

Baird triumphs for Reynard

CRAIG BAIRD gave Reynard's latest Formula Atlantic chassis its first win when he took victory in both races at the first round of New Zealand's international series at Tereonga last Sunday.

The only driver who could get near Baird's Toyota-powered car was fellow Kiwi, Ken Smith, in a three year old Ford BDA-engined Swift.

Unlike North American Formula Atlantic racing where only the Toyota 4A-GE engine is allowed, Kiwis are still permitted to use the venerable 1600cc BDA.

Smith finished second in the 15 lap preliminary race and was pressing Baird hard in the main event when a driveshaft cv joint broke 20 laps into the 30 lap race. With two third places,

Welshman Julian Westwood's Swift-Toyota led home former champion Paul Radisich in the first race, but the latter's Swift was then disqualified for being 4kg under the weight. Radisich and Westwood provide the best racing, dicing for the minor positions in both races. But Baird had prepared best. He spent three days at the Manfeild track before Christmas and development continued with another five days of running at Tereonga. The results were obvious come qualifying when none of the opposition could get to within a second of him in the first session, though Smith came close in the second, Baird claiming pole with a 54.10s to Smith's 54.17s. Westwood was third quickest at 55.12s ahead of Radisich and Harry

Nuttall.

Baird led both races from start to finish while Smith, after a poor start in the first heat, had to fight his way past Radisich and Westwood to claim second. Nuttall made an awful start and had to battle from 10th up to fifth at the flag.

In the second race Smith harried Baird for the first two thirds of the race, actually getting alongside on a few occasions, but Baird was always in control. With Smith's retirement, Baird was able to cruise to a 27s win over Radisich and Westwood. Nuttall finished fourth. Baird, Smith and Westwood all broke Keke Rosberg's 14 year-old lap record, with Smith finally setting the mark in the second heat.

Peter Jackson Formula Atlantic series Race one 15 laps: 1. C.Baird (Reynard-Toyota); 2. K.Smith (Swift-Ford); 3. J.Westwood (Swift-Toyota); 4. G.Murphy (Ralt-Ford); 5. H.Nuttall (Swift-Toyota); 6. M.Pederson (Ralt-Ford). Race two 30 laps: 1. Baird; 2. P.Radisich (Swift-Ford); 3. Westwood; 4. Nuttall; 5. Murphy; 6. J.Taylor (Swift-Toyota). Points: 1. Baird 40; 2. Westwood 24; 3. Nuttall 18; 4. Murphy 16; 5. Smith & Radisich 15.

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away from Christian Fitzpatrick's pole laps (he has bought two R124s for the bulk of test driving).

Baird wins, Westwood stars at Timaru Pacific

CONTROVERSY surrounded Craig Baird's continued dominance of New Zealand's international Formula Atlantic series at Timaru last Sunday.

The Kiwi won both races in his Reynard Toyota, but victory in the second heat only came after he and Julian Westwood touched twice during the second lap. The second altercation saw Westwood's Swift Toyota, which had been leading, spin off the track. A stop for a new nose cone saw him rejoin in the race over a lap in arrears. In the drive of the race he carved his way back up to third, while Baird had a relatively untroubled win from veteran Ken Smith (Swift Ford).

Saturday's qualifying had seen Baird grab his second consecutive pole of the Peter Jackson series with a 57.85s lap around the tight track with its numerous first and second gear corners, which visiting Americans have described as a go-kart circuit in previous years. Westwood was the quickest of the Swift drivers on 58.43s, with Smith and Paul Radisich (Swift Ford) sharing the second row on 58.55s and 59.00s respectively. All the quick times came in the first session as the second was damp. Harry Nuttall went sixth quickest.

In the first heat Baird led from start to finish with Westwood fending off Radisich and Smith. This trio raced nose-to-tail for 20 laps, but no-one could find a way past.

