

## Harris delivers Ford the V.I.P treatment with Bathurst V8 Ute Win

Written by Administrator

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Day three, Round 5 of the 2011 Auto One V8 Ute Racing Series – protected by Armor All certainly had its ups and downs. Ford drivers David Sieders and Ryal Harris outperformed Holden drivers, Nathan Pretty and Cameron McConville, to claim Race wins at Bathurst today, Saturday, 8th October.

The V8 Utes kicked off the day with Race 1 on a wet and greasy track. After 2 laps, the safety car was deployed due to an incident involving the Thirsty Camel Holden of Craig Dontas, which tapped the back of Brad Patton forcing his VIP Petfoods Ford into the wall at the exit to the Chase.

“We were fighting for position, I got a good run around the outside and Brad hadn’t seen me and moved over, we tangled wheels and the rest is history. We’ve caught up and are still mates,” Dontas said with a grin.

Patton had the same sentiment about his former teammate but came away with a different view of the incident.

“Craig tapped me and I’ve never had anything that big. It’s just disappointing; the Gold Coast is my favourite round so we are going to work really hard to get the car ready. At the moment everything is fairly bent out of shape. If we can get it home tonight we might be in with a chance to get it fixed in time,” said Patton.

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Patton was taken to medical following the incident but was soon cleared, however Dontas was put to the back of the grid for Race 2 as a penalty for the incident.

“I feel like I’m still wearing my seatbelt. My wrists are really sore and so is my left knee because I braced when it all happened. I think I had about 50 metres to prepare for it and it was frustrating, however I felt safe knowing I was wearing my Hans device and felt tight in my seat and roll cage.”

Another incident in the Chase involved Rookie Jake McNally, who tapped Yanis Derums’ Mangomedia Ford into a spin. Peter Burnitt collected Derums as well, which forced the Derums Ford out for the weekend.

The re-start left a 1 lap sprint to the finish, which saw Monster Energy Drink’s Pretty push his way to second in what became a Ford/Holden tussle to the very finish. Pretty tried to take Sieders at Murrays Corner, however the Australian Industrial Supplies backed Ford held him out and claimed the win.

On the run down Conrod Straight for the final time and racing for third, Charlie O’Brien and Ryal Harris became involved in a side by side panel banging brawl to see who would take the fast line into the Chase. Harris held his nerve around the outside of the Bathurst veteran, only to lock up and run off, taking O’Brien with him. The two continued the agro in parc ferme after the race and will be under steward’s observation for the remainder of the meeting.

Harris finished fifth and O’Brien 13th, leaving Chris Pither to take third ahead of Andrew Fisher in fourth. Ryan Hansford had another good Bathurst drive claiming sixth ahead of Kim Jane seventh, Grant Johnson eighth and Gary Baxter ninth. Cameron McConville rounded out the top ten, which earned him a jump to Pole for the top ten reversed grid for Race 2.

McConville’s Bundaberg Holden got off to a great start, however soon had Ryal Harris on his heels by the start of lap two. The Ford and Holden drivers swapped the lead three times before a spectacular incident with Jack Elsegood and Charlie O’Brien, which saw Elsegood’s Coopers Ford airborne backwards through the Chase.

“I didn’t know what happened, it just felt like I got tapped and then I was heading into the

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sand-trap. It could have been a whole lot worse. It wasn't how I planned the race to go," said Elsegood.

O'Brien was a little confused about the whole fiasco.

"I didn't know what happened, I just saw this flash across my windscreen," said O'Brien.

Harris made another move on McConville for the race lead at Hells Corner and kept it for the remainder of the race.

"It's a great result for V.I.P. Petfoods, Roylances and all of my partners; I just want to win the championship now. I have to keep a good head about me, apparently I'm on pole tomorrow so it would be great to get a good start," said Harris.

Reigning Champion Grant Johnson drove well for third, Chris Pither and Nathan Pretty claimed fourth and fifth respectively. Gary Baxter, who didn't have the best start off the front row, claimed sixth ahead of Kim Jane in seventh, David Sieders in eighth, Ryan Hansford in ninth and Andrew Fisher who closed out the top ten.

Harris will start on pole for the final race from Nathan Pretty, with Chris Pither and David Sieders Ford on row 2, ahead of Grant Johnson and Cameron McConville.

The Utes will hit the track at 8:20am tomorrow for Race 3, the decider of Round 5 of the 2011 Auto One V8 Ute Racing Series – protected by Armor All and will be televised LIVE on Network Seven.