

**Lotus team breaks faultless finishing record as they have a weekend they'd rather forget.**



Car 99 the Lotus Elise Sport of Peter Lucas, broke its season long race finishing record today when a mysterious electrical gremlin crept into the little Lotus on Lap 5 of race 1 at Oran Park. Lucas had started in 7<sup>th</sup> place and was holding station and at times gaining on the battling pair of Twigg and Flack in front, when the trouble struck.

The team identified the issue in order to have the little car ready for a start in Race 2. So far it appears as simple as a spark plug failure.

In Race 2 Lucas successfully challenged some of the fancied mid field Porsches and Ferraris and managed a credible seventh place finish from a rear of grid start.

In Race 3 the Lotus was battling with a number of Porsches and Ferraris, making some gains and passing a few cars when disaster struck again, this time slightly more expensive, with a suspected engine failure befalling the tiny yellow giant killer. The team have retired to their Sydney workshop to establish the actual cause and the full extent of the failure, but it sounds like a new engine will be in order for the Sandown GT Classic.

All the drama comes as the sister Lotus Exige GT3 of Angelo Lazaris was withdrawn from the weekend proceedings during Practice 2 on Saturday. The Exige suffered a broken drive shaft bearing on lap 1 of the practice session. Presently there are no replacements available to the team (possibly none in the country).

As the shaft is a bespoke part (and there are only four of these cars in existence), the replacements are not easy to find. This is the first mechanical failure and the first component failure on the GT3 in over 2 years of development and racing here and in the UK.

The GT3 was settling in and improving its times during the practice sessions running up to qualifying, only to be sidelined before the critical qualifying session started.

Both Loti have been undergoing lots of replacement and maintenance effort recently, ready for the GT Classic at Sandown in December, and the team are working hard to have both cars fully prepared for the event, hopefully with their traditional reliability restored.

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