

SOPWITH PROJECT CAR CAPTURES 6th PLACE FINISH

Tulsa, OK - The Sopwith Motorsports yet-to-be-completed project car ran its first race with a new engine last weekend, finishing 6th in the first event at Tulsa, Oklahoma's 2-mile road course in round four of the Championship Motorsports Association season.

The car is a Nissan 280z that's receiving upgrades and modifications to race in the Production Superstock class. "It wasn't really ready to race and I can't believe we got sixth," said Sopwith driver and 2004 GT2 champion Stephen Cox. "We just stuck numbers on the base coat of the new paint the night before the event. The body work is nowhere near finished. The new motor was overheating so badly that we never had time to really dial the car in. We made one practice session and then just went racing."

Cox said the car was a handful during the qualifying run that placed him outside row three in the 17-car field. The Sopwith G-Force Racing Gear Nissan 280z had a slight understeer and race conditions were difficult. "The track was a little greasy because they'd had events here for five straight days with no rain," Cox continued. "It was about 92 degrees and everything was pretty slippery. The car was pushy, too, so you had to be on the wheel every second." The Sopwith entry finished 19 seconds behind eventual winner Ward Brasses in the weekend's first event.

Sunday's second race proved even more difficult when the project car's brakes began to fade badly with only a few laps to go. The engine temperature was running at 250 degrees and the brakes had to be pumped to the floor six times before achieving any stopping power. A coilover adjustment loosened the car up considerably and made it more drivable until the brakes began to fade. The team dropped from 6th to 11th in the running order before the checkered flag fell on the last race of the weekend, a full 33 seconds behind winner Roger Bryan, but Cox was not disappointed.

"You can't be disappointed. This is a project car. It wasn't even supposed to be on the track yet. The brakes aren't finished, the engine is brand new, the bodywork isn't done we don't even have the sponsor decals on the car yet. This was just a test run for a work in progress. We stole a sixth-place finish with a car that should still be in the garage."