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November 11 2008

Media release: For immediate release to all media

## **Webling takes lead in Formula Fords**

Taranaki's MTA Formula Ford scholarship winner, Stefan Webling, has taken over the lead in the hotly contested MTA Formula Ford championship after another torrid round of close racing at the second round of the championship at Pukekohe. With points leader Mitchell Evans suffering a couple of no-points results at the meeting, and Richie Stanaway being penalised after winning the third race, Webling's consistency in the three wheel-to-wheel races gave him the win in the Ron Frost Memorial race, top points for the round and the championship lead.

Mitch Evans took pole from Webling and the surprise of the meeting, Damon Leitch from Invercargill. Fourth fastest was Stanaway, then Jamie McNee and Martin Short.

Webling made the best start in the first race but by the end of the first lap Mitchell was in front and held that place until the last lap, fending off Webling and Stanaway who were changing places as well as pressuring Mitch. Down to the hairpin on the last lap and Stanaway pushed himself inside Mitchell, moving him out to the edge of the circuit with a nudge. That was the chance Webling had been waiting for and grabbed the lead, crossing the line 0.07 seconds in front of Stanaway. Watching all this action out front was Leitch who took third, just holding out Daniel Jilesen and Short, then Simon Evans ahead of his unhappy younger brother.

Race two started out much the same with Webling ahead of Mitch and Stanaway but on the third lap when the youngster tried to go around Webling on the outside of the sweeper, he ran out of room and tangled lightly with Webling, bouncing high across the grass and out of the race, bringing out the yellow flag. Stanaway then took the lead but had a minor off at the hairpin which let Webling take the lead. Webling looked set for another win, but the determined Stanaway made a desperate lunge on the last lap and headed Webling to the flag by 0.035 of a second. Short was third.

Webling made a slowish start in the third race, the Ron Frost Memorial, and was in fifth, gradually moving through to challenge the leaders, Simon and Mitchell Evans, and Stanaway. Stanaway was leading from Mitch and Simon, then Short, Webling and Leitch. As the race neared the end, Webling made his move and hit the lead with two

laps to go after Mitch Evans was again 'pushed' off line by Stanaway. Stanaway then came after Webling and used the slipstream to pass him on the final lap and take the win by 0.041 of a second. However, following an enquiry, Stanaway was given a 50 second penalty addition to his time for the incident with Evans which handed the race win to Webling.

"That was some race meeting," said Webling. "I really enjoyed the close hard racing but I also tried to avoid situations where I could be involved in a shunt. Slipstreaming is very important at the fast Pukekohe circuit and no-one wants to lead into the last lap. This is going to be a long, hard-fought championship so gaining good points at each round will be critical."

Points: Webling 413, Stanaway 340, M Evans 313, S Evans 290, Leitch 276, McNee 268.

Next round: November 28-30 Powerbuilt Ruapuna Raceway (Christchurch)

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Stefan Webling is supported by:

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