

Aurora's Jake Cowden roars to three victories to sweep the Victoria Day Speedfest at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park

Jake Cowden of Aurora drove his #9 RySpec Radical SR3 to victory in all three of his races at the Victoria Day Speedfest held at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park.

The 18-year-old racer attributed his success to "the support team behind me."

"For example, my crew worked tirelessly for three hours to replace my gearbox and engine between Races 1 and 2."

Cowden was pleased by his racing team's performance, including the timely work of his experienced pit crew: "We executed well. It certainly was a highlight for us to win all three races last weekend."

The weekend at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park featured "a mix of weather conditions," according to Cowden. He explained how the race season kicked off at the Speedfest event: "The Emzone Radical Cup Canada series launched this weekend with their customary sequence of practice, qualifying, and three races."

Cowden stayed on top of the leader board, except for Friday's qualifying where he was "off pole by less than half a tenth of a second."

A rainy Saturday was the backdrop for Race 1 and Race 2. Cowden acknowledged that the weather was a factor, but he was able to "extract all the potential of the car on cold tires. After five laps, we reached the optimal temperature for grip on the road."

In Race 1, Cowden took the lead in corner 1 and maintained his lead for the 23 laps that comprised the 40-minute race. A significant challenge for Cowden emerged during the last few laps of Race 1 when "a damaged transmission left me with only 2 out of the 6 gears," but he still managed to win the race.

Due to the transmission damage incurred in Race 1, Cowden's crew had only three and a half hours to rebuild his car before Race 2.

Cowden explained the heroic efforts and expertise of his team: "They had to swap engines, as my gear box was clearly broken. Due to the design of the engine and transmission, they needed to be swapped as a whole unit, as the gears, clutch, and engine are all in one." The repair team salvaged teammate Peter Hanson's motor from his crashed car and with "five capable technicians working non-stop for three hours, I was ready for Race 2 with one minute to spare. Ironically, I got on grid and the race was delayed for 40 minutes due to fog."

The fog cleared after another downpour, Cowden started his second race of the day in P1, and repeated his "brilliant rain race" to take the checkered flag in Race 2.

Cowden's team was elated by the result in the aqueous conditions and the efficacy of the full-scale repair: "I've never heard my team cheer so hard, especially knowing their difficult engine swap had been successful."

Cowden described his third win under much better driving conditions on Sunday: "Race 3 was a sunny day at CTMP and the fans were out in the thousands. The track was dry. An unfortunate mechanical issue with Sander's #10 took him out of the race mid-way, Riedmann soon got a chance to reach me through a safety car restart, but my F1600 experience as the 2022 Toyo Tires F1600 Series Champion with Britain West was the difference. Once again, I was able to lead the race from beginning to end."

After running the table with three wins at the Victoria Day Speedfest, Cowden turned his attention to needs of his community.

Toward this noble end, he appeared at the IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's at Fairy Lake on Saturday, May 27.

Cowden has fundraised for Alzheimer's programming and research since he was 16. Cowden estimated that he has raised \$30,000 to date and this year's goal, with the support of the Gallone Family to match donations, is to bring the total to \$40,000.?

In addition to his philanthropy, the Aurora resident will make an appearance at the Aurora Street Festival on June 4 to promote the annual event.

As the Youth Ambassador for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, Jake Cowden will have his #9 RySpec Radical at the ASHoF booth and sign autographs for car-racing fans. Residents and prospective sponsors are encouraged to meet this young racer who is looking to qualify for the Honda Indy in mid-July.

By Jim Stewart