



**PUSHING LIMITS**  
(LEFT) Johan Schwartz ran a dominant season on his way to the Touring Car B title. (BELOW) Andrei Kisel pushed it to the edge and beyond, claiming third in the season's points.

# BEATING THE ODDS

Johan Schwartz experienced the BOP swing in Pirelli World Challenge Touring Car B this season, and still came out on top

WORDS Jeff Zurschmeide | IMAGES Jay Bonvouloir

One theme that turns up constantly in Pirelli World Challenge is the series' strict policy of adjusting each car's competitive potential after each race. There's no such thing as an easy championship in this series, because every time you win, you can expect a performance adjustment. That happened to Johan Schwartz nine times on his way to winning the Touring Car B championship in his No. 25 TechSport/ZERO Cancer/CAS Group Chevy Sonic.

Schwartz started the season in good form at Circuit of the Americas, sweeping all three races at the season-opener weekend. "I had never met the team or been in the car at the time, and I won all three races, including one in the rain," Schwartz recalls.

After such a strong showing at the start of the season, Schwartz was driving his Sonic under a serious handicap. "They kept slowing us down and we were really lacking speed," Schwartz exclaims. "We started with a 37mm restrictor plate, and we went to a 36mm restrictor plate in Canada, and we went all the way down to a 32 for Road America. They put an additional 25lbs, plus the 134lbs that we already had, so we were pretty slow," he says.

With a large handicap, Schwartz dropped to a third-place finish in Wisconsin. "It was one of those character-building moments," Schwartz insists. "Road America is such a horsepower track that we really struggled

with speed. So we raced to get the most points we could, and we hoped that World Challenge would see that the car was not competitive anymore."

But the World Challenge system is finely tuned to equalize competition, and drivers have to deal with that. "You can argue all you want, but you have to do what you can with what you have," he says. "At the end of the day, it's the results that matter, so we buckled down and said that these are the cards we were dealt and we have to get the most out of it."

The magic of the World Challenge system is that it often pushes teams to find speed they didn't know they had. "The low point of my season was Road America, but the high point of my season was the following race at Mid-Ohio where we won all three races of the weekend," Schwartz tells us. "We made the car go a little faster in a straight line by taking all the drag away from the tires. We really just made it roll free by being very neutral on the toe, and made it very good in the corners."

In the end, the World Challenge system made Schwartz a better driver. "Especially when we had the challenge of not having the horsepower,

I was very cautious about driving the car very consistently, paying attention to tire management," he says. "The tires would go away halfway through the race, but we got



that figured out and started going fast. We were very consistent over the long run."

Looking ahead to next year, Schwartz has big plans. "I would love to race Trans Am," he says. "I'm going to run the last two Trans Am races [in 2015]. I would also love to be back in World Challenge and to move up to Touring Car or GTS if I could get the attention of a team. But I got a call from a Trans Am team with a TA2 car, so I'll be doing those last two races. We'll see what that turns into."

Schwartz notes he couldn't have succeeded with his sponsors. "ZERO Cancer - The End of Prostate Cancer, John McAleer with the CAS Group, Thomas Koch with Promatec, Tom Noble from West Real Estate, Serengeti Eyewear, and General Motors with Jim Campbell, Dave Caldwell, and John Heinricy," he says.

TCB BY THE NUMBERS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Johan Schwartz	2,081 pts
2	Glenn Nixon	1,964
3	Andrei Kisel	1,368
4	Van Svenson	1,326
5	Jason Fichter	1,293

DRIVER WINS

Johan Schwartz	9
Glenn Nixon	5
Joey Jordan	4