



In some ways, it was a repeat performance of Bathurst.

The four car Big Gun V8 Ute team of Peter Burnitt, Brad Patton, Ryal Harris and Greg Willis came into the taxing Surfers Paradise street circuit of the Armor All Gold Coast 600 with a strong round win and some hefty damage to contend with just two weeks prior.

Team Manager Joe De Vries had pulled off a minor miracle to return Brad Patton and Peter Burnitt's XR8 Falcons to competition after they were all but destroyed in separate incidents at Mt. Panorama Bathurst.

Ryal Harris had been a shining light at the same round in his VIP Petfoods Falcon, scoring the overall win whilst the ever consistent Greg Willis had brought his Only Juice XR8 Falcon home safely once more.

So coming into the Surfers Paradise affair, the team was tired but optimistic.

And Ryal Harris didn't let them down.

The young Queenslander stormed his VIP Petfoods / Shooters Nightclub #58 to an historic and unprecedented clean sweep of the entire weekend with a performance that saw him top the time sheets in practice, get the Armor All Pole Position and win all three races!

"It's a dream come true to have a weekend like this at my home track," he beamed at the presentations, "the car was right on the money from the minute we rolled it out of the truck.

It's so awesome to win like this in front of our sponsors, my family and my friends. It doesn't get much better than this."

In stark contrast, Brad Patton's now once again pristine #14 VIP Petfoods Falcon was giving its driver and its crew the heeby jeebies.

"Joey and the boys did an awesome job to get the car repaired in time for this weekend," explained Patton, "but I felt the engine lose power on the first lap of qualifying and so we did the one lap to get into the field but unfortunately we had to replace it Friday night with a new one."

That situation put Brad behind the eight ball for the 600' weekend, particularly when the engine they replaced the initial one with developed an overheating problem!

"This racing deal is a hard game. I think I might buy a lottery ticket instead and see how we go," Patton smiled good-naturedly.

Greg Willis' stunning Only Juice XR8 Falcon turns heads everywhere it goes, both on and off the track, so when you also add the spectacular Only Juice SS Holden promo car to the mix at the front doors of the Mantra Sun City Hotel on the Gold Coast it makes for a very impressive focal point.

Greg's battles throughout the weekend were, as always, consistent and sensible as the fruit juice magnate enjoyed another weekend of mainly trouble and damage free racing in front of his home crowd.

"It's a challenging track but one that I enjoy. It's great to be home and racing in front of family and friends, and also being so close to home base. It's a lot easier on your business when you can still stay in touch with it all while you go racing," he admitted over the weekend.

Peter Burnitt is regarded as a man who goes hard in business, hard in life and most certainly hard in racing.

And never was this more evident than the weekend when the tenacious Queensland electrical contractor made it on to TV screens in prime time across the country and possibly even the world with a spectacular incident in the chicane on the backside of the circuit.

Burnitt's once pristine CNW Team Kanga Falcon became entangled in V8 Ute debutant Tim Boyle's car at over 150kph and the red and white rocket smashed into the concrete retaining wall at 147kph before spearing across the track into the other wall as well.

The twisted, smoking wreck eventually ground to a halt in a cloud of steam while the huge crowd fell silent with fear that Burnitt may not be OK inside the car. But within a few seconds Peter wriggled through the window (his door was jammed against the wall) and climbed up on to the fence to the roar of an obviously relieved audience around him.

He even took the time to bow to the TV cameras – an act that will now almost certainly live on in TV infamy for many years to come!

"Pete's a character, there's no doubt about that," says Big Gun Team Manager Joe De Vries, "nobody but Pete would think to play up to the crowd in a moment like that. He's got national TV exposure from it for his sponsors CNW that's for sure."

Unfortunately the CNW entry is now back at the workshop where extensive repairs are now required to get the car ready in time for the next round of the series at Sandown next month.

"Believe it or not, Pete's car is worse than Brad's wreck from Bathurst. This is going to be a long process in getting it back," says De Vries.

The good news, overriding all this, is that the affable Burnitt is OK, despite feeling a little sore Monday morning.

"It takes more than something like that to stop Pete," smiles son-in-law and teammate Brad

Patton.

The next round of the Auto One V8 Ute Series, protected by Armor All, is at Sandown Motor Raceway on November 18-20.