



Question: What does one pole position, two race wins and a top-5 finish add up to?

Answer: Ryal Harris's most successful round ever in the V8 Ute Racing Series!

The V.I.P. Petfoods driver has qualified on pole position and won V8 Ute races before, but last weekend he scored his first overall round win in the fiercely competitive Australian V8 Ute Racing Series - protected by Armor All.

Making the result even more special was the venue – Australia's toughest racetrack, Mt Panorama.

Driving the #58 Falcon BF XR8, Harris was the undisputed V8 Ute Mountain King after dominating the fifth round of the series at the 6.2km public road circuit on the outskirts of Bathurst, NSW. He scored 124 series points out of a possible 128, and might have swept the board if not for a last-lap tangle with Charlie O'Brien that put him back to fifth in the first of the weekend's three races.

"Charlie had blocked me into Forrest's Elbow, so when we went through the kink at The Chase side-by-side I wasn't letting him have the next corner without putting up a fight," Harris said. "We went in a bit hot under brakes, and because I was on the dirty inside line I locked up and slid into Charlie.

"It wasn't deliberate – just a racing incident."

Immediately after the race there was a verbal exchange between the pair, which prompted race officials to warn them to be on their best behaviour for the rest of the race meeting.

In the second race, Harris had to battle with reigning V8 Utes champion Grant Johnson and Holden Racing Team V8 Supercar driver Cameron McConville to take the win, but he put on a textbook demonstration in the third and final race. After the seven laps he was almost six seconds clear of second placegetter Nathan Pretty.

He is now equal-second in the V8 Ute Series pointscore, only 17 points behind New Zealand V8 Utes Champion Chris Pither, with three rounds remaining.

While Harris had a weekend to remember, it was one that V.I.P. Petfoods' other V8 ute driver, Brad Patton, would like to forget. Patton's Falcon was heavily damaged early in the first race after slamming into a tyre barrier following contact with Craig Dantas.

The South Australian's Commodore tapped the back of Patton's car at the exit of The Chase chicane, sending it head-on into the unforgiving wall.

A shaken Patton was extricated from the wreck and taken to the medical room for a check-up. He was released with bumps and bruises, but no no serious injuries.

Patton took no further part in the Mt Panorama round, and isn't certain to contest the sixth V8 Utes Series round, on the Surfer's Paradise street circuit, in two weeks' time.

Officials relegated Dontas to the rear of the starting grid in race two for his role in the incident.

Afterwards Patton, whose race workshop prepares both V.I.P. Petfoods V8 Utes as well two other cars in the series, expressed his disappointment about what happened.

"That was the biggest shunt I've had since I started racing," the Gold Coast driver said afterwards. "The car's badly bent, and right now I'm not sure that we'll be able to fix it in time for the next round at Surfer's Paradise in two weeks.

"But we'll give it our best shot, because it's our home race and I was looking forward to putting on a good show for our local fans."

Ryal Harris paid tribute to Patton's contribution to his most successful V8 Utes season yet.

"Confidence is so important in racing, but especially at Mt Panorama because it's so fast and there's very little margin for error," he said. "You can only drive flat-out across the top of the mountain if you have complete confidence in your car.

"This is the first year that I've had a car that's been capable of winning at every round, so thanks to Brad, Tony de Vries and Peter Burnitt of Big Gun Racing, as well as Tony Quinn of VIP Petfoods for their help. I'm only sorry that Brad couldn't enjoy his racing this weekend as much as I did."

RESULTS

QUALIFYING

1. Ryal Harris (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) 2min. 35.2085sec.
2. David Sieders (Australian Industrial Supplies Falcon BF XR8) 2min. 35.8340sec.
3. Charlie O'Brien (Future Assist Group Falcon BF XR8) 2min. 36.1465sec.

12. Brad Patton (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) 2min. 38.2654sec.

RACE 1 – 6 laps (37.2km)

1. David Sieders (Australian Industrial Supplies Falcon BF XR8) 21min. 39.1536sec.
 2. Nathan Pretty (Monster Energy Holden VE SS) 21min. 39.5247sec.
 3. Chris Pither (Ice Break Racing Holden VE SS) 21min. 42.5234sec.
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5. Ryal Harris (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) 21min. 43.9147sec.

- Brad Patton (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) DNF (crash)

RACE 2 – 7 laps (43.4km)

1. Ryal Harris (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) 18min. 27.1149sec.

2. Cameron McConville (Bundaberg Racing Holden VE SS) 18min. 29.5885sec.

3. Grant Johnson (Hi-Tech Motor Sport Holden VE SS) 18min. 31.1220sec.

- Brad Patton (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) DNS

RACE 3 – 7 laps (43.4km)

1. Ryal Harris (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) 18min. 13.7172sec.

2. Nathan Pretty (Monster Energy Holden VE SS) 18min. 19.3918sec.

3. David Sieders (Australian Industrial Supplies Falcon BF XR8) 18min. 20.9024sec.

- Brad Patton (V.I.P. Petfoods Falcon BF XR8) DNS

2011 V8 UTE RACING SERIES POINTSCORE AFTER 5 OF 8 ROUNDS

1. Chris Pither 609

2. Grant Johnson 592

3. Ryal Harris 592

15. Brad Patton 340

NEXT ROUND

Oct. 21-23: Surfer's Paradise (street circuit) – Gold Coast, QLD