



Townsville Race Report

The Townsville round of the Fujitsu V8 Supercar Championship would see the start of Flexi Hire Racing and the return of 2004 Series Champion, Andrew Jones.

The Flexi Hire Racing Team headed out on Friday morning for the first of two 40 minute practice sessions. Due to being a new entry, the team was supplied two sets of brand new Dunlop control tyres to be used throughout both of Friday's sessions. The only complaint regarding the car in this session was that there needed to be some steering adjustments made for Practice 2, but Jonesy also felt that he was still learning how to get the most from the car for this circuit, ending the session in 10th Position.

During the 4 hour break between Practice 1 and 2, like numerous other Fujitsu drivers, Jonesy got the opportunity to drive in the Endurance driver sessions for the Championship series, stepping into the number 8 Team BOC commodore which turned out to be very beneficial for extra laps around the circuit.

The extra laps combined with the adjustments to the steering saw the Flexi Hire car much more competitive right from the start of the Practice 2. Some damper adjustments were tried before

switching to the teams second set of new tyres for a simulated qualifying run. As was the case in Practice 1, the car balance on the new tyres was good and the Team ended the session in 6th Position and quite happy with how the day had progressed.

Going into Qualifying on Saturday morning Jonesy and the Team felt confident of being able to replicate the speed that they had the previous day and place around the top 5. Unfortunately though, a mistake by Jonesy in the braking area at Turn 10 meant he nosed the car into the tyre barrier. There was no damage done to the car, however the engine had stalled and it could not be fired back up.

This bought out the Red Flag and under V8 Supercar rules, if you cause a Red Flag in Qualifying, you are not allowed to rejoin the session and are forced to start at the rear of field for the race.

This was obviously a disappointment as the speed of the car had been promising. After later inspection, it was found that the cause of the engine not firing back up was due to the main power supply from the battery failing.

Starting from the rear of grid was certainly not part of the plan for the weekend, but things got slightly worse before the start of



Race one. As the Flexihire car was leaving the pit box to head out on track for the start of the race, a problem with the fuel pressure sensor flared up which caused the fuel pumps to not deliver fuel to the engine.

This was quickly rectified, however Jonesy would now start the race from Pit Lane. On lap one at turn two a large incident occurred involving four cars, this meant that the first five laps of the race would be under the control of the safety car.

Racing got back under way once the mess had been cleaned up but only for two laps before Todd Fiore make heavy contact with the wall on the exit of Turn six, which bought the safety car out again for another four laps.

Once racing resumed there would only be three laps until the chequered flag was waved. A finishing position of 15th was quite good given that of the scheduled 14 laps of the race, only 5 were not behind the safety car.

The starting position for Race 2 is determined by the finishing position of Race 1 which meant Jonesy would line up in 15th position.

However, Andrew Thompson was sent to the rear of the grid for an infringement, so the Flexi Hire car would line up in position 14

. A much cleaner start meant that everyone got through the opening lap without incident and all 14 laps of this race would be clear of the safety car.

Jonesy made his way into position 8 by lap ten and then spent the last four laps in a good little battle with his old teammate Cam McConville, before finishing the race in 8th Position. The starting position for Race 3 was then determined by an aggregate of the points acquired in races 1 and 2 which meant that the Team would line up in 13th position for the start.

After getting a good start, Jonesy tried to pass Rodney Jane into the turn 7 and 8 chicane for position 10, but was left on the wrong side of the road on the run up to turn ten. Again everyone made it through the first lap without incident and the safety car would not come out on track for the longer 18 lap race.

Race three was the first time all weekend that the car ran on a 'used' or 'older' tyre and the balance of the car was not as good as it had been with Jonesy suffering from a lack of rear stability effecting the pace of the car.

Again, some good battles went on throughout the race with Scott McLaughlin and Rodney Jane before Jonesy finished in Position 10.



ANDREW JONES : Driver FLEXIHIRE V8 Supercar

“ The car and Team showed great potential from the weekend. Obviously my mistake in Qualifying and the battery issue hurt our weekend, but we worked hard to get back close to where we should have been in the races. We are off to Ipswich for the next round where I believe we will be able to deliver on what could have been in Townsville. It is great to be back racing again and I can't thank the companies that have got on board this program enough for making it possible “