

Sunday 24th report

Contributed by Cindy
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Podjursky Triumphs in West Coast Champs

By Tony Stuart

It was the turn of the Superstocks to take top billing at Supercheap Autos Oceanview Speedway on Sunday. The class has been plagued by low numbers this season, but a strong 12-car field was on hand for the West Coast Superstocks.

In addition, three Memorial titles were up for grabs, one in each heat, for the late Noel Kensington, George Podjursky and Craig Heibner. These titles are always keenly contested, and this year was no exception.

Cars from Christchurch, Hawke's Bay, Wellington and Stratford were on hand to battle the locals. In the first heat Bevan Humphrey (54V) streaked away from his front row grid to win comfortably from Mitch Vickery (26S) and Kerry Podjursky (56VN). As well as taking maximum points in the championship, Humphrey won the Noel Kensington Memorial.

In the second heat and George Podjursky Memorial, Christchurch visitor Malcolm Ngatai (19C) got the jump ahead of Podjursky, who was desperate to win the race in memory of his late father. Podjursky chased Ngatai hard for the whole race, but couldn't reel the former 1NZ driver in.

After two heats Bevan Humphrey led on 22 points followed by Podjursky (21), Vickery (20), Ngatai (19) and 23V Scott Duncan (17). This set up a fascinating final heat, with Vickery on the front row, and Podjursky and Humphrey back in the field.

Mitch Vickery led out the third heat, but he was blocked by 25B Kairyn O'Brien entering the front straight on the third lap and Podjursky took the lead. Vickery recovered, and he and Ngatai took off in pursuit of the leader.

Just as they were gaining ground, Vickery and Ngatai came together at the exit to turn 2, and Humphrey almost rolled as he vaulted over the front of the 19C car. Duncan, sitting in fifth place shot past the other three cars, bringing him into podium contention.

As the laps counted down no one could catch the flying Podjursky who took the race, the Craig Heibner Memorial, and the West Coast Superstock title with 33 points. Duncan came home in second to claim third place in the championship, and veteran Bob Smith held on for third. Bevan Humphrey came home in fourth place and picked up enough points to give him second place in the championship.

Kerry Podjursky is a household name in the sport, but is usually associated more with influencing the outcome of races rather than winning. But on Sunday his tank was humming, and his victory was both richly deserved and very popular. With local cars taking the first three placings in the West Coast championship, there were some very happy locals at the conclusion of the meeting.

A good field of Stockcars gathered for Round 3 of the Elite Mechanical Stockcar Challenge. The highlight of the first two heats was the ongoing battle between 2NZ Dion Mooney and 82V Dennis Black which began at the previous meeting.

It wasn't until the final heat that Mooney and Black decided to race instead of trying to eliminate one another, and when they did Mooney took out the race to consolidate his lead in the points. Nicky Johnston (32R) and Shane Kells (87V) took out the first two races, with Blair Lockett (89V) and Ron Tye (99V) picking up multiple minor placings.

The Elite Mechanical Series is run on aggregate points over four rounds, so when it concludes next weekend, Dion Mooney is bound to find himself the centre of attention one way or the other, with big money up for grabs to the outright winner.

The season is fast drawing to a close, but there are still two meetings to go. All classes will race on Saturday 30th April starting at 6pm, and there will be a second meeting on Sunday 1st May, concluding with a Demolition Derby.

It has been a long season, but it is finishing on a very high note.