



V8 Supercars Fujitsu Series

Winton – Vic, August 2008

Finally Top 15

The weekend started out with rain coming down and temperatures of about 12 degrees. It was the first time I had really driven in the wet and it turned out better than I thought.

The first practice session I was running in 12th until the track dried out and I fell back in the field. Driving in the wet is like driving on eggs, everything happens slower and your concentration level is right up there. These cars have no ABS, no traction control - only wet tyres. Trying to stop a V8 from 200km/h in the wet is scary, every time you accelerate and change gears the car goes into wheel spin. Wish I had my heart rate monitor on that day! I had a few little rally moments in the mud but nothing major and no damage to the car.

After the first day of practice I was back in 26th. Qualifying proved to be still a challenge for me. It was raining when we went out to qualify and we all had dry tyres on - I thought my team were out of their mind, but I have to trust them. The most nervous few laps I have ever done. The track dried out luckily and I qualified in 24th a little off the pace with a lot of work to do in the races. I always drive better in the race so I was not too concerned.

Race One I kept out of trouble avoiding all the crashes, I circulated behind a slower car and never managed to pass him. I tried to pass on many occasions but could not get by - I need to punt them out of the way like they do to me. I'm still a bit cautious of that. I finished in 20th.

Race Two my team mate Dale Wood only made it to the end of the straight with his car turned around off the start and slamming into the wall, the team were up all night repairing it. I again kept out of trouble, got past all the slow guys and had good race pace to finish in the main field in 15th. My best result this year and a good sign since my speed and confidence is getting better every race, my race craft is also improving. I am better at blocking, and making the most of any mistake a driver in front makes. In race two I passed three cars on the straight when one made a mistake and held the others up.

Race Three was very up and down, I was brimming with confidence that I could do better than 15th and on lap one turn one I was tagged from behind and turned around. I ended up on the grass and went from 16th to last in one corner. I spent the next 5 laps trying to catch up and luckily a safety car came out and I was back in the main field. I kept working through the field to get up to 17th and on the last lap I ran wide into the dirt and finished 18th. Still a great result considering the start.





I finished 15th overall for the weekend and have moved up two spots again to 20th overall for the series. If this momentum continues I should finish in the top 15 for the series which was the goal for the first year in V8 Supercars.

The next race is the big one Bathurst in from 9-12 October.

James Bergmuller



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