

## RACE OF CHAMPIONS TAUPO 27-29 JANUARY 2017

By Mike Rowe

### Thursday 26-1-17

People were busy unloading cars from containers, setting up their cars and gear in the marquees, and generally making preparations to their cars for the weekend.

### Friday 27-1-17

A free Practice Day was organised by the circuit.

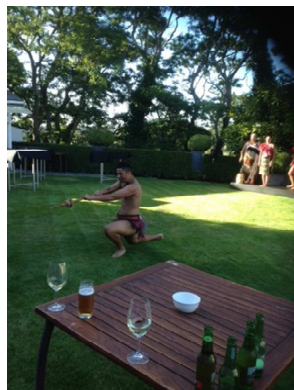
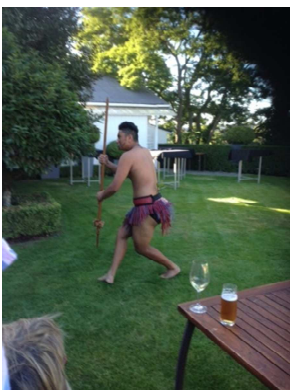
Unfortunately, this identified various issues with competitor's cars:

- David Kent's Lynx dropped a rod through the side of his block destroying a brand-new motor
- Lance Carwadine's Lynx came to a halt on the circuit, later diagnosed as a flat battery. Even later, it destroyed a camshaft in its brand-new engine.
- David Watkins Elfin had a partially blocked fuel filter which he removed, as the cause of his previous performance problems.
- Mike Rowe's Koala was still having problems with gear selection, despite the re-welding of a broken Selector Fork sustained at Hampton Downs. Brett Lupton had kindly refitted the gears.
- Bruce Edgar's Elfin gearbox issues from Hampton Downs continued, almost engaging reverse when changing from first to 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Brian Sewell had the Panther discs skimmed which improved braking.
- Jim Blockley's Caravelle, was exhibiting low compression on 3&4.
- Gordon was busy repairing tailshaft issues on John Chisholm's Gemini Mk 2.
- Marty Bullock Lotus 27, replaced his rear springs with softer ones in an attempt to improve handling. Marty later had a drive shaft fail, luckily a spare was available.
- Davide Innes had an issue with "bending donut bolts" which had to be replaced.
- Nigel Russell's Stanguellini, suffered loosening rear wheel bolts early on.

A highlight for Walter Findlay and Joe Ricciardo, was Kenny Smith taking out each of their cars for a test, and reporting back on handling improvement suggestions for each car.

Another important milestone was the appearance of Kevin Anderson's Cooper T52, a car he has owned since 1971, and entered at Taupo for the first time as a Formula Junior. Previously the car had been run with a 1500cc motor.

That evening a very generous Taupo Welcoming Cocktail party was held at the Hilton Hotel. Food and drinks flowed, and competitors and associates really enjoyed catching up. Taupo management including the Taupo Mayor, gave a warm welcome, including a dramatic welcome from local Maori traditional owners.



**Sat 28- 1-17**

**Qualifying** got under way at 0955 for class A,B & C. The 3 fastest cars were:

Jac Nellemann (Alfa Dana), Tony Olisoff (Emeryson Elfin), and Walter Findlay (Elva DKW 100).

This was followed by D&E. The 3 fastest cars were:

Greg Thornton (Lotus 22), Noel Woodford (Gemini Mk3A) and Marty Bullock (Lotus 27).

Some did not commence due to previous problems, and some didn't return after qualifying due to issues encountered. The Marquee in places, was starting to look like a demolition yard with damaged cars, empty chassis and motors littering the pits.



Neil McCrudden had gearshift problems as did Bruce Edgar, Duncan Rabagliati and Mike Rowe.

Roger Herrick's Gemini 25 had serious wear on his front left tyre, which despite suspension changes continued to get balder. Erik Justesen U2 didn't race at all until Sunday, due to gearbox issues suffered at Hampton Downs.

**Race 1 AB&C** resulted in Jac Nellemann 1<sup>st</sup>, Peter Benbrook (Cooper T56) 2<sup>nd</sup> and Walter Findlay 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Nigel managed a spin at the first corner to great applause. Mike Rowe Koala did not start due to his rear 3 piece wheel coming adrift in Qualifying and damaging the upright. Tony Olisoff did not finish due to a water hose blowing off. Richard Bishop-Miller did not start due to a blown piston.

**Race 2 D&E** resulted in Greg Thornton 1<sup>st</sup>, Martin Bullock 2<sup>nd</sup> and Peter Anstiss (Lotus 20/22) 3<sup>rd</sup>. Noel Woodford did not finish due to a second broken gearbox. Lance Carwardine & David Kent both in Lynx's did not start due to engine failures, that kept them out for the whole weekend. Robs Lamplough did not start due to the spare engine not fitting!. Peter Boel was down on power, later identified as more wasp mud in the fuel line.



*F1 legend & Patron Howden Ganley, with Koala Team Manager Valerie Rowe*

**Race 5 D&E** again saw Greg Thornton 1<sup>st</sup>, Martin Bullock 2<sup>nd</sup> and Robin Longdon (Lola Mk5A) 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Race 6 AB&C** again saw Jac Nellemann 1<sup>st</sup>, Max Pegram (Gemini Mk2) 2<sup>nd</sup> and Peter Benbrook 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## Sunday 29-1-17

Vern Williamson's Lynx T3 was fast, but wanting to go faster in Race 9, he decided to eject the rear engine cover for a bit of added speed down the back of the circuit. Finding he still needed an extra bit of pace, he then offloaded the starter motor at corner 1. This race strategy, although a bit confusing for following competitors, resulted in a 7<sup>th</sup> place for Vern.



Vernon's car without engine cover



Vernon's retrieved starter motor

**Race 9 AB&C** Results Jac Nellemann 1<sup>st</sup>, Tony Olisoff 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Walter Findlay 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Race 10 D&E** Results Greg Thornton 1<sup>st</sup>, Martin Bullock 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> David Innes. Nick Grewal retired with gearbox issues. Neil McCrudden failed even to make a start after unfortunately flooding the Lotus engine in the holding area.

**Race 17 AB&C** Aware of the weight improvements gained in Race 9, Vern opted for no starter motor from the start, and used the old fashioned but successful, push start. This light-weighting of the Lynx, did the trick with Vern finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the final race, his best finish for the weekend. We wait to see what tricks Vernon has for Christchurch. Results Jac Nellemann 1<sup>st</sup>, Tony Olisoff 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Vernon Williamson (Lynx T3) 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Race 19 D&E** Results Greg Thornton 1<sup>st</sup>, Martin Bullock 2<sup>nd</sup> and Peter Anstiss (Lotus 20/22) 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## PRIZE GIVING



Greg Thornton 1<sup>st</sup> Group E



Marty Bullock 2<sup>nd</sup> Group E



Peter Anstiss 3<sup>rd</sup> Group E



Dave Watkins 1<sup>st</sup> Group D



John Delane 2<sup>nd</sup> Group D



Jim Blockley 3<sup>rd</sup> Group D



Peter Benbrook Group C special award fastest rear drum



Jac Nellemann 1<sup>st</sup> Group B



Walter Findlay 2<sup>nd</sup> Group B



Max Pegram 3<sup>rd</sup> Group B



Nigel Russell 1<sup>st</sup> Group A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tony Pearson