



# Castrol BMW Race Series

## Driver Newsletter 3 – November 2008

**TV Coverage:** The BMW Open class from September's Icebreaker meeting will feature this week on the **Metalman Classic Motorsport Show**. Currently advertised screening times are:

Friday 28 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	Sky Sport 3
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup>	12:00 am (ie midnight Friday)	Sky Sport 1
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup>	1:30 pm	Sky Sport 3

Further details at: <http://www.skytv.co.nz/Default.aspx?tabid=211&Search=BMW+Racing>

This will be the third of three programmes from the Icebreaker meeting with a total of six classes (3 x BMW) being covered. With the intention to run the Manfeild coverage immediately afterwards, we may see that on Sky as early as the weekend of December 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>. More details to follow in due course.

As always, we appreciate your feedback on the TV coverage. We are already working to improve the in-car shots, as well as the commentary. To maximise your **opportunity to get exposure for you and your sponsors**, please forward some basic details that will allow us to educate the commentators. Items like previous race experience, famous victories (yeah, right!), sponsors and some vehicle history / specifications (especially for the open class) would be very useful. **Please send as soon as possible.**

**Round 2 - Manfeild:** The second round of the 2008/09 **Castrol BMW Race Series** was held recently at Manfeild, with solid entries from both classes. Despite having just one race grid available for each class, nobody missed out on a starting slot, after initially being oversubscribed.

The front of the **Open Class** field saw some close racing between three totally different cars. Conrad Timms's Group A E30 M3, Mike Delmont's 2002 Turbo and the E36 325i 3.2 of defending champion Andre Cowan. Conrad took the early advantage by setting the fastest qualifying time of 1:16.33, more than a second ahead of Mike and Andre. Next came a pair of Z3 M Coupes, with Paul Mill just ahead of Malcolm Abernethy.

In **Race 1**, Cowan took the early lead. However, Delmont got past Timms on lap 3 and took the lead from Cowan on lap 5, holding this position until the end, and setting the fastest time on lap 6.

Jim Wallace in his E30 M3 made a quick start in **Race 2**, climbing from fourth up to second on the opening lap, just behind Timms. Delmont passed Wallace on lap 2 and took the lead from Timms on lap 6. Wallace held on to claim 3<sup>rd</sup> place ahead, comfortably ahead of Cowan.

**Race 3** was a handicap start, with several cars starting from the pit lane. In fact, Delmont and Timms had had to watch several cars commence their second lap well before they even got going. Stephen Marks, making his BMW debut, started about 10<sup>th</sup> in his E30 320i 2.7, and eventually took the lead on lap 6. Despite a late charge by Cowan (4<sup>th</sup>) and Delmont (7<sup>th</sup>) Marks held on to win the race and the **Hugh Tunley Memorial Trophy** by just 0.5s from Russell Grace (2002) and Shannon Millar. (E36 325i)

That third place gave Millar three top-10 results at Manfeild and helped him to secure third place overall for the weekend. Two wins and a 7<sup>th</sup> was enough for Delmont to win the round, ahead of Cowan. (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>) With a third and a second in the first two races, Timms had been in contention for round honours, and despite getting the 3-point bonus for fastest lap, scored no further points when he parked his M3 in the gravel trap on lap 7.

Despite the DNF, Timms still leads the Open class championship after two rounds (6 races) with a total of 453 points, with Aaron Harris (442) in second, and Jim Wallace (440) in third. Both showing that consistency is important. Close behind is Andre Cowan on 437 points and Paul Mill on 391 points. Next comes Warren Glassford who was unable to start the last race at Manfeild, ending a run of 29 consecutive starts and finishes in the BMW Race Series. With Peter Bromley taking 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at Manfeild, he now has the only perfect set of results across both classes. 30 starts, 30 finishes!

The **E30 Class** saw the return of several drivers from last year, including Andrew Nugent, Nigel Patterson, Keith Mitchell, Harvey Gray, Carl Kirk-Burnand and Mike Watson, plus a debut for Richard Batchelor. Nugent and Gray showed they are still serious with second and third respectively in the E30 qualifying session. However, they couldn't outpace series leader Mark Babb, who set a pole lap of 1:27.14, just over a second quicker than the same meeting last year.

