



Garth Tander, in action at Townsville, says his car is in good shape for the enduro events.

REBECCA WILLIAMS

GARTH Tander is confident Holden Racing Team's form is building at the right time for him to push for a breakthrough win in the Sandown 500 when the V8s' enduro season kicks off this weekend.

While a three-time Bathurst 1000 winner, Tander is yet to claim victory at Sandown Raceway, or even secure a podium finish in the 500km event.

He has finished fourth four times in the race that serves as an important lead-up to next month's Bathurst 1000.

But Tander hoped he could cross off one of the few missing links from his racing resume this weekend.

"A lot of people look at the event as sort of a Bathurst warm-up, but it's an important race in its own right," Tander said yesterday.

"I'm really looking forward to it. It's one race I actually haven't won.



"I have won the 500km race in the past, but that was when it was down at Phillip Island ... so I'm really keen to get that one ticked off.

"It would mean a lot. I've been fortunate, I've won the majority of the events that we have in V8 Supercars, but not the Sandown 500."

Tander will have Warren Luff as co-driver for the Sandown 500 and the rest of the endurance season, which takes in the Bathurst 1000 at Mount

Panorama on October 12 and the Gold Coast 600 at Surfers Paradise two weeks later.

Luff helped Craig Lowndes (Red Bull Racing Australia) to podium finishes in all three enduros, including a win on the Gold Coast, last year to claim the inaugural Enduro Cup.

"Having Warren Luff join us this year is exciting because he's certainly a very polished professional as far as these races go, so having him as part

V8 SUPERCARS

SANDOWN 500

Friday: Practice from 10.35am
Saturday: Qualifying from 12.15pm
Sunday: Race 29, 1.40pm

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Jamie Whincup	2025
2 Mark Winterbottom	1890
3 Craig Lowndes	1812
4 Shane van Gisbergen	1778
5 Fabian Coulthard	1712

of it will be good," Tander said.

Tander said he was buoyed by strong testing at Winton last week.

His VF Commodore has secured two podium finishes since his only win this season in Townsville in July.

"We've certainly proven over the last four or five events that the car speed's coming back," Tander said.

"We've been on the podium pretty much every weekend, whether it be myself or (HRT

teammate) James (Courtney).

"The form's certainly coming back and the car speed's coming good and certainly coming into this time of the year with Sandown and then obviously Bathurst, it's a good time of the year to be coming back into form.

"We're pretty confident we're heading in the right direction."

Tander, ninth in the championship standings, said his position would allow him to really attack this weekend's race.

"We can probably be a bit more aggressive with strategy and things like that and go for the win rather than consolidate our championship position," the 37-year-old said.

Tander will make his 220th Australian Touring Car Championship/V8 Supercar Championship round start at Sandown, tying with former HRT teammate Mark Skaife for fourth on the all-time list.

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