

Ross Nicastri ready for Gold Cup and National title assault



ABOVE : Ross Nicastri will be looking for the checkered flag at Sydney Speedway and Mildura. Gary Reid photo.

Ross Nicastri could arguably lay claim to being Australia's most travelled Late Model racer this season. The Frank's Auto Parts Managing Director has competed throughout NSW, Victoria, and Western Australia in a campaign that would test individuals half his age.

But just because Nicastri has been clocking a lot of kilometres up travelling between speedways, it doesn't mean he's slowed down out on the track at all, in fact, the opposite would be the case, as wherever he has competed he has been a force to be reckoned with. And now Nicastri faces his toughest challenge of the season thus far, with two weekends of racing against the nation's best.

First up is the United Acreage Marketing Gold Cup at Tyrepower Sydney Speedway (NSW) Saturday January 15.

Nicastri has an A Main victory at Sydney Speedway already this season, and is the only competitor to have defeated NSW Champion Nathan Disney in an A Main, a statistic not to be taken lightly. Nicastri knows he faces a huge challenge Saturday night though.

"The United Acreage Marketing Gold Cup has attracted a quality field of cars. Apart from the local racers like Nathan, you have to factor in visiting guys like Brad Blake, Geoff Phillips, and Blair Granger. It's going to be tough, real tough, but I thrive on a good challenge!" Nicastri said.

"It would be great to win the Gold Cup that's for sure. It's the biggest Late Model race in Sydney all season, and because we race there regularly, victory would mean a lot.

We have a good setup for the track, and all the racing I've been doing means the 30 lap distance won't be a worry".

"It's just a matter of getting through the Heats OK with some good results in order to start towards the front in the A Main".

One week later and the #99 Mastersbilt will be in action in the Australian Late Model Championship at The Edge Hotel Motel Timmis Speedway Mildura (VIC). Nicastri is excited about the Australian title being so close to home.

"The National title at Mildura is going to be very open, and with drivers from every state currently running the division represented in the field, it's already a win for the class in general. I'd like to congratulate Late Models Australia for their foresight in bringing the title to the East Coast, and wish the South Australian Late Model Association and the Mildura Speedway Drivers Club much success in their staging of the event" Nicastri said.

"We raced at Mildura in the Trans Tasman Challenge and went well, so we have some knowledge of the track conditions. With racers the calibre of Brad Blake, Brad Ludlow, and Nathan Disney in the field the action served up to race fans should be top quality".

Ross Nicastri competed in Western Australia over the Christmas / New Year period and although mechanical problems intervened at the two meetings the experience gained was invaluable.

"I'd like to thank the Blake family for providing me with a car to race, and their hospitality. It was tremendous to race against the nation's best, and US star Jeep Van Wormer. The trip west was a real eye opener, as the level of competition on the west coast was much higher than I was used to. It was a great opportunity to witness first hand where Late Model racing currently stands, and where its heading" Nicastri said.

"While I was on the west coast Ben raced the #99 at Nowra in the NSW Series Round on January 1 and did a terrific job to finish second in the Feature. I'm really proud of the way he is adapting to Late Model racing, and to get second in only his second meeting is a fantastic achievement".

Nicastri Motorsport is set to raise the bar again soon, with a second car heading downunder from the USA.

"We hope to have a second car here sometime in February" Nicastri said.

"The plan is for me to drive in the Gold Cup and National Championship, and then put Ben in the car until the second car arrives. It will be great to have us both on the track together!" concluded Nicastri.

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