

## **JAMES KOVACIC – WINS IN PROTOTYPE SPORTSCAR DEBUT AND TAKES OVERALL HONOURS AT MAZDA LAGUNA SECA RACEWAY**

The youngest driver in the field at the age of 16 and the only Australian in the field, James Kovacic, won on debut in the COOPERS TIRES PROTOTYPE LITES SPORTSCAR SERIES USA driving in the Elan DP02 Mazda powered Sportscar for the INTERSPORT RACING TEAM USA. Kovacic is the first Australian to taste success in this class and is the youngest competitor to do so.

Attending his first race this year. Kovacic travelled to the famous MAZDA LAGUNA SECA RACEWAY in Northern California, after a last minute call up from the ALMS Team, Intersport USA. Kovacic managed to show maturity as he grabbed a second row start for the 1<sup>st</sup> race of the weekend on Saturday. After a blistering start, Kovacic proceeded to take the lead within 5 laps and go on to take a convincing victory in a quality field of 22 drivers after 30 minutes of racing.

After his fantastic victory on debut. Kovacic became the overall highest point's scorer for the weekend. The two round meeting was held in conjunction with the American Le Mans Series, where another Aussie by the name of David Brabham was also competing.

Kovacic consolidated his debut victory with a strong 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the second endurance race held on Sunday. After a scintillating display on Saturday, recording the fastest lap time on his way to victory, Kovacic was able to secure Pole Position for the 2<sup>nd</sup> race of the weekend. The second race was held over 75 minutes and required a 5 minute Mandatory Pit Stop for all cars. The Prototype Sportscar Class is a stepping stone for young drivers and also professional racers looking at moving onto the Le Mans classes or either the IRL or F1 series. The mandatory pit stop has become an integral part of the championship allowing drivers to hone their skills for the future.

After becoming the first and youngest Australian driver to win in the class, Kovacic was also awarded with a \$500 Fastest Qualifier cheque for the 2<sup>nd</sup> race of the weekend. The prize was awarded by series sponsor COOPERS TIRES. Kovacic was very pleased and said before the race;

"I'm very happy about the prize. I'm even happier that I could be the quickest. I have to thank Clint and Jon from Intersport Racing and Mitch Biner from Oversteer for coming over with me to help me out. They did a great job and the car was perfect. I would like to thank Coopers Tires and IMSA for the prize. Every dollar counts. I will aim to do this again as I can really get used to this!"

At the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Race, The Intersport Team decided to call James in for an early Mandatory pit stop whilst he was in the lead. The pit crew and Kovacic did a fantastic job, however they had no luck in the strategy as there were no Safety Cars while Kovacic was in his 5 minute Mandatory Pit Stop. Upon leaving the pits, Kovacic progressed setting some fastest laps. However, due to 4 very lengthy safety car periods, it left him down almost 3 laps compared to the lead group as they took advantage and pitted during the safety car periods. After the last Safety Car period ended, Kovacic set about making up for lost ground and managed to get back onto the lead lap and into 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Kovacic set the fastest lap of the race in the process. Unfortunately, he ran out of time and could not catch the 2 leaders. Another podium was still a welcome result for the youngster from downunder.

Kovacic was still very happy with the result and enjoyed the race. Kovacic said at a post race press conference,

"I would like to thank Intersport and in particular Jon and Clint and the rest of the team for making me feel as though I was at home. The racing was fantastic and the car was perfect. The Laguna Seca track was a

fantastic experience and winning on debut will be in my memory forever. I would further like to thank my supporters and sponsors which include BBX ([www.ebbx.com](http://www.ebbx.com)), Mike Navybox of the Navybox School of Motorsport ([www.navyboxschoolofmotorsport.com.au](http://www.navyboxschoolofmotorsport.com.au)), Kart Racing Magazine ([www.kartingmagazine.com.au](http://www.kartingmagazine.com.au)), Mitch Biner from Oversteer Race Centre and Daran Pratt from Edge 1<sup>st</sup> Fitness ([www.edge1stfitness.com](http://www.edge1stfitness.com)) all of whom without their support I would not be here racing.”

All results and series information can be found on the following websites: [www.imsaracing.net](http://www.imsaracing.net)

[www.prototypelites.com](http://www.prototypelites.com)

[www.jameskovacic.com](http://www.jameskovacic.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Release courtesy of Sealpoint Publishing Pty Ltd**