

Newsletter

April 2020

President's Note

Well you would have to say that what we are experiencing with Covid-19 is like nothing we have seen before. Unfortunately, it has meant an abrupt end to the race season. The bright side of all this is that we now have 4 weeks or so to work on the race cars to get them ready for next season. Or maybe build some new ones.

On a sad note after 12 years and a lot of hard work, Norma has decided it is time to leave the office at Teretonga Park. I would like to thank her for all the effort she has put in over the years.

COVID-19 Lockdown

Following the Government's instructions for a total lockdown, please be advised that Teretonga Park will be closed until further notice. Norma will continue to work from her kitchen table and is available by phone or email if you need to get in touch for any reason.

In the meantime, please stay safe and look after one another.

Rachael Beck
President

Steven Kennedy

Club members were shocked on the eve of the George Begg Classic SpeedFest when news of the passing of Steven Kennedy reached us.

The Southland Sports Car Club and the wider motorsport community are mourning the loss of Steven Kennedy, a man who made his mark at the very highest levels of motorsport, but was always proud to say he was from the Southland Sports Car Club. Steven passed away suddenly on Thursday 13 February while working at his beloved Fernview home and he was remembered on the Saturday of the George Begg Classic SpeedFest with a minute's silence.

Steven started competing as a 16-year old in race events at Teretonga Park in a very standard Honda Civic and showed plenty of talent, beating many with more highly modified machinery. He also loved rallying and over the years took part in plenty of race and rally events. At the time of his passing he still had one of his old race cars, a Toyota AE86, in his possession.

As well as competing Steven also showed commitment to his club and the sport by becoming involved in administration, holding various positions within the Southland Sports Car Club. He was on



the Club's Executive, a Chairman of the Rally Committee, a President of the club from 1985 until 1988 and Chairman of the Board of Control. He was made a Life Member of the Southland Sports Car Club in 2009.

Such was his nature and ability to build friendships that through his many years of competing and officiating he made many lifelong friends with whom he always maintained regular contact.

Steven's interest in administration at a national level came as the Motorsport New Zealand Annual Conference was held in Invercargill in the late 1980's.

He was elected onto the Executive of the national body and went on to become the Motorsport New Zealand President from 1998 to 2010. Under his watch the hugely successful Toyota Racing Series was established as was the Elite Motorsport Academy. He was also an FIA Steward, Chair of the Asia – Pacific Rally Committee at the FIA and a Member of the World Touring Car Commission. These were important positions and his many roles took him to many events around the world and to the highest echelons of world motorsport. However throughout he was always an ardent supporter of his club – the Southland Sports Car Club.

Outside of motorsport he was also the Board Chair of Sport Southland, the regional Sports Organisation in Southland.

In 1999 he was presented with an Award of Merit at the Motorsport New Zealand Awards and in 2002 he received the Member d'Honneur at the Awards. At the conclusion of his Presidency in 2010 he received Motorsport New Zealand's highest award, President d'Honneur.

Again his warm, genuine, personality stood him in good stead and made him many friends in the international motorsport community and through all his roles he had tireless support from his wife Adrienne.

In the words of one friend, "in the demanding world of sports administration, he ran a really, really, good meeting." Locally motorsport people are lamenting the loss of a genuine, good guy, one who would lend a helping hand to anybody.

Tributes flowed from the motorsport community and a large contingent of motorsport people attended Steven's funeral which took place at the Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill on Thursday 20 February at 1.30pm. A motorsport Guard of Honour was formed at the conclusion of the service.

The Southland Sports Car Club thanks Steven for his exceptional contribution and extends their heartfelt sympathies to Steven's family Adrienne, Tarryn and Adam and friends.

Volunteer Evening

It is a tradition that on the Thursday evening before our January race meeting that we have our Volunteers/Marshalls night. It is a chance for the club to say thank you to those that keep our events going and each year those that attend have the opportunity to hear insights from some of the drivers and officials that are involved in the meeting. In addition our volunteers can win some wonderful prizes. This year Toyota Gazoo Racing Ambassador Bob McMurray, interviewed Castrol Toyota Racing Series drivers, kiwi Chelsea Herbert and Stockholm based Henning Enqvist. He also chatted with Castrol Toyota Racing Series Operations Manager Amanda Tollemache and Toyota Gazoo Racing Manager Mark Whittaker.

