

Dear Supporters,

On Sunday 7th March I had my first ever race meeting in a race car. I was running a formula ford from the Canterbury Motor racing School under the guidance of Andy Neale and Ryan Charles. Eager for my race debut, I made a great start to the day impressing with a 1:31.94 second lap in morning practice. In Qualifying I struggled to get a string of clean laps and unfortunately making little mistakes cost me until I posted a 1:32.674 in the dying minutes. This placed me tenth in a field of fifteen overall and fifth out of seven in my class; full of more experienced drivers and former South Island Formula Ford champs, which I think is pretty good. Race 1 was a great eye opener for me, I got a fantastic start passing two cars including national championship racer Henry Thomas-Kircher. The run into turn 1 was daunting being in the middle of a seven car pack trying to go three into one and unfortunately let up and came out near the tail of the field but all was not lost after passing a few cars I was settling into fifth place when the two cars in front tangled, elevating me to a podium in my first race!

The next race I made an absolute flyer off the start passing a newer car then drawing alongside another. However, being on the outside was not good; plus the fact that my confidence is not super strong to dive it in under brakes but that will come in time. So again lingering outside the top five it was up to me to push harder but not enough aggression on the first lap cost me and the more experienced drivers gapped me. By race end I was up to sixth in class and five seconds off the lead pack. Race three was solid with a fourth in class as I started mid field as it was a handicap, in the last few laps the much faster f5000s and f4000s came flying through so I ended up fourth in class and seventh on the track after being in a solid fourth outright for most of the race. In race four the Flying Farewell I managed to 'fly' to the lead off the start only to miss not one but two gears (1st to 4th gear) and be swamped into the first turn and come out last. Over the next couple of laps a few cars spun and I was looking good until I couldn't capture a slide in the heat of the moment spinning me, I got going again coming in fifth in class and eighth overall and fifth for the day. It was awesome to mix it up with the regulars it was lots of fun and I learnt heaps.

Thank you all for the support, encouragement and advice.

Best Regards,

Tom Barker

PARTNERS

