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### **Whincup makes it back-to-back in Abu Dhabi**

Jamie Whincup has capped a perfect weekend on his return to Holden with a second consecutive win at the Yas V8 400 on Saturday evening in Abu Dhabi.

Whincup, the back-to-back reigning series champion, took the lead into the first corner of Saturday's race after pole-sitter Mark Winterbottom (Ford Performance Racing) made a slow start, and was untouchable thereafter, eventually cruising to a 4.06-second victory at the 4.7km Yas Marina Circuit.

After fading to fifth on lap one, Winterbottom recovered to finish second, while young New Zealander Shane van Gisbergen (SP Tools Racing) completed the podium for Ford, setting the fastest lap of the race with a 1min 58.7370secs on lap 28.

Holden's Rick Kelly just held off Whincup's teammate Craig Lowndes for fourth, while Ford's James Courtney was sixth. Holden's Lee Holdsworth just edged Ford's Steven Johnson on the last lap for seventh, while Holden pair Russell Ingall and Jason Bright completed the top 10.

Whincup, in his first race weekend for Holden since 2005, took a 1.4 second lead over Holden's Garth Tander after just two laps, and with a time of 1:58.9930 on lap 15, set a fastest lap that was three-tenths of a second better than the best of the rest at that stage of the race. Tander, who pitted early on lap 10, briefly headed Whincup after the first round of pit stops, but the hopes of the 2007 series champion were dashed when a locking mechanism for the left front wheel nut flew off his car on lap 19, which forced him to the pits and eventual retirement.

Tander's misfortune came after a disastrous first race on Friday, when he started from the back of the grid following a technical infringement in qualifying and got caught up in numerous incidents to finish 26<sup>th</sup>. HRT teammate Will Davison, recovering from a blown engine and retirement yesterday, shot up to 12<sup>th</sup> place from 22<sup>nd</sup> on the grid in the early stages, but the 2009 series runner-up faded to finish 14<sup>th</sup>.

Following Tander's demise, the 27-year-old Whincup was in complete control for the final two-thirds of the race, and was nearly 10 seconds ahead of Winterbottom when he made his second and final scheduled pit stop on lap 33. He cruised to the line from there for his 36<sup>th</sup> career victory and a perfect start to the 2010 season.

Heading into next weekend's second round of the V8 Supercar season in Bahrain, Whincup has a perfect score of 300 championship points, while Winterbottom is second with 267. Lowndes, on 249 points, rounds out the top three.