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Pedders Racing's Queensland Round 3 wrap

from the view of Team Principle and 'A' driver, Grant Phillips

Well the first day on the road to Queensland was a big one, starting the latest race adventure with a 16 hour drive in the Pitman Trucks transporter with Mike at the helm, and the Pedders No Bull support crew in tow. With a parts refresh completed thanks to Euro Truck Spares, the truck was running well, the team secretly hoping it would be a good sign leading into a good weekend.

First pit stop for Round 3 was the Jolly Swagman at Goondiwindi, the team's yearly haunt for the pilgrimage to Queensland Raceway, and once again owner and host Leslie, was up late to greet the tiring crew with a chat and drinks at the bar before settling in for the evening.

Thursday morning, bump in day and now just a short drive lay ahead, the three hours on route to the circuit remaining, the minutes ticking by and seeing Pedders Racing arrive on track in the early afternoon, kicking straight in to the unload of the #86 Toyota and on to completing the now well-known Pedders hub set-up to give the Toyota 86 its garage for the weekend, right at the heart of pit lane. All hands on deck, and in no time the No Bull Chicks Claire and Alicia, driver Grant, mechanic Chris, transporter driver Mike, and chefs Vanessa and Steph, had the Pedders garage looking like the place to be for the weekend ahead.

As the sunset on preparation day at Queensland Raceway, the crew headed for the accommodation at the Cleveland Villas, a comfortable place to relax, strategise and complete final pre-race checklists. With an ongoing alliance with Bartercard, the villas were set and as further team members arrived, the addition of co-driver Andrew Turpie, car controller and temp team manager Damian, and media liaison, Kat from CIMA Media, had the team all set for track Friday.

From sunset to sunrise, an early start on Friday morning and the focus became wholly and solely the performance of the Pedders Racing Toyota 86, with first practice looming. Adding to the team's excitement and opportunity was the arrival of the latest team support and member, Chris O'Shannessy, whose experience in Sepang, Malaysia, with a TRD Japan prepared Toyota 86, would provide for information share and comparison, allowing the local Aussie team to advance through greater development and valuable knowledge.

With O'Shannessy to take the wheel of the Pedders entry for the opening practice sessions, the team were poised and ready for his feedback after an opening practice run, the hope that the car would be going as well as it was looking, the Grafico Auto Disegno livery still a stand out on track. On return to the pits, O'Shannessy was immediately impressed with 'out of the box' performance and the temperature control of the boxer engine, thanks to the new association with Evans Waterless Coolants. The new Evans products had clearly shown a significant difference in engine temperatures, keeping the car running cooler with a much higher boiling temperature, meaning smoother operation, and with the product being a one off buy, lifetime use deal, it was certainly an association and improvement of great value to the team, always looking for new ways to improve and secure the #86's high performance life.

Two sessions complete with international endurance star, O'Shannessy at the wheel, Phillips was back on deck to take back control of the now refined Pedders 86, with suspension and shocks adjustments complete to keep the car at its best in and out of corners, and there was one further significant change to be completed before the close of the day. Another new alliance being confirmed with Dixcel Advanced Brake Technology, had new brake rotors and pads fitted to the car ahead of the traditional weekend sponsor ride session. With Turpie in the drivers' seat and O'Shannessy on board to talk lines, brake markers, throttle points and gearing strategy, the new brakes were bedded in by an impressed Turpie who now had a feel of clarity and greater response through the pedal, the short session enough to give a greater confidence with no fade and a consistent wear expected to keep performance at its best all weekend long.

After some team photos for our long-term partners in Bosch Automotive, Oz Racing, Valvoline and new partners, Evans Waterless Coolants, it was home for a quiet Friday evening with the team together for laughs and lists, each member ensuring they were fully prepared for the morning's qualifying and the opening night race of the season, the Australian Manufacturers Championship Fight in the Night, where it would all come down to the advantage of the Pedders Racing 86's braking capabilities, and the revised approach lines and gear changes discussed between the three key drivers of the weekend, Phillips, Turpie, both under the advice of O'Shannessy.



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Where the excitement starts, the Pedders Racing Toyota 86 hit the track Saturday and Sunday for the competition of the Round 3 weekend, qualifying back in the field, but taking full advantage of the Toyota reliability and new Dixcel braking package, the team added another note to their, and Toyota international's, history books, claiming the Class D race victory in the 200 kilometre Fight in the Night, and with that, securing the world's first national Class race win for a production racing Toyota 86. In Sunday's second and final race, the team battled on against higher powered and classified FPV Falcons, pushing lead Class Mitsubishi Evolutions to their limit as the unbeatable braking performance saw the Pedders Racing Toyota 86 pull away through the tight corners, the team coming home with second in Class, on the verge of the outright top ten once more, and having done enough to tie for the Class round honours, all achievements leaving the team proud and hopeful for what season 2013 of the Australian Manufacturers Championship may yet bring.

Having completed the successful weekend on track, the monkey was off the back, a weight lifted and confidence was increasing as a happy crew completed bump out from their pit lane home in almost record time, signaling the time of safe return of the Pedders Racing Toyota 86 into its home in the Pitman Trucks transporter. Retiring one last time to the Cleveland Villas, it was a happy, content and proud team taking a well-earned relaxation evening, able to prolong the enjoyment of success as the messages rolled in from the invaluable team supporters and partners who are the reason the racing dream, and the success it has now started to bring, is all possible.

The final pit stop of the weekend, the journey home would come with a detour as the Pitman Trucks transporter with No Bull support crew in tow, headed for Sydney to deliver the history making 86 to Dixcel Advanced Brake Technology's home at Garage 88 near Sydney Motorsport Park. During its stay, the Pedders Racing Toyota 86 will again undergo additional improvements for greater performance and reliability, the season of research and development continuing with a new list of suggestions and possibilities enlightened through the 86 experience of new team member, O'Shannessy.

Overnight in the big smoke of Sydney, and the final day of the latest race weekend adventure had arrived, the Pedders Racing crew leaving early Tuesday morning to be back on the road to home in Bendigo, another long day of driving laying ahead. From the darkness of night racing on Saturday, to an evening arrival on Tuesday, the crew arrived safely home to settle into Bendigo life once more, but for Team Principle, Grant Phillips, it will be a short stay, hitting the open road back to Sydney on Friday to collect the refreshed #86 as it becomes the star of the Toyota Australia 86 Festival. That one day in August will transform Toyota's Head Office to a Toyota 86 extravaganza as Toyota 86 Chief Engineer, Tetsuya Tada, joins the glamour before the Pedders Racing Toyota 86 returns home to Bendigo to await Round 4 at Wakefield Park in October.

Pedders Racing are proudly supported by Pedders Suspension, Bosch Automotive, Pitman Trucks, AMG Australia, Oz Racing, MRT Performance, ECUTEK, Evans Waterless Coolants, Dixcel, PBR, Whiteline, Project Mu, Grafico Auto Disegno, Heidi Yi Mineral Cosmetics, Valvoline, Exedy, Reliable Rack & Pinions, Nameless, Cobalt Retail, Freak Fabrications, GMP Racing Products, ARB, Bartercard, Fluidive, M&C, Pedders Bendigo, J&A Light Freight and CIMA Media.

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