Geoff Short from Speedworks was next on the microphone followed by Elton Goonan from Motorsport NZ and the CEO of Motorsport NZ Simon Baker.

Brendon White of D1NZ was next and said D1NZ had been in existence for 17 years but this was their first trip to Teretonga Park. The drivers already rated it the best circuit in New Zealand, he said.

Australian drifter Jake Jones was next up and gave some very interesting insights into the sport.

The Southland Sports Car Club is grateful to everyone who gave up their time to spend time with our volunteers.

It was also heartening to hear each and every group acknowledge that if it were not for our volunteers they could not compete - and that is very true.

The evening ended with some prize draws and supper, every volunteer receiving a prize. Of the major prizes our life member Wendy Jenks won a ride with drifter Jake Jones, sitting alongside him in his 700hp Toyota GT86 - she was excited (we think).

Bernard Mathews and Sean Maloney both won Lexus rides while the club was also very pleased to announce that last season's Marshall Of The Year, Chanel Muir, was to be sent to New Zealand's round of the Virgin Australian Supercar Championship at Hampton Downs in April to work as part of their marshalling team at the event - a fantastic opportunity. Obviously that trip is now on hold until the calendar is reset in the future.



Chanel Muir

The Southland Sports Car is always happy to hear from people interested in volunteering at the circuit – call us at 213 0522 during office hours or email info@teretonga.org.nz.

Wendy's Drifting Debut

A very nervous Life Member of our club, Wendy Jenks, donned a pair of overalls the day after our volunteers evening and got buckled into the passenger seat alongside Valvoline D1NZ National Drifting Championship competitor, Australian Jake Jones.

Despite her nerves pre-ride Wendy thoroughly enjoyed her time sitting alongside Jake in his 700hp Toyota GT86 during a demonstration run. "Awesome, loved it," was Wendy's reaction.

It was great to see one of our hard-working volunteers get the opportunity and many thanks to Jake for giving of his time.

He now has an Invercargill New Zealand based fan club.

Thanks to Ron Veint for the image.



Brendon Leitch Update

Since our last newsletter a lot has been happening for club member Brendon Leitch.

Brendon Leitch was named the Toyota GAZOO Peoples Choice Award winner by Velocity News late last year.

Decided by public vote Brendon was chosen from a list that read like a Who's Who of New Zealand motorsport. He headed off Shane Van Gisbergen, Scott McLaughlin, Liam Lawson and Nick Cassidy in the voting. Others on the list included Andre Heimgartner, Brendon Hartley, Chris Van Der Drift, Earl Bamber, Fabian Coulthard, Hayden Paddon, Mitch Evans and Scott Dixon.

Comments received along with the votes highlighted Brendon's happy-go-lucky nature and the fact he is approachable at race meetings and a great ambassador for Southland and New Zealand.

When we last spoke to Brendon prior to our last newsletter he was about to head to Italy for a test with Leipert Motorsport and Lamborghini Squadra Corse in their Huracan GT3 EVO at the Cremona circuit 100 kilometres south of Milan. Brendon says he spent just 30 hours in Italy but the test was successful and in just a few short laps he was just 2/10th's off the factory drivers time.

Prior to the current situation in the world Brendon would have been arriving in Europe about now for some racing, the details of which should be announced in the near future.

For the time being he is at home in Invercargill waiting for another monumental step forward in his racing career.

Jordan Michels – a great opportunity cut short

Young Southland racing driver Jordan Michels received a great opportunity to join a star studded grid at the Australian Grand Prix meeting at Albert Park in Melbourne in March. However, as has been widely publicised, the meeting was cancelled on the second day of the event.

Michels was due to drive a S5000 car in the support races at the event. The cars are Australia's fastest race cars based around the French designed Onroak-Ligier chassis fitted with a 560hp 5 litre Ford V8 engine and a Holinger 6 speed sequential transaxle.