The second race saw Westwood win the start and lead into the first corner from Baird while Radisich again got away better than Smith. Going into lap two Westwood and Baird touched

at the first corner as Baird tried a run up the inside. Two corners later he tried round the outside. The cars again touched and Westwood spun. Smith - who had an incident with Baird at the same corner two years ago which saw him roll - was in doubt as to who was in the wrong: "Craig just barged through. That car's so good in corners he could've waited for the right opportunity and still won." Westwood had a similar view of the incident: "Craig went for a gap that wasn't there. He then cut me off when I had the inside."

Baird saw the incident differently: "The gap must have been there, otherwise I wouldn't have got through." Baird finished the race with a split wheel rim.

After replacing the nosecone, Westwood unlapped himself from Baird to claw his way back up the field to finish third. Meanwhile it took Smith 17 laps to find a way past Radisich to claim second. Two laps later Radisich was in the pits with an overheating engine and out of the race. Nuttall failed to finish after spinning.



FORTUNE smiled neither on Westwood (left) or Radisich at Timaru.

Peter Jackson Formula Atlantic series, round two, Timaru. Race one: 1. C.Baird (Reynard-Toyota); 2. J.Westwood (Swift-Toyota); 3. P.Radisich (Swift-Ford); 4. K.Smith (Swift-Ford); 5. G.Murphy (Ralt-Ford); 6. H.Nuttall (Swift-Toyota). Race two: 1. Baird; 2. Smith; 3. Westwood; 4. Murphy; 5. M.Pederson (Ralt-Ford); 6. I.McDonald (Ralt-Ford). Championship: 1. Baird 80; 2. Westwood 51; 3. Smith 40; 4. Murphy 36; 5. Radisich 27; 6. Nuttall 24.

Tamburini breaks elbow

Baird beats Westwood to the Lady

Morelli's F3 test

JULIAN WESTWOOD provided Craig Baird with his closest opposition yet before the Kiwi continued on his winning way in New Zealand's international Formula Atlantic series at Christchurch last Sunday. The Reynard driver continued his unbeaten run with victory in the 41st Lady Wigram Trophy race and the shorter preliminary events held before it.

It was the first time in three years the Wigram Airforce base, the race's traditional home, had been used after Ruapuna Park had hosted the race for two seasons because of runway resealing during the summer at Wigram.

Westwood's Swift finished less than half a second behind Baird after spending half of the race trying to pressure him into making an error in the light rain the drivers had to contend with. After starting from pole position, Ken Smith in another Swift was third and Paul Radisich finished fourth in his Swift.

Because Wigram is an airforce base for the rest of the year, no early in the week testing was possible. Some teams ran their cars at Ruapuna, but its tight configuration is the complete opposite of Wigram's long straights and mainly sweeping bends.

Baird was quickest in qualifying, with a 70.85 second lap, but the competition was much closer, with Smith and Westwood both recording 71.03s. The Kiwi veteran got the other place on the front row of the grid by virtue

of setting the time first. Radisich had to be content with fourth fastest on 71.66s after missing the first practice session. In the first of the two 15 minute test sessions provided for drivers to set up their cars, a newly rebuilt BDA in Radisich's Swift lost all its oil. By the time another motor had been installed the former champion had missed the first half hour qualifying period.

Harry Nuttall was sixth fastest on 73.08s, with Greg Murphy in the quickest of the older Ralts being timed at an excellent 72.99s. James Taylor (Swift ford) was 11th on the grid.

Smith made a superb start to the short 12 lap race, but on the third lap, Baird got a better run out of Bomb Bay bend onto the long back straight and hauled past into the lead. On the first lap Radisich had tried to out-brake Westwood into the hairpin and the pair tangled. Mark Pedersen came off worse, hitting one of them with his Ralt. The two Swifts rejoined the fray and had soon got back to third and fourth, although they had no hope of catching the leading pair.

Radisich lost a place on the last lap with an overheating engine, allowing Murphy in only his first season of Formula Atlantic after just one season of Formula Ford, to take fourth spot in his Ralt RT4. Smith had to be content with second behind Baird, but he turned in a lap time faster than

Baird's pole position qualifying effort, to get the coveted position for the main race. Nuttall finished seventh and Taylor was tenth.

