



LACROIX SCORES SECOND IN DEBUT FOR JOHN WALKO RACING

TRAFFORD, PA (May 17, 2006) – The streets of Houston, where the STAR Mazda series hosted the second round of their Championship schedule, proved to be tough to tame for many competitors. Kevin Lacroix was up to the challenge however, bringing home the UniSelect #74 in second place.

For the seventeen year old rookie it was his first race in the STAR Mazda Series and only his third opportunity to run with his new team. Extensive testing at BeaveRun Motorsports Complex and Mid Ohio aided the rising star's quick success as he proved himself to be a fast learner. In the opening practice Lacroix found himself eighteenth on the time sheets, a long way from his goal, but he was undaunted.

"There was a lot of traffic, many cars going off course, and I was doing my homework," noted Lacroix. As the sessions progressed he improved his times each time out moving to eleventh in the subsequent practice and finally in to the top five in qualifying. Kevin felt comfortable that he had room to improve yet again once the green flag dropped, "I wasn't able to get a clean lap in the last five minutes of our (qualifying) session, but I knew I had some speed left in the car at that point."

Once the race started, Lacroix continued his trend of improving with every session picking off two spots early before settling in to third.

"My goal was to stay between the walls and get the most of my track time but the car was awesome and I moved to the front real quick," commented a jubilant Lacroix after the race. He continued, "The guys at JWR gave me a car that improved every time I took to the track. It was easy to pace my learning of this slippery concrete track with the handling of the UniSelect 74 car."

Post race inspections resulted in the disqualification of the second place car, thereby awarding Lacroix with a second place finish in his debut. Points he noted that he desperately needs in the Championship after spotting the rest of the field a one race head start, "I settled for third in the last laps because my tires were losing a bit of traction. Finally, being second will give me a few more points in the standings."

The team's second Rookie driver, Charles Anti, also improved throughout the event after a first session accident cut in to his track time, forcing him to start 28th in the race.

The Pittsburgh native picked his way through the field early in the race. "I got a good start and was moving up through the field. I passed quite a few cars but then lost a few after the tires went away." Anti settled for a 20th place finish in the 37 car field.

Texan Ross Smith was hoping for good results in a return to his home state. A sixth place spot in the final practice had hopes high but qualifications were heated and Smith was forced to start sixteenth. Smith ended the weekend 31st.

The team now looks to Mid-Ohio where they recently completed a two day test. Hopes are high as team owner John Walko noted, "We tested at both Mid Ohio and BeaveRun, where the setups and racing style are very similar to Mid Ohio, and the teams as well as the drivers responded very well. Our cars ran 3,000 trouble free miles at these tests so we learned a lot as a team and the drivers are very comfortable there too.

Ross Smith enters the weekend eleventh in points while new team mate Lacroix sits tied for fourteenth after just one race. Anti is in the 27th spot after just two race in to his rookie season.

Contact info@johnwalkoracing.com for more information regarding testing programs available for the 2006 season. Additional team information can be found at www.johnwalkoracing.com.