



Searching for EDGE in close V8 competition

If ever there was an example of how close racing is in 2010, it came in Races 11 and 12 of the V8 Supercar Championship Series at Winton Motor Raceway, in Victoria, last weekend.

On paper, qualifying 21st and 16th were not great showings for Greg Murphy, who found himself starting both races with a lot of cars in front of the Castrol EDGE Holden Commodore. But the margins that separated Murphy from the front row of the grid were very telling.

On Saturday, the gap between the four-time Bathurst 1000 winner and pole position was only 0.64s, on a 29-car grid in which the top 10 qualifiers were separated by only two-tenths of a second!

On Sunday, he was only half a second from pole position, with small changes resulting only in incremental gains in speed.

Winton was the second race in a row in which teams have only been able to use Dunlop's soft-but-fragile 'Sprint' tyre, and that fact highlighted the incredible depth that exists in V8 Supercars today. Murphy's team worked hard, but there was just not enough speed gain in a new set of tyres, so he was forced to race back in the pack.

Saturday's race started well enough, but quickly it transpired that the car was going to be wearing its tyres quicker than some of the opposition drivers and teams. Murphy bided his time, and delayed his compulsory pitstop as long as he could, before coming in for tyres



Four-time Bathurst winner, Greg Murphy (right) and the Castrol EDGE team continue to try unlock the secrets of the new chassis (above).

on lap 18 of the 40-lap race. From there, he made his way through the field and, when a late-race melee happened in front of him, he made up three positions on the final lap to move to 13th position.

On Sunday, Murphy and the Castrol EDGE Holden faced a 64-lap race, and made his stops on schedule, but dropped a couple of positions over the final laps and finished 15th.

The Paul Morris Motorsports team is continuing on with its program of coming to grips with its third version





of the Commodore VE it has had in three years, and while the margins are close, there is still a lot of work to be done.

James Courtney continued his purple patch at Winton, taking his third and fourth wins in consecutive races. The Ford driver's victories have vaulted him into the lead of the V8 Supercar Championship Series for the first time, after Jamie Whincup finished a lowly 24th on Sunday after crashing in the final race. Craig Lowndes was the best of the Holden drivers, with second placings in both of the races.

Murphy is now in 27th position in the V8 Drivers' Championship on 369 points. The series continues on June 18-20, with the Skycity Triple Crown at Hidden Valley, near Darwin, where the cars will again revert to the more commonly-used Dunlop 'Control' tyre, though the teams will have one set of the 'Sprints' available for the drivers to use in the longer, second race on Sunday.



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2010 V8 SUPERCAR CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES RESULTS – RD 6, WINTON 300, BENALLA, VIC

RACE 11 – 120km

1. James Courtney, Jim Beam Ford
2. Craig Lowndes, TeamVodafone Holden
3. Jamie Whincup, TeamVodafone Holden
4. Steven Johnson, Jim Beam Ford
5. Shane Van Gisbergen, SP Tools Ford
6. Todd Kelly, Jack Daniel's Holden
7. Jason Bright, Trading Post Holden
8. Michael Caruso, Fujitsu / GRM Holden
9. Tony D'Alberto, Centaur Holden
10. Lee Holdsworth, Fujitsu / GRM Holden
13. Greg Murphy, Castrol EDGE Holden

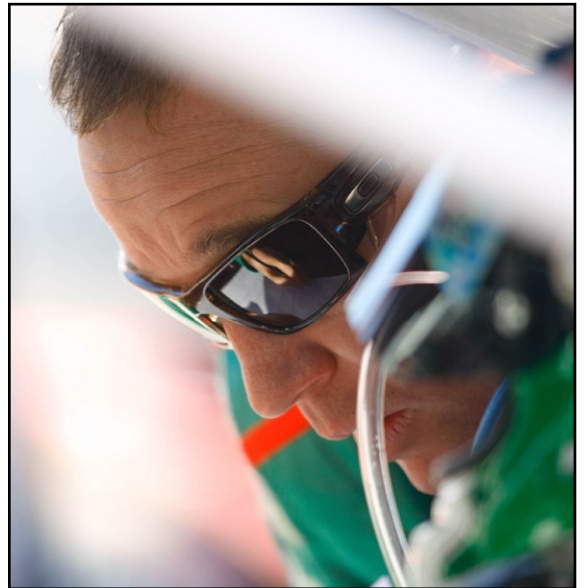
RACE 12 – 200km

1. James Courtney, Jim Beam Ford
2. Craig Lowndes, TeamVodafone Holden
3. Lee Holdsworth, Fujitsu / GRM Holden
4. Rick Kelly, Jack Daniel's Holden
5. Michael Caruso, Fujitsu / GRM Holden
6. Mark Winterbottom, Orrcon Steel Ford
7. Tim Slade, Wilson Security Ford
8. Garth Tander, Holden Racing Team Holden
9. Tony D'Alberto, Centaur Holden
10. Paul Dumbrell, The Bottle-O Ford
15. Greg Murphy, Castrol EDGE Holden

2010 V8 Supercar Championship Series Points (after 12 of 26 races): 1. James Courtney 1467; 2. Jamie Whincup 1353; 3. Craig Lowndes 1245; 4. Shane Van Gisbergen 1164; 5. Garth Tander 1116; 6. Lee Holdsworth 1110; 7. Rick Kelly 1079; 8. Mark Winterbottom 1056; 9. Michael Caruso 1035; 10. Steven Johnson 932; 12. Russell Ingall 777; 27. Greg Murphy – 367.



Murphy suited up for a big weekend at Winton (above), the Castrol EDGE Commodore not far from the front, but such was the closeness of competition at the picturesque rural Victorian circuit that just a few tenths of a second was the difference between a front row start and mid-pack. The Castrol EDGE/PMM team continues to work hard towards getting to the front, a full day test planned for Thursday, 27 May at Queensland Raceway.



While it was beautiful and sunny during the day, the evenings and early mornings were cold and foggy at Winton, but the PMM Castrol crew were out practicing pit stops (below).

