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Bonilla Leads Andersen Racing Contingent In Star Mazda Race Saturday at Mid-Ohio

LEXINGTON, Ohio, May 20 — Gerardo Bonilla was allowed to compete in the Star Mazda race presented by Goodyear Saturday afternoon at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course while his penalty from the Houston race last weekend is under appeal. The Orlando, Fla.-based driver made the most of it and finished sixth in the Skip Barber Racing School No. 9 to lead Andersen Racing's three entries in the 29-lap event.

Brad Jaeger of Cincinnati regrouped from an early incident to come from last place on lap two to 12th at the end in the 34-car field with his Andersen Racing Team No. 2. He passed Ramiro Scuncio of Concepcion, Chile, on the last lap to push his other Andersen Racing teammate's Sky Arline Chile No. 22 to 13th at the finish.

Bonilla ran in seventh place for the first 19 laps and got sixth by passing Logan Gomez, and then he ran unopposed in that spot to the checkered. That sounds easier than it actually was, as the driver who finished seventh, Daniel Herrington, actually set the fastest lap of the race.

Jaeger started ninth but he and Mark Pavan touched wheels on the first lap, sending Jaeger flying across a gravel trap and off the charts. He regrouped and started all over again from the rear of the field. By the halfway point he was 18th. He kept on methodically passing cars and the

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last one he passed before time ran out was Scuncio.

The latter driver had the best start of them all, as he qualified 20th but he was 16th by the end of lap one and 15th by the end of lap two. He got hit in the side by a lapped car but he still got as high as 11th, where he ran from lap 14 through lap 18 when Matt Varsha got around him. Then he ran in 12th place until Jaeger got by at the very end.

Ryan Justice ran away with the race to post his second consecutive victory. Adrian Carrio and Kevin Lacroix joined him on the podium.

Earlier in the day Justice set a new track record to win the pole. Bonilla qualified seventh, Jaeger qualified ninth and Scuncio qualified 20th. Second place through 13th place were all within 1 second of each other.

Although Thursday and Friday were rainy, the weather was beautiful on race day.

The Mid-Ohio race is scheduled to be televised on SPEED at 3 p.m. Eastern time on June 11. The next telecast is actually of last weekend's race in Houston, which will be shown at 5 p.m. Eastern time on Sunday, May 28 on the same network

The next Star Mazda race is June 3-4 at the Milwaukee Mile.

Andersen Racing's Web site is at andersenracingteam.com and the series' Web site is at starmazda.com.

Quotes follow:

Gerardo Bonilla: "We stayed out of trouble.

"The start was crazy. It's the first time I started so far back. Cars were going four wide at the start. They forget that there's a kink out there after Turn One. People almost touched wheels.

"Today was all about avoiding unnecessary risk. I just kept my spot. The race settled down pretty quickly after the start and things became safer quickly. The guys in front of me just got better grades today.

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“I had an on-board camera; hopefully I gave them some good shots.

“I just got into a rhythm and worked on the car. I experimented with the bars and my braking and my line. We closed in, but then Varsha spun in Turn Eight. I missed him but in doing so I lost my spot to Gomez. Then I passed Gomez again.”

Brad Jaeger: “Mark Pavan tried to pass me on the outside in Turn 11, and we hit wheels. It pinched my car sideways and sent me flying to the inside. I just missed a guardrail and I went flying through a gravel trap. Then I regrouped from there. I don’t know if I was last or next to last, but we came back from there.”

Ramiro Scuncio: “A lapped car turned into me in Turn Eight; No. 96 I think; he was a lap down already. He hit me in the left side.

“I’m reasonably happy though. I should still be in the top 10 in the point standings, which will be very important at Montreal when the starting line-up will be determined by points.

“I was very happy with my car in the beginning. It had a little understeer at the end.

“Brad passed me at the Keyhole at the very end of the race.”

Stats from Mid-Ohio:

Thursday Test Session 1:

1. Ryan Justice, 1:32.288 (88.081 mph)
 10. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:35.787 (84.863 mph)
 11. Ramiro Scuncio, 1:35.943 (84.725 mph)
- Brad Jaeger, no time.

Thursday Test Session 2:

1. Mike Potekhen, 1:23.464 (97.393 mph)
11. Brad Jaeger, 1:28.499 (91.852 mph)
17. Ramiro Scuncio, 1:32.054 (88.305 mph)
21. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:33.392 (87.040 mph)

Thursday Test Session 3:

1. Ryan Justice, 1:25.615 (94.946 mph)
9. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:27.806 (92.577 mph)

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11. Brad Jaeger, 1:29.094 (91.238 mph)

Ramiro Scuncio, no time.

Thursday Test Day Combined Times:

1. Michael Potekhen, 1:23.464 (97.393 mph)

14. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:27.806 (92.577 mph)

15. Brad Jaeger, 1:28.499 (91.852 mph)

20. Ramiro Scuncio, 1:32.054 (88.305 mph)

Friday Practice 1 (8:50 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.)

1. Rob Bunker, 1:47.342 (75.728 mph, 7 laps)

10. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:51.597 (72.841 mph; 6 laps)

16. Brad Jaeger, 1:54.484 (71.004 mph; 3 laps)

29. Ramiro Scuncio, 6:37.002 (20.47 mph; 1 lap)

Friday Practice 2 (4:15 p.m. to 5 p.m.)

1. Mike Potekhen, 1:20.207 (101.348 mph)

3. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:20.658 (100.781 mph)

6. Brad Jaeger, 1:21.093 (100.240 mph)

26. Ramiro Scuncio, 1:25.977 (94.546 mph)

Saturday Qualifying (10:55 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)

1. Ryan Justice, 1:18.300 (103.816 mph), new track record

7. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:19.573 (102.155 mph)

9. Brad Jaeger, 1:20.033 (101.568 mph)

20. Ramiro Scuncio, 1:21.470 (99.777)

Saturday Race (4:05 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.)

1. Ryan Justice

6. Gerardo Bonilla

12. Brad Jaeger

13. Ramiro Scuncio