



MEDIA RELEASE

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BIG NAMES LOOKING TO KICK-START '08 CAMPAIGN IN QUEENSLAND

A number of pre-season championship favourites will be looking to get their 2008 Toyo Tires Drift Australia Series campaigns back on track this weekend, 12-13 April, when the series heads to Queensland Raceway.

Robbie Bolger, Beau Yates and Fernando Wiehrl are eyeing big results at the Ipswich circuit, while current Australian Drift Championship leader Leighton Fine will be looking to pick up where he left off in last month's season opener in Tasmania.

South Australian resident Fine (Commercial Truck Sales Nissan 180SX) beat former World BMX Champion Luke Fink (Holford Motors Nissan Silvia) to win round one and heads to Queensland intent on maintaining his points advantage.

"Our car performed really well in Tasmania, so I see no reason why we won't be strong again this weekend at Queensland Raceway," Fine - championship runner-up in 2006 - said.

"That said, there are a number of really strong car and driver combinations in the field, and the level of competition keeps on rising, so it will be interesting to see what happens."

Last year's championship runner-up Christian Pickering (Senwill Racing Nissan Silvia) was another driver to enjoy a strong start at Symmons Plains, finishing third.

However the man who beat him to the 2007 title has work to do.

Defending series champion Bolger (VIP Petfoods Holden Monaro) could only manage 14th in his 800hp Holden V8.

The Queensland-based Irishman is looking for much better at his home circuit, where he won in 2006 and was second in 2007.

"We under-performed at Symmons Plains," he admits.

"But the V8 Monaro is well-suited to Queensland Raceway and it's a circuit we've done well at in the past, so we're confident of getting a good result this weekend."

Also looking for more this weekend is 2006 Champion Yates (Toyota Racing Developments AE86 Sprinter), defending Queensland Raceway winner Wiehrl (Auto

Salon Nissan Silvia), who are currently ninth and 11th respectively, and 2005 series Champion Darren Appleton.

Wiehrl won two events and finished third in 2007, while Appleton will debut a recently-purchased Peer Industries Nissan Silvia after a disastrous Symmons Plains weekend.

Appleton and Bolger are part of a seven-strong contingent of Queensland-based competitors, joined by Matt Mingay (CAPA Holden Commodore), Eugene Arendsen (Mercury Motorsport Nissan 180SX), Trent Whyte (Federal Tyres Nissan Skyline), Chris Nutley (Nissan Skyline) and Danny Kenneally (Toyo Tires Nissan Skyvia Ute).

Mingay is the highest-placed Queensland competitor in the field, sitting 12th in the championship.

The field in this weekend's Toyo Tires Super Drift development series is joined by European Drift champion Paul Vlasblom from Holland.

Vlasblom is a two-time King of Europe Drift Champion and the 2005 Belgian Champion and accepts an invitation to head down under from Bolger - the pair having met at last year's D1 Grand Prix All-Star World Championship where Vlasblom was also competing.

The weekend will feature a feast of motorsport action for local enthusiasts.

Team Drifting, Racing Logic 'Extreme Entry' competition, stunt bikes and Ben Bray's Holden burnout drag ute will also be part of the on-track action.

Off-track, there's a Show 'n' Shine and fans can check out some of the country's best drag cars on display, including Bray's Datsun 1200, Tony Wedlock's Toyota and Theo Woollett's Nissan Skyline, the fastest GTR in Australia.

Tickets are \$20 for Saturday and \$30 for Sunday, or \$40 for the weekend, with kids under 12 free all weekend.

Anyone who can't make it to Queensland Raceway can tune into internet motorsport radio station SpeedFM.com.au which will stream commentary from the circuit.

For more information about the Toyo Tires Drift Australia Series, head to www.driftaustralia.com.au

Toyo Tires Drift Australia Series Standings

1. Leighton Fine (SA, Toyo Tires Nissan 180SX) - 499
2. Luke Fink (VIC, Holford Motors Nissan Silvia) - 464
3. Christian Pickering (SA, Senwill Civil Nissan Silvia) - 434
4. Chris DeJager (VIC, Turtle Wax ICE Nissan Silvia) - 389
5. Adam Trehwella (WA, Miluc Civil Nissan Cefiro) - 367
6. Tom Monkhouse (SA, Japanese Motorsport Nissan Silvia) - 364
7. Paul Austin (SA, WheelWorx Nissan Silvia) - 353
8. Danny Vahoumis (SA, Miluc Civil Nissan Silvia) - 350

About Drifting

Originating in Japan, Drifting is a form of motorsport where drivers are judged on their speed, line and angle through each corner on a course.

Like extreme sports such as freestyle motocross, surfing and skateboarding, drivers are awarded points by judges, based on a number of factors.

Two cars battle at a time, with the driver who scores the most points in a battle - two passes of the course - advancing to the next phase.

Competition starts with an elimination round of 32, then progresses through Top 16, Top 8 and Top 4 rounds before two drivers battle to determine the event winner.

Since it first arrived in Australia just a handful of years ago, Drifting has become one of the fastest growing forms of sport in the country, and now has a strong following of spectator and commercial support.

The Toyo Tires Drift Australia Series is sanctioned by the Confederation of Australian Motorsport as the official Australian Drift Championship.