

February 19, 2010

### Whincup and Lowndes dominate opening race of Yas V8 400

Jamie Whincup has enjoyed the perfect return to Holden after four years with Ford, heading teammate Craig Lowndes in a dominant 1-2 for TeamVodafone in the first race of the Yas V8 400, the opening race of the 2010 V8 Supercar Championship Series in Abu Dhabi on Friday night.

Whincup, the reigning back-to-back series champion, built a comfortable lead with a superb second stint of the race, and eased to the line in the final laps, coming home 0.9secs ahead of teammate Lowndes, who was driving his first race for Holden since Bathurst in 2000.

It was the perfect start for Triple Eight Race Engineering, who switched from Ford to Holden this season after the second of Whincup's championships.

Behind the all-conquering TeamVodafone duo came Ford's Mark Winterbottom (Ford Performance Racing), who beat pole-sitter Whincup into Turn 1 on the opening lap but was judged to have jumped the start, which cost him a 10-second time penalty in his opening pit stop. Ford's James Courtney (Dick Johnson Racing) was fourth, while Lee Holdsworth was fifth in his Holden for Fujitsu Racing/GRM.

While one top-line Holden team enjoyed a perfect day, the same couldn't be said for the Toll Holden Racing Team. Garth Tander, who qualified second in this afternoon's shootout, was sent to the back of the grid after his team was found to have used an incompressible device under his car during qualifying. Starting from 29<sup>th</sup> place, Tander found himself in numerous clashes in the opening laps and nursed a battered car to 26<sup>th</sup>, while teammate Will Davison was forced to retire on lap 30 of the 43-lap race with an engine failure.

Whincup was the final man to stop on lap 16, and teammate Lowndes, who pitted eight laps earlier, took the lead in the second part of the race. Whincup pitted for the second and final time just after Davison's smoky exit, and emerged four seconds ahead of Lowndes to cruise to the win, the 34<sup>th</sup> of his career.

Race two of the Yas V8 400 will take place over 43 laps at 6.05pm on Saturday, with qualifying scheduled for 3.10pm.