

February 19, 2010

Abu Dhabi delight for Whincup on Friday at Yas V8 400

Jamie Whincup continued his near-perfect weekend at the Yas V8 400 in Abu Dhabi with victory in the first of two 200km V8 Supercar races at the Yas Marina Circuit on Friday night.

Along with his team, Triple Eight Race Engineering, Whincup switched to Holden this season after back-to-back championship wins with Ford. With brand-new cars for himself and teammate Craig Lowndes, the TeamVodafone drivers scored a superb 1-2 result in Friday's 43-lap race, with Ford's Mark Winterbottom (Ford Performance Racing) rounding out the podium in third position.

The win was the 34th of Whincup's career, and the 27-year-old admitted to being stunned by the early success in his return to Holden, who he last drove for back in 2005.

"It's almost shock, to be honest - we certainly didn't expect this," he said.

"We had a couple of test days, and we tried to set the cars up like they were last year, and it didn't really work. We've come a long way in these last couple of days. All in all, it gives you massive confidence for the year. If I wasn't pumped up before the weekend, I certainly am now."

Whincup took the victory from pole position after he also topped qualifying earlier in the day, and he has finished in first position in all but one on-track session for the V8 Supercars at the Yas Marina Circuit this weekend.

The V8 Supercars will be back on track at 3.10pm on Saturday for qualifying for race two of the Yas V8 400, which will take place over 43 laps at 6.05pm. A packed support race schedule will also be a feature on Saturday, with races scheduled for the Porsche Middle East Championship, Chevrolet Middle East, the UAE GT Championship and the Gulfsport Radical Cup categories. On-track action commences at 9.30am.

Off-track, there's a host of free activities for adults and children at the Yas Marina Circuit to enjoy on Saturday. There's live music and DJs playing in the Stage area for adults, while the V8 Supercar Paddock is open for patrons to meet the drivers of Australia's premier racing series and see the Ford Falcons and Holden Commodores up close in the pits as they're prepared for on-track battle. For kids, there's face painting, jugglers, a sand sculpture and plenty more on offer in the Oasis area.