

2011 MICKEY THOMPSON TIRES NATIONAL OFFROAD RACING

CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Round 1 - North Island - Meremere

A little luck can go along way. At least that is what I wished for ATR on Thursday prior to the meeting as they faced the prospect of hosting the first round of the national championship in wet conditions. And while the weather conditions had improved on Sunday (race day), the damage was done. The track was a mud bowl and did not induce a spectacular number of cars to front for the meeting; nor induce a race racing spectacle due to the track conditions (some might argue that going a third of the pace you would under dry conditions through mud baths is a spectacle). However, the show must go on; and that it did with some exciting and varied racing throughout the classes.

In **Whakatane Commercial Spares Class 1**; Neville Smith (#188) of Auckland Offroad Racing Club (AORC) dominated the days racing with consistent and winning performances. Defending Class 1 champion and NZ3 Mal Langley (#193) of Whakatane had a shocker with numerous issues plaguing his days racing. The Thorntons (#180) new ~~truck~~ (sorry buggy) was driven by Max Thornton who started with a flurry in race one before steering issues forced his retirement for the rest of the heats. Max returned for the feature race and claimed 2nd place behind Neville Smith. Colin Meridith (#130) of Putaruru in the ex Clive Thornton Southern Cross drove consistently throughout the day and claimed second in class.

The **BUMAC Engineering Class 3's** saw only three competitors start race one after 6 entries were received. However, the competitors that raced did not disappoint. Each of the heats saw Paul McCormack (#373) of Counties Manukau Offroad Racing Club (CMORC) in a fierce and sometimes scrapping battle for position with AORC driver and defending national class champion and NZ 1 Donn Attwood (#371). Paul finally coming out of what seemed to have been an eternal plague of bad luck and misfortune. Paul's efforts did not go unnoticed and he was awarded the Non Stop Commentary Driver of the Day award from Paul Madden and came a close second to Donn in the overall points for the day. Greg Mullins (#303) of Pukekohe debuted his new car and performed consistently throughout the day to pick up a deserved third place in class. Philip Johnston's (#390) Class 3 'odyssey' only made it of the trailer before major gearbox issues were realized.

In **Leader Products Class 5**, competitors and spectators alike got to get a glimpse of AORC racer Troy Tuffnell's (#576) new car, who would be coming up against stalwart Jim Cato (#509) and CMORC racers Phil Finlay (#569) and defending class champion Nick Hall (#561). The results were mixed throughout the day with each competitor suffering some form of mechanical fault. The results saw first equal placing's to Nick Hall and Troy Tuffnell with Phil Finlay edging out Jim Cato for third place.

The ***Coms4u Challenger Class*** saw what was probably the lowest numbers to a national event since challenger class inception. With only three competitors, the racers ran on diminished points. It was all one way traffic with CMORC racer Nick Leahy (#C87) taking out the racing in comfortable fashion continuing his dominant role in the class. Fierce competitor and CMORC racer Wayne Rowe had endless troubles with visibility which resulted in a lesser performance by his standards.

In Class 7, youngster and sole entrant, Tane Carrington performed well a picked up valuable experience and points.

A.F.W.E. sponsored Classes 2, 4, 6 & 8 saw the return of Maurice (feel no pain) Bain (#200) in his trademark Nissan Navara Class 2. Maurice ran well in the early races jostling hard for position with Craig Patterson (#214) for the top spot. Maurices day ended early and Craig took home first in class. In class 4, Rex Croskery charged hard in his debut for class 4 and was extremely satisfied with how things went stating it was great to drive it up on the trailer after racing in such conditions. Speaking of driving it on the trailer; fellow class 4 competitor ??????? took things a little too far when he drove his truck up onto his trailer and then proceeded to drive it half off again over the front of the trailer (not cool).

Sole entrants in class 8 and 6 saw those competitors pick up maximum diminished points for the day.

Once again, the event was marshalled by ***WEST Event Support*** crew who did a good job. Thank you for your continued support of our sport.

So now us North Islanders must plot the next phase of our championship title hopes; which for a lot of us will involve some serious hours in the shed. Nonetheless, Round 2 is just around the corner; lets all get in behind Palmerston North and support our National Series

Nick Hall #561

CMORC