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APRIL 01, 2011 NEWS

**Introducing: Prototype Lites Championship's Ari Straus**

When the Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Championship field arrived at Sebring International Raceway for the season-opener doubleheader in mid-March, many expected a BERG Racing entry to be among those challenging for top honors in the L2 class. While this indeed proved to be the case, it was not the defending class champion and team owner John Weisberg leading the way, but rather newcomer Ari Straus making his mark with a win in his series debut.



*Ari Straus scored an impressive L2 class win in his series debut with BERG Racing at Sebring (Photo: Montcello Motor Club)*

Piloting the No. 75 Monticello Motor Club/BERG Motorsports entry, Straus entered his inaugural Prototype Lites event with a plan to continually build speed and make the most of every opportunity. The partner and President of the Monticello Motor Club in New York promptly did just that, improving his fast lap time by upwards of a second each time he got behind the wheel. Following a strong qualifying run that earned him fourth in class starting position, Straus continued that trend when the green flag waved for Round One. Not only did Straus find more speed come race time, but some great racecraft and a superb late race pass for the lead resulted in a season-opening win. While Round Two did not go according to plan, his race ending prematurely, Straus impressed many in his Prototype Lites Championship debut.

For Straus, the love affair with cars and racing began as a 16 year-old via a first driving experience with sports car champion Bob Akin. While never ceasing to be an ardent car and racing enthusiast, it wasn't until later in life that the New York resident took the next step. That came in 2006, when Straus began taking to the track via SCCA and NASA club racing action. Piloting a variety of cars, ranging from a Spec Miata to a Radical SR-8, Straus' passion for the sport grew. The father of three as a result soon found himself eying a move to the pro ranks.



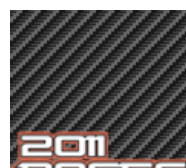
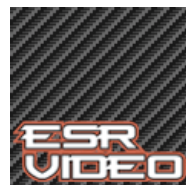
Straus took the next

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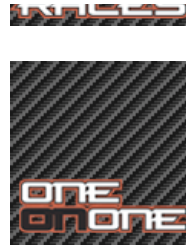
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*Straus continues to gain speed and experience each time he gets behind the wheel*  
(Photo: Brian & Laura Friedrich - FreidrichPhoto.com)

step up the motorsports ladder in 2008, partnering Nick Longhi in Grand-Am sports car competition behind the wheel of a Grand Sport class Ford Mustang. Building on a successful first pro



outing, Straus continued to take part in selected Grand-Am

events over the course of the next two seasons, piloting a Sports Tuner class BMW 330. He however did not limit himself to just Grand-Am competition, taking part in a Ferrari Challenge event, as well as continuing to race in SCCA and NASA events.

While always interested in prototype racing, it was only after speaking with BERG Racing owner Weisberg, that Straus found himself behind the wheel of a L2 class West WR1000 car. The end result was Straus joining forces with the defending class champion for a full campaign and a potential title-winning season.

So when the Cooper Prototype Lites Championship title chase resumes with Rounds Three and Four on July 8-9, at Lime Rock Park, you might want to keep an eye on Berg Racing's Ari Straus.

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