy booth that won the round. Kayne Scott still maintains his championship lead ahead of John McIntyre and Booth. Bristow is in tenth just thirty-four points behind Andrew Anderson.

Media: Benjamin Carrell