



Wood claims round, Sargent enduro cup thriller at Sandown

19/09/2022 Sandown Raceway, Melbourne. Ryan Wood has won a thrilling third round of the Porsche Michelin Sprint Challenge Australia series by a single point following a dramatic, rain-affected Enduro Cup race at Sandown Raceway.

Thomas Sargent won the 40-minute affair, however in finishing second Wood did enough to claim the round overall ahead of his championship rival and Courtney Prince.

Brett Boulton claimed the Morris Pro-Am round win over Sam Shahin and Matt Slavin, while Lachlan Harburg won for the first time in Class B.

The results don't indicate how dramatic the final race of the weekend was, with a rain shower moments before the race commenced splitting the field – half of the grid electing to pit and put wet tyres on.

That resulted in Aron Shields bursting into an early race lead, before he tripped up in the wet conditions

and spun at turn three.

Through all the drama Eric Constantinidis assumed the lead, while drivers who had elected to fit wet-weather tyres carved their way through the field.

Among them were Race 1 winner Ryan Wood and his closest rival Sargent, who both made quick work through the out-of position drivers.

Sargent led the charge and assumed the lead by lap five, only to be passed by Wood a lap later.

The pair then spent the next stanza of the race running nose-to-tail in a continuation of their battle that started in the opening race of the championship.

Sargent then pounced on the 21st lap to re-take the lead, despite a trip through the mud at turn 2 that damaged his front splitter.

He would hold off his young Kiwi rival to take the race victory, however Wood's second place was enough to give the Team Porsche NZ / Earl Bamber Motorsport ace the round victory.

The battle behind was equally furious with a drying circuit giving those who started the race on slicks an opportunity to shine as the race evolved.

One of those drivers was Lachlan Bloxsom, who dropped to as low as 16th position but began to march his way forward as the race evolved.

He reached the top-10 on lap 14 and climbed to fifth by the 19th tour, often lapping three seconds quicker than the leaders as the race evolved and the circuit dried.

Then on a thrilling final lap he passed both Courtney Prince and Harrison Goodman to climb into the top three at the final corner.

The battle for Morris Pro-Am honours was equally competitive, especially when race one winner Danny Stuttered struck dramas early on, dropping to the back of the field.

That handed the advantage to Constantinidis, who would lead outright before he too slipped down the order.

The experienced Indiran Padayachee then assumed point in Pro-Am only to fall to the flying Brett Boulton, who like his McElrea teammate Bloxsom was charging through the field late in the race.

Boulton would ultimately claim the class with Matt Slavin a late charge to second and Sam Shahin third – passing Padayachee for a spot in the top three late in the race.

Lachlan Harburg's run to Class B victory was no easy drive either, though the Queenslander found himself running second outright for a time on the opening lap thanks to the split strategies employed by the field.

He ultimately finished 19th outright to not only win the class in the Jim Richards Enduro Cup race, but for the round Overall.

With three rounds complete, Thomas Sargent now provisionally leads the Porsche Michelin Sprint Challenge Australia series by 9 points over Ryan Wood, with Courtney Prince in third position.

The next round of the championship will see the field head to The Bend Motorsport Park in South Australia on October 21-23, joining the Shannons Motorsport Australia Championships at the venue just outside of Adelaide.

QUOTES: Ryan Wood, Pro round winner:

"It was pretty intense those opening laps, starting from pitlane and battling with Tom for 30 odd laps. It's bittersweet though, I feel like I could have won that last race but it is, what it is. We've closed the Championship gap, even though it's only a few points it's just so close. We'll now go to The Bend and have a proper crack and see where we end up."

Brett Boulton, Morris Pro-Am round winner:

"We turned up here and it was dry with some dry running in practice, then obviously the wets came out. I've been struggling with flu all weekend, so I was quite glad it was wet and not too hot inside the car. The decision to go from slicks to wet basically came down to my decision and the team asked me which way I wanted to go. We swapped on the dummy grid and went out on slicks and then I said to the guys let's roll the dice and go with the wets, because it was raining quite hard on the back straight and I'm glad we did as coming through the field was great fun."

Lachlan Harburg, Class B round winner:

"To win just my second Sprint Challenge race is kind of surreal, if you told me on Friday afternoon when I was dead last, that I would win Class B this round I wouldn't have believed you. I'm so stoked, it means so much to me to win a trophy in a national Porsche category and add to our family history, it's hugely emotional and I'm wrapped. I just want to keep coming back and doing this, on Friday I had thought was I out of my league, but this (win) is a massive confidence boost. I'm looking forward to the next round at Tailem Bend, another new track and new experience for me, I'm relishing the challenge."

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