

DRIVER DIARY R4 QLD 26-27 MAY

SVEN 'MR UNIVERSE' BURCHARTZ



PRACTICE & QUALIFYING

When we took the car out of the trailer on Friday we were immediately on the pace carrying some of the speed that had us winning at Bathurst the previous round. Testing at Winton between rounds found us some time and things that the car responded to well so that was looking like translating into continued improvement at Queensland.

Practice was an indication of things to come and by the time qualifying came around we'd managed to establish a clear break from the rest of the Porsches. The usual suspects were on me from the word go. Flack at his home track, Dann full of self belief and Max with the clear ability to give us a hard time (as bloody always).

Still, notwithstanding that I didn't maximise my opportunity on the green tyres, I was still a handy gap ahead of Max and 6th on the grid beside ... say it slowly now ... Peter Lucas in a Lotus! My English car mad mate back in Melbourne was nearly unable to breath he laughed so hard. Mick Ritter on the other hand spoke some very unprintable words with great regularity. I think he called me a "spoon"? I don't know what it means but I don't think it's a compliment!

So, after an earlier night Saturday than the one we had Thursday and Friday night (BF, who looks after team mate Jon Trende's car, was working on a PB for number of Scotch and Coke cans in one night. Thursday night was 15 cans from 5 pm until stumps ...) Friday was a little subdued for him and gave us all a great opportunity to make him try and vomit. In true Sonic style, he bit it back and got on with it.

SUNDAY

Didn't sleep so well as Jon decided to slide the snore volume to full Chapel Street spec so I spent the night with a pillow over my head. Team mates! I bet Lewis doesn't have to put up with that crap from Fernando. We get to the track at Ritter o'clock (otherwise known as 7 am - and not a minute later if you please), look for coffee and start off the hydration program. By the time the first race was on I'd had 2 litres of water and a PowerAde. Note to category managers - the pits are too far from the dunny!

RACE 1

Objective simple. Get past Lucas and let the guys behind him mess around with each other whilst I tried to stick with the 4 cars in front (in that other race that was taking place on the track for the GT results) on cold tyres. On the rolling start I was lagging a little so Ritter gets on the phone and very calmly and politely requests that I "get up the f&*kin arse" of the car in front. So tense! I do as suggested and make the jump on Lucas and try and stay with the GT cars. The rest of the race was fast but uneventful and we came home in 5th overall and first in the PDC with Max and Co in hot pursuit.

RACE 2

This time, objective - stay in front of Lucas. Otherwise, refer to race 1 objective. The start was a pisser. I got the jump on Kaias in the Aston and surprised Simonsen into turn 1 by going through there door to door with him. This stayed that way for, oh, 20 seconds as Kaias blasted past 3 turns later. 150 extra horsepower will do that ... Again, the idea was to build a gap and hold it. We were on program and about 5 laps from the end; I got the call to back off and save the tyres for the last race. Hey, this is just like the V8's (without all the talent).

RACE 3

Kaias was obviously a bit stressed that I got the jump in race 2 and got a case of the twitches at the start and jinked his car hard right just after we jumped. He must have just sneezed, surely. He said he couldn't remember doing it when I asked him after the race. His nose must have been irritated by the mist that descended on the warm up lap. Still, I had another go but decided that as I wasn't racing those guys anyway so let him go and then try and stick with him. Nice plan but Twiggy was obviously onto me having watched from behind for the previous 2 races. Smart boy. Mongrel.

6th place outright, Bugger! Still, second of the Porsche Drivers Challenge (PDC) Porsches on the track was OK as, with no second gear for the second half the race, keeping in touch with Twiggy and ahead of the closing cars behind became the order of the day. Max and I had built up a gap of about 15 seconds back to the cars behind by about lap 6 and it was on after I went wide at turn 6 and let Max sneak through.

Visions of the elbowing match that we had at Eastern Creek came back to me and I expected a return favour so kept the door open so we could both keep racing. I stayed on his hammer for the next 5 laps until going into turn 4, grabbing second and I heard a bang and at turn 6, no second gear. The rest of the race was bloody frustrating with no second and Max cruised to the PDC race win. Gary Dann was trying to close but even with all his gears present and accounted for was not making any real time up so when Max and I took the hanky after 15 laps, my gap to the 3rd PDC car was still good.

That race was also frustrating as I really wanted to make the weekend to be a clean sweep for the guys in the team.

RACE DAY WRAP and RESULT

PDC pole, 2 wins and a second for the round win and jumped from 4th to 2nd in the Porsche Drivers Challenge standings. I must be doing something right. Further support for that theory came from a number of quarters during the weekend with the series Technical Commissioner investigating my car after some "observations" from some guys, I think in the HQ pits, about the front splitter on my car. Can't have been the Porsche guys, surely ... Suffice to say, all clear (as it was always going to be) given that the Porsche part number sticker was still on the splitter when they pulled it off. I hope none of those HQ guys park their cars in glass houses.

Anyway enough of the fun and frivolity, this is GT racing! Next stop, my home turf. Phillip Island. We're testing in early July for the August race. The call has gone out for guys to come and share the track with us to keep the costs down. Maybe some of those HQ guys can come and test with us. That would be nice."