

Disappointment for Webling in Enduro

Taranaki racing driver, Stefan Webling, found out all about the highs and lows of endurance racing when he teamed up with his Formula Ford Superlux team-mate, Andre Heimgartner, to contest the second and final round of the New Zealand Championship, the 'Altherm 1000 Three-Hour Enduro' held as a support race to the Toyota Racing Series round at Hampton Downs last weekend.

Webling was very pleased when he was invited to co-drive with young Heimgartner (15) using a Motorsport Services Porsche 996, believing they could have a good chance of some success in the 15-car field. "Any chance to get in some racing mileage, especially in a Porsche, is well worth the time and effort, apart from being a good chance to drive with my Formula Ford team-mate, instead of against him," said Webling.

Heimgartner started the race in very warm conditions and was soon up to third place behind the more modern Porsche 997 of experienced Porsche drivers, Andrew Bagnall and Ant Pedersen and the Ferrari F430 of Tim O'Connor and Craig Innes. While the Ferrari was the fastest car on the circuit, it also used more fuel so had to stop more often for fuel. Heimgartner handed over the Superlux Porsche to Webling who improved to second, the Superlux car now being a lap down on the 997 Porsche, but three laps ahead of the Ferrari which had had to pit with a flat tyre. With two hours gone, things were looking promising for Webling and Heimgartner but just as Webling was planning to pit and change over to Heimgartner, his left rear tyre blew out going into the corner at the end of the main front straight. Webling maintained control and limped back to the pits to replace the wheel and hand over to Heimgartner. Still in second place, Heimgartner took off and then suffered a clutch malfunction which jammed the Porsche in a low gear. He came back into the pits and the Motorsport Services crew tried to fix the problem but were unable to do so, putting the car out of the race.

"That was a major disappointment, but I am very grateful to have been given the chance to broaden my experience of driving race cars. The car went well while it was going, but the extreme heat conditions made it almost unbearable at times," said Webling.

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