Smith botched the start of the main race, allowing Baird to drive straight around him into the lead. On the second lap, Smith compounded his problems by missing a gear, allowing Radisich and Westwood to overtake him. On lap five Westwood got past Radisich and set off in pursuit of Baird who was four seconds up the road in the lead. Nine laps later, the Welshman was on Baird's tail. "It was easy enough to catch him," said Westwood, "passing became something else. On the exit from corners he simply powered away, so I had to hope some pressure would force him into an error."

Westwood's comments mirror those of Smith who says the new Reynard's major advantage over the Swift seems to be its rear suspension and the way it puts its power down coming out of corners. Baird resisted the pressure to take a narrow win, with Westwood repeatedly closing the gap under braking, while Smith overtook Radisich two laps from the finish to claim third. Nuttall was fifth and former Formula Vee champion Chris Maxwell got the better of Murphy for the first time in the series to be sixth and the first Ralt home. Taylor finished ninth.

'STAR of Tomorrow' FF1600 champion Dino Morelli is due to have his first F3 run on January 28, as an addition to his prize for winning the 1991 junior title.

The young Irishman will be driving a new Edenbridge Reynard 923 around Silverstone's GP circuit, although he has no plans to contest this year's F3 series, having signed for the new Martin Donnelly Racing Vauxhall Lotus team.

AWS suits stolen

MIKE THEOBALD, proprietor of Advanced Wear & Safety, was less than impressed after the recent Auto Sports Show to find that his van had been broken into and that 24 Nomex race suits had gone walkabout.

Although the alleged thieves were later interviewed by police, the suits have yet to turn up. "Therefore I'm asking anyone offered a brand new Nomex two or three layer suit from a non-official retailer to contact me directly," said Mike. "All of our suits have our own homologation number embroidered into the collar and the non-removable numbers are 01.133.R.A.C.90 and 010.82.R.A.C.88. The dark suits have yellow embroidery, the light suits blue.

"It seems that even the Birmingham underworld thinks AWS suits are the best!"

AWS can be contacted on 0233 638498.

Results - Lady Wigram Trophy Race, Round Three Peter Jackson International Series: Preliminary (12 laps): 1, C.Baird (Reynard Toyota) 14m 18.18s; 2, K.Smith (Swift Ford) 14m 20.90s; 3, J.Westwood (Swift Toyota) 14m 31.14s; 4, G.Murphy (Ralt RT4 Ford) 14m 46.64s; 5, P.Radisich (Swift Ford) 14m 54.57s; 6, C.Maxwell (Ralt RT4 Toyota) 14m 58.88s.

Trophy race (26 laps): 1, Baird 34m 04.57s; 2, Westwood 34m 04.93s; 3, Smith 34m 10.05s; 4, Radisich 34m 11.19s; 5, H.Nuttall (Swift Toyota) 35m 06.49s; 6, Maxwell 25 laps.

Series points: 1, Baird 120; 2, Westwood 78; 3, Smith 67; 4, Murphy 50; 5, Radisich 45; 6, Nuttall 36.

The Baird facts: Craig clinches title

Westwood slams circuit

PAUL RADISICH upset Craig Baird's winning run in New Zealand's international Formula Atlantic series last Sunday in the first of two races at Baypark, Mt Maunganui. It was the first time anybody had headed Baird and put an end to the eight straight victories he had chalked up in the first four rounds of the series.

Even so, Baird's second place in the factory Reynard-Toyota in that first race was enough to give him the Peter Jackson title for the second year in a row, with three races still remaining. Baird then won the second race after a controversial collision with Radisich's Swift halfway through the first lap. That left Radisich with bent front suspension and he could only finish fourth, while Julian Westwood came home runner-up after leading for the first 13 of the 35 laps in his Swift-Toyota.

Baird's driving and his subsequent overtaking of Ken Smith resulted in a reprimand from the clerk of the course. The file of evidence has been passed onto the clerk of the course for the series' final round at Pukekohe this weekend to put Baird on his best behaviour.