The drive came about as Greg Woodrow, who used to engineer Jordan, was selling a race transporter to Albert Callegher. Callegher is an Italian with his own racing history and in the course of discussions Woodrow asked Callegher who his driver was. "At that stage Albert did not have a driver so Greg recommended me," says Jordan. "Albert was due to engineer the car while Greg's team ran it. Greg and I have had a very good friendship from the beginning of our time in motorsport together and even when we ran ourselves I was on phone to him quite a lot so it is quite cool the two of us could do it together."

The field contesting the races at the Grand Prix was stunning, including former Formula 1 drivers Rubens Barrichello and Giancarlo Fisichella plus current Bathurst Champ and former GP2 racer Alexandre Premat of France and current Williams Formula 1 test and reserve driver Jack Aitken. Barrichello won eleven Formula 1 Grand Prix races and Fischella three, including one at Albert Park.

"It was a quality field and when I was playing Formula 1 games on Xbox you would never imagine you would one day have the chance to race with some of the greats."

Michels tested at Winton Motor Raceway and Tailem Bend in preparation for the drive. "The car is a handful. It has plenty of horsepower, you're doing 280 km/h at the end of the straight at Tailem Bend and you have to stop it wheel spinning all the time. The acceleration is phenomenal."

Practice and qualifying was scheduled for Thursday followed by a race each day. Friday and Saturday were qualifying races before the feature on Sunday for the Alan Jones Cup.

However as we now know after practice and qualifying there was no further action at the Albert Park circuit.

Before the event was cancelled Jordan had qualified twelfth fastest and would have lined up beside former Formula 1 ace, Brazilian Rubens Barrichello, in the first race of the weekend on Friday.

"I was gutted, it was quite bizarre but there a lot of people far worse off than me," said Jordan on his arrival back to Invercargill soon after the weekend.

However, despite his short time at the venue Michels was impressed. "It is a great track, amazing, and it was very special to be driving on it. We didn't have the quickest car on Thursday but we made some pretty big changes overnight and were pretty confident we would be quicker on Friday. We were pretty excited heading to the track on Friday. The TCR cars were on the grid ready to go and then the event was cancelled."

Michels was scheduled to compete in the second round of the S5000 Championship at Sydney Motorsport Park at the end of March but now the remainder of his season is a matter of wait and see. “Hopefully I get to pull my helmet on somewhere in the near future,” he said.



Photograph – Pace Images

Race Committee

We have had three race meetings since our last report and all have been good events.

Our December meeting presented by Downer saw a good range of classes and good entries prior to the Christmas break.

January was of course the Speedworks Events meeting. Sadly, we lost the TCR Championship and the BNT V8s so the fields were a little thin. However, we had the best grid of Castrol Toyota Racing Series cars for several seasons with potentially a future Formula 1 star or two among them while the first visit to Teretonga Park of the Valvoline D1NZ Drift Championship proved a hit. The crowd loved the drifting and the D1NZ competitors rated Teretonga Park the best circuit in the country.

The rebranded George Begg Classic SpeedFest in February was a great event. There was the welcome return of the Formula 5000 cars and the theming by the Bill Richardson Transport World team around the event had the circuit looking great. There were good crowds and a good number of campers. It was great to see the crowds making use of the new and old spectator banks at both the January and February meetings.

Unfortunately, our Super Truck meeting in March was a casualty of the Covid-19 lockdown but we will be working hard to ensure that the next race season is ready to get under way when we're allowed out of our "bubbles".



Bevan Gerrard
Race Committee

ClubSport

While many of us find ourselves with little to do at the moment, the opposite is true of our ClubSport Co-ordinator Malcolm Mitchell. Malcolm is a tad busy at the moment so we will wrap up the season on his behalf ... and what a season it was.

Numbers were really good at all rounds of the Evolution Motorsport Clubsport Championship and also at the non-championship grass event at Nigel King's property in January.

