



## V8 Supercars Fujitsu Series

### Sandown Vic - June 2008

I had a very eventful lead up to this race, the Monday before the race I was on a bike ride with my training partner and he fell off his bike and as he fell, took me out with him. I landed on his rear wheel and badly bruised my left hip, right hand and left elbow. Luckily when I got into my race car on Friday at the track the seat had a gap right where my hip was bruised, so it didn't affect my driving. Looks like no more bike rides the week of a race.

We had one test day at Winton two weeks before the race, this was a big help to familiarise myself in the car again, since it had been nearly 2 months since we last raced.

Saturday was practice and the first four laps were with wet tyres on and with rain spitting, this was the first time I had driven in the wet. After six laps I came in to change onto dry tyres. The mechanics noticed the diff was leaking whilst I was sitting there. It ended up being a seal leaking and had to retire that session early. This hurt me throughout the weekend not being able to drive another 20 laps and sort out the car, especially since it was the first time I had raced a V8 at this track. By the end of the second practice session I was a long way back and needed a lot of work to get on the pace to qualify the next day.

I qualified on the Sunday in 26<sup>th</sup> place, going over 3 seconds faster a lap. It had taken me till then to learn how to drive this car at this track at pace. Unfortunately the session was cut short with one competitor slamming into the wall on the opening lap and cutting our track time.

Race One started terrible I lost a lot of ground in the first lap and had to fight my way back through the field. I am still getting used to being bashed around in the first lap, in formula fords which I used to race one touch from a competitor and the wheels would get damaged and you would be out of the race. In V8 Supercars, even if there is no gap the guys behind will push you out of the way to make one. I finished 20th with no damage or incidents.

Race Two I had another bad start, with wheels spinning off the line; I really need to work on my starts for the rest of the season. It began to rain in the last four laps and I ran off the road on the last corner losing a few spots before I returned to the track and finished 23rd.

Race Three was very similar with another poor start and very uneventful until the third last lap where I was tagged from behind coming onto the straight and lost a few more places. I finished again in 23rd.

Overall I am sitting in 23rd for the championship season.

My approach coming into this race was to simply relax and have fun, put the last race behind me and enjoy this one. I now finally feel comfortable in the car and can push and be on the limit without worrying about making costly mistakes.

It's now only up from here for the rest of the season.



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If anyone is interested there is a YouTube video of a drive day I did with Preston Motors, if you go to [www.youtube.com.au](http://www.youtube.com.au) and type in Preston Motors and click Video, it will come up.

The Next race is July 18-20 at Queensland Raceway.

James Bergmuller



This is what a birthday at the race track looks like – Team-mate Dale Wood