He qualified for pole position with a 52.85s lap despite a cracked bellhousing. It was the third time in a week the crack had opened up - on each occasion it was welded up. After the second time, Baird's team and the Reynard factory arranged for a new bellhousing to be flown to New Zealand with Baird's sister Wendy, who suddenly found herself getting a hurried trip home. Father and team manager Stan Baird then decided not to risk any delays in fitting it between the two races and the part will now just go into the car for the final round at Pukekohe this coming Sunday.

Radisich was close to Baird with a 53.32s lap. Westwood was third fastest

on 53.72s, but none too happy with his Swift which he found impossible to set up on the seaside circuit, which is built on sand dunes. "It makes a mockery of a modern racing car," he said. "We've changed just about everything but it hasn't made any difference."

With the track being covered with a constantly shifting fine film of sand, Westwood did not take to the conditions: "The whole place is the pits. If I was running the series I wouldn't come back here again."

Ken Smith was equally frustrated on 53.88s in his Swift-Ford, while Harry Nuttall was fifth fastest on 54.92s and the Ralt RT4 of Steve Richards completed the top six with a 55.28s lap. James Taylor's Swift-Ford was 10th quickest on 56.39s.

Radisich won the start of the first race from the outside of the front row of the grid, Baird losing traction in the dust and sand on the pole line. West-

wood also got past, but Baird was back to second under braking at the end of the back straight. Smith was fourth followed by Maxwell and Nuttall.

For the full 20 laps Baird shadowed Radisich's every move. At times he got alongside as he attempted to go around the outside of the Swift at the infield loop, but Radisich managed to keep his nose in front.

On lap 14 Smith outraked Westwood into the infield loop for third place in the only major positional change of the race. Radisich took the chequered flag with Baird snapping at his heels, while Smith was third and Westwood fourth. The Ralts of Steve Richards and Greg Murphy completed the top six, while Taylor was ninth, having dropped a place on the last lap.

Nuttall had exited the fray on the seventh lap when he lost his nosecone in the battle for fifth with Chris Maxwell.

For the 35 lap second race, Radisich again won the start. At the end of the back straight Baird drove around the outside of him. What happened as they exited the loop differs depending on who you talk to: "I was still ahead," said Radisich. "He turned into me." There are tyre marks on the Swift's sidepod. With their wheels interlocked, Radisich's car went up in the air, crashing down heavily on its left front suspension, bending a steering pushrod.

Baird reckons he was completely past the Swift: "He then tried to accelerate into the gap again." Baird's car also had tyre marks on its sidepod.

In the confusion Westwood took the lead, with Smith second and Radisich rejoining third, while Baird finished the first lap in 10th place. In the next lap he was up to sixth and on lap three he was fourth behind Radisich. With a car which could not steer properly the first heat winner was powerless to resist.

Baird was now three seconds behind Smith. In five laps he was on his tail and outraking him into the infield loop. But Smith fought back again at the end of the back straight. For two laps the veteran held the youngster at bay, but then spun under pressure at the loop at the end of the back straight.

In another lap Baird was on Westwood's gearbox and he drove around the outside of the Welshman at the same corner as the first lap altercation with Radisich. Then Baird drove away to victory by eight seconds. Smith made up a gap of six seconds to be on Westwood's tail by the end of the race, but he ran out of laps before he could consider an attack on second place.

Radisich finished fourth, keeping Nuttall at bay, while Chris Maxwell was sixth in the first of the Ralts and Taylor finished 11th.

Peter Jackson Formula Atlantic Championship - Baypark. Race one, 20 laps: 1, P.Radisich (Swift-Ford) 18m 05.74s; 2, C.Baird (Reynard-Toyota) 18m 06.06s; 3, K.Smith (Swift-Ford); 4, J.Westwood (Swift-Toyota); 5, S.Richards (Ralt RT4); 6, G.Murphy (Ralt RT4).

Race two, 35 laps: 1, Baird; 2, Westwood; 3, Smith; 4, Radisich; 5, H.Nuttall (Swift-Toyota); 6, C.Maxwell (Ralt RT4).

Points: 1, Baird 195 (champion); 2, Westwood 128; 3, Smith 113; 4, Radisich 102; 5, Murphy 62; 6, Nuttall 60.