



O'Neill and Weaver Continue Winning Ways in Formula Mazda Challenge

June 10, 2008. Willows, California. The Patrick O'Neill and Bill Weaver juggernauts continued to roll as the MOLECULE Formula Mazda Challenge took to Thunderhill Raceway Park for a doubleheader weekend, but the competition is closing in as the championship approaches the halfway mark of the season.

Driving the #64 O'Neill Construction Pro Formula Mazda, San Francisco resident O'Neill recorded pole positions and victories in both Saturday and Sunday events to keep his 2008 unbeaten streak intact in the Pro Formula Mazda division.

"Once again my crew gave me a great car for both races and I was able to stay out front all day," O'Neill commented. "The drivers behind me have been stepping things up so I have to keep working to keep the streak alive."

Joining O'Neill on the podium for Saturday's ten lap race were Michael Guasch in the MOLECULE sponsored entry and Stan Kohls, who was coming off a podium finish at Miller Motorsports Park in his World Speed Motorsports Mazda.

Series newcomer Kevin Woods made an impression in the race as well after a crank trigger sensor failed in qualifying and left him towards the back of the grid. Driving with a vengeance, Woods drove through the field, setting the fastest race lap by more than a second, to earn the fourth position overall.

Woods would give O'Neill a hard run on Sunday, keeping the 2007 champion in his sights throughout the event after picking off Kohls and Guasch on the opening lap of the event. The rookie would capture the second podium spot ahead of Kohls, who recorded his third consecutive podium finish.

"Patrick has a ton of seat time and that is just hard to beat, but a couple of our guys are knocking on his door and working hard to get to that level. It shouldn't be long before they are battling for the top spot. Getting three podium finishes in 2 races is commendable and our entire team did a great job all weekend." Telo Stewart WSM Team Owner commented.

The racing was hard fought in the Standard Formula Mazda class as well as the assembled drivers sought to knock Standard Mazda legend Bill Weaver off of his throne. Weaver, who like O'Neill entered the weekend unbeaten in 2008, would leave the weekend with his streak unbroken as well, earning the pole and victory on both days in his #67 James G Parker Insurance Mazda.

Leading the charge in the attempt to unseat Weaver on Saturday was the new kid, Matt Trudell, making his second race weekend in the championship. Going up against a field of seasoned veterans Trudell would hold his own and finish second to Weaver, edging out Derry O'Donovan for the position.



In Sunday's eleven lap affair Weaver would once again pull away from the field as O'Donovan, Stew Tabak, Bruce Carpenter and Trudell all worked to close the distance to the 2007 Standard Mazda class champion. As the checkered flag dropped it would be O'Donovan and Tabak joining Weaver on the podium for Round Five.

"The weekend was a great success for all the participants. I can't thank the people from NASA, Thunderhill, and Trackmasters enough. They have made each of these race weekends real professional level events that reflect well on us and our sponsors," shared World Speed Operations Manager Mark Milazzo.

To assist with the at track coverage of the series, the Formula Mazda Challenge hired Jeff Lepper as the announcer for the weekend. Lepper has a tremendous amount of experience in announcing having previously been the track announcer for Speedworld Raceway Park in Phoenix, Arizona. Lepper also has radio experience as he is currently a DJ for KUIC Radio 95.3 in Vacaville, CA. Jeff is in a unique position having lots of racing experience himself. He has won multiple series championships from NHRA to NASA.

"MOLECULE really has stepped up their marketing campaign, and having a professional announcer call the practice, qualifying, and race sessions really was a neat added value that the weekend participants really appreciated," Ben Hetteema, Molecule Formula Mazda Challenge Official, reflected.

Through five rounds of the MOLECULE Formula Mazda Challenge O'Neill has a firm grip on first place in the Pro Formula Mazda class with 225 points. Guasch sits in second place with 191 points while Woods is third with 176 points overall. In the Standard Formula Mazda class Weaver is out front with 225 points and Tabak and Carpenter sit in second and third overall with 197 points and 170 points respectively.

The Formula Mazda Challenge now heads to historic Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca for Rounds Six and Seven of the Championship during the SCCA doubleheader weekend on June 27-29. For more information please visit www.formulamazdachallenge.com.