

Back in the TBR Mygale Formula Ford Race car.....you bet!!

After 1301 days (over 42 months) of recovery following a life-threatening motor vehicle accident, which placed Thomas in a coma for 73 days and a long and arduous rehabilitation programme, Thomas suited up and strapped the helmet back on to reunite himself with the cockpit of his beloved Formula Ford race car. He contested Round 3 of the NZ Formula Ford Championship at Circuit Chris Amon over the weekend of 5/6/7 April as a stand-alone return to racing in this category. There were 22 entrants from all over the country, the best of NZ Open-Wheel motorsport at present in attendance. The test day on Friday was tinged with frustration for Thomas, as he attempted to acclimatise with the car, a new and different brand of controlled race tyre and such a long break away from racing while recovering. However, he improved each session to post his best time of the day in Test 3, which was a nett gain of 2.4s.

A solid start to the weekend was overshadowed by a significant engine misfire during qualifying, which meant the #67 Mygale was forced to start from position 21 all weekend, This was not a major concern, as the event was about driving the car accurately and gaining confidence to push when required. Misfire fixed, Thomas began Race 1 with a good start, and he made up places during the race to finish in P18 across the stripe after 10 laps and further time improvement. Race two was a complete contrast, with a sticking throttle forcing Thomas to pit lane before the race even got underway, erring on the side of caution. This required a change of throttle cable overnight in preparation for the Sunday races.

A new day on Sunday morning brought more stunning sunshine. The third race was another fantastic start from 21st position, with some amazing wheel-to-wheel racing on display. Another great improvement in driving and speed was achieved, setting his best time of the weekend on Lap 5 of the race. The final race of the event saw another fantastic start from P21 and some more great battles. A mature drive came undone by a broken tie rod end bolt and Thomas was forced to retire on lap 7.

Thomas gained skill and confidence at every corner of the Manfeild circuit, smashing goals similar to before his accident. An overall gain of 4.2s and the honour of being awarded the “Driver of the Weekend” award by his peers made for a very satisfying weekend. Team Boniface Racing would like to thank everyone who has been supporting along the journey to enable him to compete again!



Photo credit: Geoff Ridder Photography and Donna Boniface