There were several new faces throughout the year, several of them staying on and doing the whole season. The Evolution Motorsport Toyota Levin as well as the Ford Ka that was available at every round were both well used and gave competitors a great opportunity to get started in the sport. It was a hard-fought season with a close finish in both the Autocross and Motorkhana Championships. In the end it was Liam MacDonald who took the Motorkhana Championship from Stacy Lines and Andrew Kennedy while Andrew Lawrie secured the Autocross Championship from Craig Allan and Liam. Sam Hole won the 0-1600cc class and Andrew Lawrie the 1601cc & over class.

We introduced some new innovations during the season including putting well known Southlanders into our Evolution Motorsport Toyota Levin – the first being Invercargill City Councillor Darren Ludlow. We had two more well-known personalities planned for the non-championship Triathlon event in April but unfortunately we had to cancel that event.

The use of celebrities offers good publicity opportunities for club sport and we managed to exploit this during the season. There are more exciting new innovations for the future but first and foremost we look forward to getting the sport underway again as soon as we are able and it is safe to do so – that is the number one priority.

Here are Malcolm's end of season comments lifted from his final facebook post of the season -

I would like to thank all my awesome helpers who have stuck around at the end of each event to pack up and make my job that much easier. Big thanks to Bree Nutsford for the awesome administration and timing work, Campbell McKenzie for taking the role of Clerk of The Course, timer and starter plus Ian Richardson and Krista also for timing and starting duties.

Thanks also to Cody Masters and his awesome bunch of flaggies, chefs Zac and Darren Murch for your culinary delights, Rachel and Andrew Lawrie, Jo O'Brien and of course Aimee Morison for the Teretonga creche and looking after the budding wee clubsporters of the future.

A special thanks to Aimee, Alice and Harrison for your amazing support – thank you.

A big thank you to those who supported us – Evolution Motorsport, East End Liquor, i Hire Invercargill, NZ Safety Blackwoods and Mighty Meats. Keep these businesses uppermost in your mind when you require the types of products and services they provide.

Most importantly though, THANK YOU to all of you champion competitors for coming out and making this season a very successful and enjoyable one. Without all of you turning up and having a crack and helping me out, this would not be possible so from me CHEERS GUYS AND THANK YOU!

Back to us now.... and a big thank you to you Malcolm for your enthusiasm and effort in taking up the role and driving a great season!

Race4Life

It was great to have RACE4LIFE back at Teretonga Park for a second year early in March. RACE4LIFE is a trust set up to fulfil the wishes of Palliative Care patients and there were numerous activities and experiences set up for attendees.



Just a small taste of some of the machinery at RACE4LIFE.

2020 New Zealand Classic Rally

The 2020 New Zealand Classic Rally visited Teretonga Park on the evening of Wednesday 4 March. The event ran throughout New Zealand from 15 February to 8 March and was a truly international event with 24 cars with drivers from the US, Canada, Great Britain and right throughout Europe in a stunning array of cars. Many of the drivers are veterans of iconic events such as the Peking to Paris Rally and there were some real treasures amongst the cars that took part. It was a privilege to host them at Teretonga Park.



Other Motorsport News

Igor Fraga pips Liam Lawson to the Castrol Toyota Racing Series title after five weeks of racing around New Zealand.

Club member Liam MacDonald was sitting second in GT1 and 3rd overall in the OSCA Super Saloon Championship prior to the final round of the championship being cancelled. The season highlight was a run from 27th to 1st in a televised race at Highlands Motorsport Park.

During February Motorsport New Zealand announces that the TCR Championship which had its New Zealand debut postponed this summer is to be given official NZ Touring Car Championship status for next season, a title previously fought out in the BNT V8s category. Then in March the BNT V8s Championship announce the change to TA2 cars, their new championship to be known as NZV8TA2.

COMING UP

We are currently working on Race and ClubSport dates for next season, however due to the uncertain times at the moment we are unable to confirm anything but will update you as soon as the situation becomes a little clearer. One date that was on the calendar prior to the lockdown was the opening round of the South Island Endurance Series scheduled for Teretonga Park on Saturday 12 September.

DIRECTORY OF CLUB OFFICIALS

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Imm Past President	Dean Maw	215 6851
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Chief Flag Marshal	Cody Masters	0278 206773
Chief 1 st Response	Lenard McLeod	217 7026
Chief Timekeeper	Bevan Gerrard	215 8257
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