

## **The Chairman wears pink - sometimes!**

OK, so no amount of fear (see Ken Garlick's article Dec magazine) brought forward any volunteers for the report for the Trofeo Series HRSCC Taupo round on the 2nd/3rd December. So you're left with my impressions, gained largely from Flag Point 1 where I spent the majority of the weekend. (Explanation follows).

Well Saturday dawned fine and warm(ish - if you were out of the wind) and off we set at a very leisurely hour (this is the HRSCC meeting after all) to the old Taupo track. Many of us anticipated a low key day under the trees of the old pit area and a return to the old (but altered) Taupo track which has resulted in so many excellent close races of the past. First sign that all was not as we thought when we turned into the old circuit and found it... empty. A1 GP modifications had caused the transfer of the meeting to the new Intermediate track, so back out the gate leaving behind the grassed, treed and sheltered pit area and off to the new track. Open and under construction - no place to pitch the tent and a nice cool breeze (gale) coming in directly from Ruapehu. Great - those 5 layers of clothing designed to be shed under the Taupo heat were definitely NOT coming off!

The change to the new track led to a desperate call from HRSCC to provide more volunteers for flag marshal duties. No problem - we didn't have many supporters along (read no school holidays) but rallied around those not driving and corralled Greg Wood, Ant Gray, Ray Shanks & me - Trofeo's best (?) Ant & I made our home in Flag Point 1 - Greg to the hypothermic Point 4 and Ray to Point 5 (not any warmer I expect).

Well life is different over the other side, although up close and personal with the action you do have to keep your wits about you and hold out the appropriate flag as required. Easy right? Well yes, if you're warm and sheltered and your limbs still respond to instructions - which you're not and they don't! Then you have to school yourself not to watch the door to door battle unfold once it passes the next flag point (BUGGER). BUT this is part of being involved in the Series and it is part of the fun (believe it or not). Rewarded by the Trofeo grid which was the biggest of the meeting keeping us all very busy. (Kelvin Houten was having practicing Nord-ic aerobics at Turn 1 and wondered why I was wildly waving my yellow flag, then realised that it was him I was waving it for! - Nice one, Kelvin!) It was apparent that there were people with points to prove on the track and a lot of learning curves to turn. (And that's not to mention those that did the full 360° - suffice to say there were a few - names withheld to protect reputations). By the time we were offered water we really fancied coffee and hot donuts! With Ant's excellent guidance we did OK - but then he tells me he has to go back to Auckland (likely story), he had a heater in the Nissan luxury vehicle. So I got to know the Taupo Car Club chief flag marshal (now that could be handy).

Sunday - Points Day - As with the organiser's preference we ran our points races on the 'real' race day Sunday, although if you'd witnessed the Saturday Trofeo races you might have wondered what the difference was - do you guys ever give up?

And ... you guessed it - shortage of flag marshalls again. Despatching my official duty in delivering the Trofeo start grid for Race 1, in the absence of any timing facility at the meeting, I found David Frith on Flag Point 1 - what are you doing there David? 'Just lending a hand till my next race' came the reply between roaring historics. So back out to Flag Point 1 for me, again - go race David!

Points Race 1 with Ben and Eddie on the 1st row and Don & Ron poised to pounce, plenty of work to do. We grouped the cars in class groups based on season results to date - so safe to say a few were out to prove us wrong. The Ken & Simon battle was going to be interesting with Chris Hunkin jumping into the absent Rob Hunkin seat to challenge Richard, Brent & Paul. John Rhodes also returning after his Armco encounter at the Icebreaker. Max & Tina alone to fight out TI honours splendidly, I could only wish for the race bits that would see me join them on the track - at least I would have been warmer! Race 1 results showed why Ben & Eddie always appear in the same frame of a photo. In Veloce Chris Hunkin showed Richard that he wasn't just there to keep Rob's seat warm picking up a 2nd. Ken showed Simon the way home in Trofeo class. And Max collected max points from Tina.

Trofeo Race 2 - full charge again. Under the reciprocating points rules (the what?) Ben pipped Eddie, Chris H pipped Richard, and Tina claimed 'her' points back from Max. Only Ken bucked the trend and re-confirmed why he is leading his class. Brent Gladding & Paul Weatherley had good points hauls in Veloce, other Trofeo points were battled hard by David F, Ted and Chris Browne with Warwick Grady showing he is getting to grips with his Sud in his first season.

Notable returns from Jim & David Newsham (David & Jim completing marathon trips to get both themselves, Lianne, Emily and race cars to the meeting after David's 164 objected to going further south just outside Morrinsville). Lucky you have 2 tow cars, David.

One to watch - improving at every meeting Kelvin Houten in his very smart GTV. I predicted out loud that he could grab another spot by the end of this meeting. Right on schedule he produced some excellent racing beating a busy group of David Newsham, Mike Moran & Mark Rantin - Sorry guys; I'll keep my predictions to myself in future.

GTA class has blossomed with 16 drivers having taken the track in the season to date. Points are becoming very hard to come by mid field and fought for with vigour. Even a good race can result in no points for the kitty - not that anyone's out there for the points, right? (Could this mean a migration to Veloce next season?) But it all makes for very good sport.

Trofeo Race 3, Handicap. Why is it however the handicap is set all the drivers have a prearranged meeting at the same corner on lap 4 of 6? But, what an exciting race! By then I had been totally abandoned - chief flag parked alongside said he had full confidence in my solo ability (I think he wanted to stay in his comfy car seat). Reportedly only 21

starters (of the earlier 26 car grid) but when you're covering the track from Point 6 (just before the chicane onto the front straight) through to Point 2 'round the corner from Turn 1 it's more than enough. A head on a pole would have been a bonus (not that anyone actually wanted that - not really eh?)

The GTA class weaved its way through the pack with Ron challenging Don all the way to chequered flag but being kept very, very honest by Paul Weatherley, Chris(es) Browne & Hunkin and a very valiant run by Warwick Grady (told you he's getting to grips with his Sud.) Tina anticipating a pass on the right by Ron Dijkmans then had to cope also with a pass on the left by Don Bradley ... all approaching the narrow single lane chicane onto the back straight. S-t-r-e-w-h-t-h guys! (Check out David's photos on the Gallery page)

All in all a successful weekend and a good natured meeting by the HRSCC whose hospitality we have enjoyed for many years. Very little in the way of dents to report although Ken & Dave felt the need for 33 & Sprint makeovers involving shared paint jobs.

So... the chairman wears pink ... sometimes, but usually it's well buried under about 5 layers of other clothing layers. Unless she's in her race suit belted into a fully equipped race going Sud... Ahhhh ... dreams are free - or is that hypothermia setting in?  
I don't do cold - OK ???

Wendy Metcalfe, Chairman Trofeo Series