



Mini Racing
DRIVERS NZ

Round 1 Report: Manfeild

Super Mini Challenge Tames the Wild Weather at Manfeild

- Elliott Heron

Manfeild was the venue for the first round of the Super Mini Challenge series for the 2012-13 season, with a one day meeting getting the ball rolling.

A good mix of cars faced the starter, including Kevin Townsend who was back from a season off with his fire-breathing Open class car. Also on track was Craig Anderson in a BMW Mini and the regular field of Mini 7 and Miglia competitors.

Qualifying was the only dry session of the day, with the drivers getting out early to score some quick laps. A shower fell in the middle of the session, but those who braved the conditions fared well, with the fastest laps being recorded late in the session on a drying track.

Townsend resumed from where he left off, scoring pole with a 1:22.93, 3.5 seconds clear of leading Miglia runner and Feilding local Bill Robson. Anderson was next in the BMW, ahead of the Mini 7s headed by Elliott and Warren Heron, who was debuting the first 850cc engine run since the mid 1990s. The weekend ended early for Chris Thompson, who had an engine drama keep him from racing.

Conditions had worsened for Race 1, with consistent rain falling on an already sodden track. To make proceedings interesting there was a large amount of oil spread across the racetrack, reducing the racing line to less than a car width. Townsend won from pole, but had to fend off advances from Anderson and E Heron, who remained in close company throughout the race. W Heron ran fourth, ahead of the leading Miglia of Robson.

The wet and slippery conditions only claimed one victim, with Lawrence Croydon-Fowler spearing off at Higgins causing some suspension damage to his Mini 7. Laurie Axcell also had a tough run, with his

engine imploding as he crossed the finish line, doing irreparable damage and putting him out for the day.

The track had dried considerably for the second race, with the drivers all electing to use slick tyres. However the rain soon started to fall, making the conditions extremely treacherous. The Mini 7 class led the field away, with the Herons taking off to a clear lead. W Heron led off the line, but the stiff head wind on the back straight allowed E Heron to draft to the lead.

The positions would not change, giving E Heron the win overall. W Heron came through for second with the Miglias of Robson and Simon Mans taking third and fourth overall. Anderson and Townsend were limited to fifth and sixth after a tough handicap. The conditions took no further victims, however gearbox issues caused Croydon-Fowler to finish one lap down.

The final handicap race was in full wet conditions, with the drivers back onto wet tyres. Anderson made quick work of the handicap, fighting his way past the Mini 7s to take the win. Mans held on for second after starting off the front row, despite having to stave off advances from E Heron on the final lap. W Heron came through in fourth spot with Townsend fighting back from 30 seconds down to finish fifth.

Following the action packed day of racing E Heron heads the points on 103, ahead of Townsend on 94 and W Heron on 81. The Miglia class lead is tied between Mans and Robson, both on 79.

The next round is at Taupo on Labour Weekend 20-21 October, with a full field of exciting Mini race cars promised along with the host of IRC classes.