



Round 1 Clipsal 500

Clipsal and no damage!

Adelaide Clipsal 500 was the first race for me in a V8 Supercar. The week prior we drove the car for the first time up at Winton in Victoria. My new car is being prepared by Greg Murphy Racing who is aligned with Tasman Motorsport. Our test day was very busy with all Victorian Teams in Main game and Fujitsu testing on that day. It was a baptism of fire with the likes of Kelly, Skaife, Dumbrell, Tander, Holdsworth all racing around me. They don't need much room to get past at full pace.

The test day went well completing 90 laps and sorting out as many comfort and fitment issues for myself as a driver and last minute work to be done prior to Round 1 at Clipsal.

The following week we were in Adelaide for the Clipsal 500. Expecting 40 degree heat like every other year I arrived in shorts and t-shirt however it turned out to be a much more comfortable 20-25 degrees all weekend.

For those of you who have never been to Clipsal it's a daunting place with high concrete walls and very narrow streets. But I had raced there three times before in Formula Ford which was obviously an advantage.

Thursday gave the Fujitsu drivers two practice runs of 20 mins each. My first session was taken steady to familiarise myself in the car and keep it off the walls and away from damage.





Friday Morning saw us qualifying in disastrous weather conditions, two minutes prior to starting we had wet tyres on due to the rain, however with one minute prior to start we decided to change to dry tyres and went out on those. We posted a time in the first few laps which had me in 15th but then the rain set in and I came in to avoid crashing on dry tyres. The sun then came out and we were out on the track again but this time I was held up in traffic and ended up in 26th place from 30 starters that afternoon.

Race 1 - Saturday

With the obvious nerves of my first race for the year, and my first race in a V8 Supercar I had no idea what to expect. The race started well and I moved up to 24th spot and kept the car off the wall with no damage. I was not expecting how rough and how much you get pushed around by the other competitors which is something I will have to learn. I had a problem with my seat all weekend and by lap 8 of 25 I could hardly lift my left arm and change gears. It was a big disadvantage for my first race.

Race 2 - Sunday

I started from 24th but had a terrible start and lost three spots by turn one but then followed the pack around for three laps until I made up some spots. The race was unfortunately cut short due to a fatal accident and we only completed 14 laps. I did however manage to finish in 18th spot which I was extremely happy with for my first completed race weekend.

Overall I finished 21st for the weekend and picked up some points and had no damage on the car. It was a great start to the season with the next round at Wakefield Park in Goulburn NSW from 4-6 April.

James Bergmuller

