

NSW Hillclimb Championship 2023

Round 6: Tamworth, Oakburn Park

Here's your race report from Round 6, the penultimate round of the 2023 NSW Hillclimb Championship, which took place on the weekend of 15 and 16 July 2023 at Oakburn Park in Tamworth.

Hosted by the Tamworth Sporting Car Club, this round saw 15 participants from the Wollongong Sporting Car Club make their way to a city also known as our country music capital. Of the 37 competitors across the weekend, 30 were lining up to compete in the state championship round for those all important points, as the season heads towards its close next month.

The track isn't a climb but rather a technical track with a long straight to start each lap followed by twists, turns and chicanes. This year, for the first time, it was (almost) a two lap affair, which meant that every class winner automatically set a new class record. All competitors enjoyed the extra time on the course and said it made for a lot of fun while setting a technical challenge.

The fastest time of the day, creating a new track record for the new configuration, was our very own Peter Brown in his Prosport Mulsanne. Watched on by a number of family members at this event along with his club mates, Peter ripped around the track in a time of 1.07.332. This was his 6th time at this track and event.

The weekend saw a few first time racers from WSCC including Gavin Parker, Stuart Clark, Mitchell Brown and also Ben Ford. All four won their classes, though for Gavin, Stuart and Mitch getting a completed run guaranteed this as they each had no competition. Mitch was also the fastest Junior which was impressive given he had back troubles leading into the weekend and decided to rest up and miss practice on the Saturday.

New member, but old friend, Michael McGeorge also flew the WSCC flag at the event for the first time, while son Travis competed at this track for the first time as a multi-club competitor.

At the track in his mini for the second time, Richard Ostle zoomed around the track incident free and also won his class.

Competing here for the third time were Dave Hussey, Chris Tait, Ben Brown and Riley MacQueen. All had great weekends of racing with Dave and Riley winning their classes. There was also a glory filled couple of minutes for Ben Brown when he held the outright track record, given he was first off the grid!

A few of our team were competing at Tamworth for their fourth time including Greg Jones and Mick Arts setting up their usual duel. While Mick did a spin in practice on Saturday, both he and Greg enjoyed whizzing around the track for an incident free Sunday of racing. Greg walked away with the trophy (and a top ten finish in 7th overall and a time of 1.10.64) but both enjoyed the track and had fun zipping around for the 2 laps.

Despite a few issues with Phoenix, Wayne Penrose had a great weekend winning his class and finishing 4th in the overall standings in a time of 1.09.578.

Mishaps and Mayhem

While the track was, thankfully, free of major incidents some of our cars didn't quite get through the weekend without dramas. On the track itself there were a few wobbles and spins from some of the crew coming out of those tight corners but all in all it was a great weekend with good times put down and 10 class wins from the WSCC team. We had 3 finishers in the top 10, and 7 in the top 20; another great result for the club.

However, not all cars were cooperating throughout the weekend...

Racing sadly ended early for Chris Tait when his gear box blew third gear on only his second run. It was such a shame as Chris had a couple of friends at the track to watch his racing.

Both members of team WPVW also had challenges, with Ben having pronounced understeer issues. Wayne, who was celebrating his birthday on race day was itching to be back on the track after his recent European holiday. He had a great first run in Phoenix but had issues in the second and third runs. While diagnostics and on the spot mechanical information was at the ready, it appears the issue was not with Phoenix but with Wayne's right foot; ie not being able to hold it flat to the floor, triggering the computer to make unexpected corrections and causing Phoenix to misfire!

Gavin had some dramas with his carburettor – while a few tweaks of the float height helped reduce the splattering on race day, upon closer review back home the cause was found to be a universal gasket with a hole in the wrong spot, which allowed fuel to enter the air bleed section of the carburettor.

Riley's Loosey also had its dramas by occasionally not wanting to start! It turns out that heat soak from the exhaust was causing the starter motor solenoid to fail. On top of that we saw Loosey let loose with a few power slides which lead to the delamination of one of its tyres.

Off the track we were sad to hear that Cameron Brown was unwell and couldn't join his brother and dad for the usual triple Brown showdown, but do hope he's well and truly on the mend.

We'll be back with a report following the last round of this year's championship at Circuit Italia near Raymond Terrace, which is also the venue for this year's Australian Hillclimb Championship in October. See you there on the weekend of 12 and 13 August.