Babb led **Race 1** from start to finish with Nugent temporarily surrendering second place to Paul Olson, before regaining it on lap 4, and that's how they finished, with Gray in fourth, Mike Ashton fifth and Daniel Kent in sixth. The close performance of the E30 race group was highlighted by the fact that 20 cars (half the field) lapped within 2 seconds of the leader

The **second scratch race** was a virtual repeat, with Babb winning again, albeit by just 0.26s, and clinching his further win of the season. Olson was comfortable in third, more than 7 seconds further back, followed by Ashton and Allen. Despite starting third, Gray slipped to 13<sup>th</sup> by the end of the first lap and 19<sup>th</sup> after lap 2, before improving to 15<sup>th</sup>.

As expected, the **handicap race** saw plenty of positional changes as the faster cars made their way through the field. Murray Brown led for three laps before surrendering the lead to Tim Trout, who was never challenged and won comfortably by over 8 seconds from Brown, Patterson and Gerald Fava. Babb secured the Round 2 trophy by getting past 28 cars in 8 laps, up to 11<sup>th</sup> place, and setting the fastest lap in the process. That gave him full set of fastest laps (12 bonus points) and a total of 292 points for the round. Nugent (29<sup>th</sup> in race 3) and Olson (21<sup>st</sup>) were tied on 252 points - Nugent taking second place on a countback. Behind them were Ashton, Allen & Trout. This was the first time a 318i driver had won a trophy, showing that the relative performance is closer than ever. Well done Paul!

With four race wins, four fastest race laps and two pole laps from the first two meetings, Mark Babb has established a commanding lead in the **E30 championship**. He has 581 points (out of a possible 624) with Greg Symons second on 509 points, and Mike Ashton a further 7 points behind. Next come Rob Berrington-Smith, Ezra Orr, Tim Trout and Steve Lawrence. With each race worth up to 103 points (including fastest lap) the tight E30 competition sees no fewer than 17 drivers within reach of second place. Whether anyone can catch Mark Babb is another story.

Full results from Manfeild, including lap charts and individual lap times, can be found on the Mark Time website: <http://homepages.slingshot.co.nz/~marktime/results/081115-CMG.HTML>

Points tables for Manfeild and the season to date have been posted on the [Race Series website](#).

**Rounds 3 & 4 :** The next round is scheduled for late January, back at Pukekohe, with Taupo just a week later. Entries for both events are open already and previous HRC entrants can complete the process on-line at: <http://www.motorsportentry.com/> NB: You will need a transponder from now on.

Once again, we will have two E30 race groups and will use the same format as Pukekohe, with split grids for qualifying and the first scratch race, followed by a second scratch race (fast & slow groups) and finishing with a reverse grid / handicap race for each group and requalifying in between races.

Historically, we have used a cumulative+qualifying process for our events, as this has generally been adopted by the race organisers. A couple of you have expressed concern that you may have finished in front of a particular car in race 1, only to find him ahead of you on the race 2 grid. All because he had a faster lap than you, either in qualifying or the previous race. We have no immediate plans to change the format, but would appreciate your feedback if you think the system should change. Remember, it only applies between races 1 and 2, as race 3 is either reverse grid or handicap. The idea is to reward those who have improved their lap time over the course of a meeting, and this is quite normal with many new drivers visiting some of the circuits for the first time and taking a while to learn the lines.

**Vehicle Appearance:** With 2-month break until the next round, now's the time to get your cars back in shape, both mechanically and cosmetically. Some of you will have been reminded about this by the scrutineering team at Manfeild, so don't wait until the last minute if you need any paint or panel work.

**End of Season:** With the wet spring now virtually ensuring that Hampton Downs will not be ready this season, we are likely to end up with just five rounds in the championship, the same as last season. Further racing opportunities may be possible but cannot be confirmed until the New Year, and are therefore unlikely to be championship rounds.

Two such opportunities are the one-day TACCOC race meetings scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup>. Both at Pukekohe. These race meetings will have only 5 or 6 race groups, so you can still expect practice and three races, meaning there will be very little standing around. Even less if you can enter two race groups. In addition, the entry fee will be considerably lower than a 2-day meeting. TACCOC are even prepared to run a dedicated E30 race group, if there is sufficient interest.

The only proviso is that all entrants must have a Certificate of Description (COD) for their car. Getting one is a very simple process. Just ask those who have done it already, and the cost for E30's has been further reduced by Motorsport NZ, who recognize that the cars are very similar and have a special price. Virtually every car in our Open class could also get a COD and many have them already.

At this early stage, it would help with planning if you can indicate by return e-mail whether you are:

a) Interested in one or more of these meetings, and b) If you already have a COD or plan to get one.