

The third Rata-SM (Finnish Championships) race weekend in Pärnu, Estonia, took place in hot conditions and with about 200 drivers participating from both Finland, Russia and Baltic states.

In Formula Fords, the question on everyone's mind was whether Antti Buri could repeat his Alastaro success and win the races here. Last year Antti did not race in Pärnu, but has been there before. However, the answer to the question was a clear yes - Antti took a clean pole and also two clean victories ahead of Elmeri Ylitalo who was an equally clear second in both races. Antti also set the lap record for Formula Fords at Pärnu at 54,067 (qualification). It should however be remembered this was the first time Duratecs were in Pärnu, and the new Dunlop tyre has proven to be faster than the previous Avons, making this record not much of a surprise. Ville Kivinen was third in both races. Miikka Mäkelä was having trouble in both races, although he did well in practice and maintained some pace also in qualifications. It seems something was wrong with his Mtec '10 car, as the car oversteered dramatically in corner entries. Hopefully the Mtec team can sort the trouble out prior to the next race.

In Zetecs, Kristian Laine set the pace with 55,6 in qualification. This time was matched only by Henri Höglund in free practice. Kristian thus took the pole and also the win in the first race, with Markus Ollila second and Per Stenius third. Henri Höglund had a misfortune already at the start of the race, with a broken tripod and thus failing driveshaft. Equally Pinja Mari Forsman had bad luck with a broken valve stem, a somewhat unusual problem normally. In the second race Henri Höglund got back on pace, and after a somewhat slow start took the race with vengeance. Finishing first by a clear margin, he was followed by Markus Ollila second and Per Stenius third. Kristian Laine, who started the race well, unfortunately took off in the high speed corner of the track, with a quite remarkable crash following. However, despite being pretty shaken, he was ok and so was - amazingly enough - most of the car! So Kristian definitely was the luckiest driver in the crowd, this could have ended much worse.

Unfortunately I do not have pictures from Pärnu yet, but given the sunny weather and tight racing there should be some good pics coming up. Stay tuned...