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Webling takes third in championship

MTA scholarship winner, Stefan Webling of New Plymouth, finished third in the MTA Formula Ford championship, slightly disappointed that he could not have finished higher, but grateful that he was even able to contest the final round at Pukekohe.

During the open testing day on Friday prior to the meeting, Stefan came over the hill at Pukekohe on a damp track to find Mitch Evans spun-up across the track. Rather than T-bone Evans, Stefan took avoiding action and shot off the track across the damp grass and hit the armco barriers at 175kph.

His VnC Cocktails van Diemen was virtually destroyed in the impact, breaking the bellhousing, wrecking the rear suspension and a front corner.

“It was a huge impact but better than hitting Mitch at that speed and wrecking both cars with probable personal injury. Fortunately I was OK, but the car was a mess. However, the Motorsport Solutions Team that look after my car immediately went to work and began a massive rebuild which they completed at around 3am on Saturday morning. The car was ready for qualifying in which I took third place. I can’t thank those guys enough for the huge hours they put in – most other teams would have packed up and gone home,” said Stefan.

The first race appeared to be a Richie Stanaway benefit, but Webling fought off the other contenders to take second place – which later became first when Stanaway was disqualified from the results and qualifying for a technical issue.

In the second race, Webling dived with the front group, but conscious that he was now in second place in the championship and had a chance of winning it, decided to make sure he finished the race in the points and didn’t get involved in an incident. A brilliant drive from Stanaway saw him come through the field and the close pack fighting for second behind Mitch Evans, to take second place on the last lap, Webling finishing seventh in a very close finish.

In the third feature race, Webling was very focussed and determined in an almost do-or die effort. He dived with the front three in the early part of the race, but then had an exhaust header break which caused the engine to show signs of overheating. Stefan backed off, dropped to the rear of the

front group, but once he was happy with the engine he again tried to get back onto the pace. Then a minor brush with Mitch Evans on the final lap bent his steering and he dropped back to coast across the line in ninth place.

“So near, but it just didn’t seem to be my weekend,” said Webling who despite his problems, still took second place for the final round.

“I just want to thank all those who have helped and supported me in this championship – it has been a huge experience. Special thanks to my Mum and Dad for their support, and to the Motorsport Solutions team for all their work to give me a top car to drive at each meeting. I could not have achieved what I did without them and the support from VnC Cocktails, Horizon Energy Services, Max Pennington Auto City, Diverse Extreme, Altherm Window Systems and Warner Construction,” said Stefan.

Points: Stanaway 1215, M Evans 1111, Webling 1092, McNee 1014, Leitch 1007, S Evans 956, Penrose 924.

Stefan Webling is supported by:

VnC Cocktails Horizon energy services Max Pennington Auto City
Diverse Extreme team Altherm Window Systems Warner construction