

## **The Muddy Talker's Bit.**

### **Counties Classic Series Final 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

To quote that Ozzie ad, "Where the bloody hell are you?" With a prize pool to the value of \$2,000 up for grabs, you'd think the series would bring out all of the region's drivers looking for a piece of the richest prize in NZ offroading. A \$1,500 travel voucher for the winner, used by previous champions to get to Christchurch for a national final, a trip to Bathurst, or to take the missus to Fiji for a holiday, for example. Second place pockets \$300, and third gets \$200.

Jeez, don't you guys like paddock racing or something?

Despite the best efforts of some of the top half's better drivers, Eric Teers took his UTV to the series win. By just 10 points, from another UTV piloted by Mike Small.

Not quite taken seriously by many people, these little monsters must now be considered a real threat. Why? Because they turned out in numbers, and given the diminishing points system used, scored more points than any other class over the three round series.

Aha, I hear you say; game over! Not by a long chalk. If not for rare mechanical failures, both Geoff Matich and CMORC President, Nick Hall, were serious contenders. As it was, Geoff was 3<sup>rd</sup>, only 2 points behind Mike S, Nick a bit further back in 5<sup>th</sup>.

Let's talk Kiwitricks, now having their own competition within the series. Marcus Runciman won that rather comfortably, as I had predicted, by an amazing 64 points. Done and dusted! As I said in the report on Rnd 2, he could have sat this one out and still come out the Junior Series champ. But like a real racer, (N.B. paragraph one, folks!), he went out there and drove hard all day. Well done lad, very well done.

In J Class, it was all Marcus, with daylight second. Trae Carrington finished best of the rest, on occasion being close enough to Marcus to give him a bit of a hurry-up. Aston Southward pushed hard, but couldn't repeat his form from Rnd 2. Travis Buckley tried, but the truck seemed to lack a little power compared to the others. . In Class M, Fergus Crabb took victory, after the very quick Jack Hawkswood couldn't get the truck to run cleanly, putting it on the trailer after the first heat. Pity, he is fast! Watch these kids; there is some real talent there.

Jaden Carrington took top honours in Class 7 and looks the business. Dyson Delahunty, having moved up from Kiwitricks this year, looks to be still coming to grips with the extra grunt provided by the old 1200cc VW. A work in progress.

With class leader, Phil Finlay, missing the final, Taine Carrington (yes, another one.) did enough to take top points in Class 5. But not by much. If Nick Magness had entered the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, it might well have been a different story. After running his Class 7 car very successfully for the past few years, Taine is probably still adapting to the 1300cc car, and

got caught out by the slippery second corner on a couple of occasions. Again, just getting used to the extra grunt is his only problem. Just my opinion.

What about those golf cart thingies then? Although not dominating the UTV's 3 heats, Eric was able to get enough top three finishes to edge Mike S. Mike got a bit paranoid over some of the tactics employed by his competition on the day. Graham Giles had a good day, often being at the pointy end. Others who showed real pace were Ben Thomasen and Shaun Pyke, neither of whom entered the first two rounds. Maybe, if they had, the overall result may just have been a bit different; but I doubt it. Shaun pushed Eric very hard in the 15 lap feature, keeping the spectators well entertained. And these guys are not scared to hit the jumps at full noise, either. Mad buggers, all.

Despite the blown CV joint in Rnd 2, Nick ended up winning Class 3. And just to add icing to the cake, easily won the 15 lap Feature that concluded the series. Jarrod Marwood shows a lot of talent in a car that, I'm sure he will admit, is getting pretty long in the tooth. Phil Johnston gave his converted Class 10 car what I understand is it's last outing (new car under way), and Lee Barkey had a day he'd like to forget.

Speaking of Class 10, Ian (Stan Clear) Foster and Jimmy Johnston ran with the UTVs, and frankly, got a bit of a hiding. Jimmy's consistency saw him get the better of Ian, whose pretty new toy is still in it's early development stages.

Alan Joy had the big red Class 8 Ford out for a skid, as did William VanDerWal with his new truck. This truck looks good, and runs hard, William beating Alan by a big margin in the feature. Alan struggled with front end grip, often drifting wide on the last corner. William had a good chance to beat him up the inside, in the second heat, but stuffed up the previous corner. A chance gone begging!

Grant Sleeman, by attending all three rounds, just took Class 1 honours, Mike Fraser having a few issues matching the kick of the turbo to the second, slightly slippery, corner, getting well out of shape a time or two, thus losing touch with Grant, and Tony McCall. Tony missed the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, using his two appearances to shake the Terra Chev down for the Nationals. Good thing he did, as the problem that gave him a DNF at the National Final last season again raised it's ugly head. A fuel pick-up in the wrong place was the source of his woes, which saw him pull out of the feature. This has since been rectified. He also wore a rock in the head from Grant in the second heat, and pulled off, goggles full of blood. Note, that he was behind Grant for this to have happened! Although his car has a lot more grunt than Grant's two-seat V6, Tony made it look spectacular. He told me later that in the last heat, he finally gave the V8 some gas, pulling away from Grant, as he didn't know how close he was. Good show, gentlemen.

There you have it folks, the Counties Classic Series, supported by Elf Oils, for 2013. This season saw an experiment by CMORC, running the series during the summer for the first time; the second and third rounds being run between 2.00pm and 7.00pm. Blighted by the drought, the first round was very dusty, the second almost perfect, the third maybe a little over-enthusiastically over-watered. As Mike F, Taine and Nick may attest! The club

would like to hear comments from competitors on this season's series. Good? Not good? Whatever you think will help them keep this the best short course racing series in the country (well, I think so, anyway) will be appreciated.

As usual I presented the NonStop Commentary "Driver of the Series" trophy, this year the recipient being Eric, easily. Honourable mention went to Mike F, Mike S and young Marcus. For many, the highlight of the series was the extremely intense final race, the 15 lap Feature. All good stuff.

See you at the motor races.

Dink.