

COX HANGS ON FOR RUNNER-UP FINISH AT COMMA CHALLENGE

New Video Feature on Race at www.SopwithMotorsports.com

Hallett, OK - With a smoking engine and a broken gearshift knob, Sopwith Motorsports driver Stephen Cox limped across the finish line in second position in Round 3 of the Championship Motorsports Association's Sportscar Challenge Series on Sunday afternoon near Tulsa, Oklahoma. A new four-minute video feature on the race can be seen on the Multimedia page of www.SopwithMotorsports.com.

The G-Force Racing Gear Nissan began the day third fastest on the time chart in the first practice session at the Hallett Motor Racing Circuit's 1.7 mile road course. Still, Cox wasn't pleased, knowing that the car was fast but unable to compete for the win. "We went back to the garage and Shayne, Jeremy and John Zentner went to work. They scaled the car again and changed the coilover settings, then we changed the rebound on the struts all the way around and got a lot faster. We had a super hot lap going in qualifying but I missed a shift and blew it, otherwise we'd have won the pole."

Cox started on the outside of the front row in the main event, jumping out to an early lead briefly before falling back to second place in a dead heat with the Mazda of Ward Brasses. It was still early in the race when the first bizarre event occurred in Turn Two, a heavy braking zone where the cars decelerate from about 110 mph to 35. "It was the weirdest thing... the shift knob broke off in my hand," Cox said. "I was downshifting in the hairpin and the whole thing just came off. I tried to screw it back on while I was driving but it wouldn't stay. I had to reach down and grab the stump of the shifter to get from one gear to the next."

The Nissan's engine began to smoke halfway into the event, but Cox still managed to set the team's fast lap (and the second quickest time of the race) with only three laps remaining. Sopwith crew chief Shayne Stephens said it was an older engine and the rear main seal may have gone out. The motor would only make 4500 rpm's on the final lap and Cox barely nursed the Sopwith entry across the finish line ahead of another hard-charging Nissan driven by Bryan Dickinson.

"On a day like this you take second and be glad. We're not in the points race or anything so we can afford to just have fun," Cox said. "We found a ton of speed and qualified on the front row, but who would ever think that a shifter knob would break? And then the engine would let go? So we really can't complain over second place."