

PORSCHE

GT3 CUP CHALLENGE

NEW ZEALAND



2009/10 Battery Town Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge - Round two: Ruapuna 28-29 November 2009

Courtney Letica's weekend diary: A flying weekend: That's how I'd describe our brief stop at the world's most southern race circuit – Teretonga, near Invercargill. The third round in the Porsche series, I was back behind the wheel following the accident late in November at Ruapuna near Christchurch. With another car (formerly driven by our Triple X Motorsport team principal Shane McKillen) – I had a reliable package to see what shape I was in for racing.

Having an all-clear from the doctors to race late in the week following the removal of the cast on my foot I can assure you there were some nerves about going all the way to Invercargill. The 2.61 kilometre circuit is very fast with long corners that really test your ability to judge grip levels. Also known for its fickle weather, in terms of changeability and extremes, at least now I can say it really was amazing to have two days of blue skies.

Friday practise and qualifying:

Setting top-five times in early practise was a huge boost given what happened last time I drove a Porsche 911 type 997. So I had every reason to set my best ever time in qualifying and while things were going well a computer alarm showing low oil pressure forced me to stop early – so seventh best was as good as it got.

Saturday Mad Butcher 100 kilometre race:

The race went well and I had a great tussle with Jonny Reid that saw us swap places several times. On the run to the line he just pipped me but finishing the double points race in sixth place behind him was a huge achievement.

Sunday's double race:

Sunday started out great, but at the re-start in the morning race I out drove my tyres after they had cooled down and lost quite a few places. That was really devastating – as things had been going so well. I've come such a long way and wanted to keep pushing forward. Funnily enough, much the same could be said for the final race in the afternoon. On the warm-up lap I was instructed to get in to start-grid order and...had a little accident. Leaving the grid area late I had to pass the field during the warm-up lap to get to my position three near the front of the field. Following Matt Halliday I waited until he finished his tyre warming sequence and went to accelerate past. Just as I was getting alongside he pulled hard left to continue warming his tyres and I had to take evasive action, although it wasn't quite enough to avoid being hit in the right-rear tyre. I just couldn't believe my luck – it wasn't anyone's fault – just wrong place at the wrong time.

So I had to pit while the Triple X Motorsport boys changed the tyre. The stop forced me to start from pit-lane – same too with Halliday.

Once the race started I was last one out – but it wasn't a bad thing. I charged hard and with Halliday in front had a great race trying to make up lost ground. Passing many of the back-markers in the 16-lap finale I finished fifth – moving me back up to seventh equal in the championship standings.

So that probably answers any questions as to how I was feeling after the concussion injuries and ankle fractures. To be honest I was feeling better on the Sunday than I had in a long time. However, before I could enjoy the result too much with the Triple X Motorsport team – we left for home.

It'll be a few brief days and then we'll be off again – our next race is the very next weekend – Timaru. It's much tighter and more technical than Teretonga, but one I'm really looking forward to as we're back to flying!



NEXT RACE:
Levels, Timaru
22-24 January 2010
Round four of six.

