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Media release: For immediate release to all media

November 9 2010

Webling takes third place in opening round of the Formula Ford Championship

Taranaki racing driver, Stefan Webling, finished the opening round of the New Zealand Formula Ford Championship at Pukekohe in a 'fighting' third place after three torrid closely-fought races among the five leading contenders.

Webling (22) has decided to revert to the Formula Ford Championship which he contested a couple of seasons ago, as the budget to continue his foray in the Toyota Racing Series Championship was not forthcoming.

"If I can find the sponsorship funding, I would love to continue to contest the TRS, but I am not prepared to race in that premier series without the backing to be driving a competitive car. I enjoyed my time in Formula Ford and when the opportunity came to race one of the new Mygale cars with Motorsport Solutions and its Superlux team in this year's championship, then I jumped at the challenge to race one of these state-of-the-art chassis, at a price that was within my motorsport budget," said Webling, an apprentice automotive technician in New Plymouth.

Webling qualified in fifth position, getting quicker as he got used to the new Mygale chassis and handling characteristics. "The Mygale is quite different from the Van Diemen I used to race in this championship, so it took me some time to adjust its characteristics and best set-up. Having a Superlux team-mate in Andre Heimgartner in a similar Mygale and the guidance of the very experienced John Crawford of Motorsport Solutions certainly helped," said Webling who had a scary moment when a steering arm bolt broke in qualifying.

In the first race, Webling finished third, dicing closely with those in front of him but in front of his young team-mate, Andre Heimgartner (15). In the second race, Webling again finished third very close behind Heimgartner. The third race was for the Ron Frost Memorial Trophy, over 12 laps, and featured a furious battle to see who would take out the prestigious trophy. Webling made some challenges for the lead in the closely-fought battle, but again had to settle for third, with his team-mate, Heimgartner, winning the Ron Frost Trophy.

“It was a very good meeting with some very close wheel-to-wheel racing among the top five cars. I am sure that once I have some more ‘miles’ under my belt, I will be able to hold off my talented young team-mate, Heimgartner, and our other Motorsport Solutions team-mate, former champion, John Whelan in his trusty Stealth. It was great racing so close with the top guys in this class – there was nothing much between us, but with the karting experience that many of these young guys now have, we can race very closely, giving each other room without interlocking wheels etc. I am really looking forward to the next round at Ruapuna,” said Webling.

Image: Attached is a free-to-use image of Stefan Webling in his Superlux Formula Ford Mygale, dicing with team-mate and former Formula Ford Champion, John Whelan. Please credit Geoff Ridder.

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