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Andersen Racing's Bonilla and Jaeger Escape Injury in Wild Star Mazda Accident Saturday at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca

MONTEREY, Calif., Oct. 21 - Two of Andersen Racing's drivers, Gerardo Bonilla of Orlando, Fla., and Brad Jaeger of Cincinnati, were involved in a wild accident in Turn Five during Saturday's season finale of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca here. Bonilla's car even flipped during the melee, but luckily everyone involved escaped injury.

A third driver for the Fairfield, N.J.-based team in this race, Micky Gilbert of Golden, Colo., spun once in front of a pack of cars in another incident but he was able to regroup to finish 17th in the team's No. 4, which was sponsored by Gilbert Engineering.

Bonilla's Skip Barber Racing School No. 9 and Jaeger's Andersen Racing Team No. 2 ended up 34th and 35th, respectively. The 45-minute race, which attracted 41 entries, ended under one of four cautions. The longest span of green-flag laps was just the first three circuits around the 2.238-mile, 11-turn road course, as 14 of the 22 laps were run under yellow.

Bonilla, who clinched the Expert Series' championship a month ago, ended up sixth unofficially in the overall point standings. Jaeger, who missed five races due to an accident



in Montreal in June, finished 28th in points for the 12-race season. Ramiro Scuncio didn't do all the races either but he was 18th in the unofficial final point standings. Several of the team's other drivers, including Phil Saville, Francois Bellemare, Pablo Donoso and Gilbert, weren't running for points this year. The team as a whole ended up fifth in the final team point standings.

Bonilla had the best qualifying result of the Andersen Racing trio here at Laguna Seca this weekend. He posted the same time as the 10th-place starter, Ryan Phinny, with a 1:21.265 (99.14 mph), but started 11th because his fastest lap in the morning qualifying session occurred two laps after Phinny's fastest lap.

Jaeger qualified 16th and Gilbert started 21st.

Bonilla ran in 11th place for the first six laps, and then Russell Walker got around him. He was still in 12th when he was involved in the big wreck of the day in Turn Five with 16 laps down.

Jaeger dropped back two spots at the initial start but he improved three spots on lap two to advance to 15th. Ross Smith and Jaeger both got around Phil Fogg Jr. on lap six to put Jaeger in 14th place before another yellow waved. He was still in 14th when the trouble erupted in Turn Five working lap 17.

Things started out great for Gilbert, as he moved up one spot on lap one and another spot on lap two before he settled into 19th place. He moved up to 18th on lap six when Ken Losch dropped back, but then he dropped back to 20th with 11 laps down. He fell to 23rd after a 360-degree spin with 16 laps in the books. He advanced back up to 17th when his teammates and some others were involved in the Turn Five crash and dropped out, but Gilbert couldn't advance any further because no more green-flag laps were run.

The race, which was held under perfect weather conditions, was won by Ryan Justice over Mike Potekhen and series champion Adrian Carrio. Justice led all 22 laps.

The race is scheduled to be shown on SPEED at 3 p.m. Eastern time on Oct. 29. It supported the Monterey Sports Car Championship American Le Mans Series (ALMS) headliner.

For more information see the team's Web site at andersenracingteam.com and the series' Web site at starmazda.com.

Driver quotes follow:

Micky Gilbert: "I got blocked a lot, especially once when I was going for a pass in Turn Two. I spun once in front of the whole pack, so considering that, I guess I'm glad I finished.

"I was faster than some of the people in front of me, but when you're that far back in the field you get caught up dealing with some questionable moves.

"I want to thank the team for all their hard work. I guess it just wasn't our day."

Gerardo Bonilla: "Russell Walker tried to pass Logan Gomez and they touched in Turn Five. Russell spun and went across the track and caught my left-rear tire. Then I went into the gravel sideways and flipped over, and landed upside down and scrambled out.

"Brad ended up in the gravel too.

"Before that my car was great. I worked with the bar and its handling improved. We were doing fine, but there weren't enough green-flag laps to move up much.

"I wish we could have finished. I wish these kinds of things didn't happen. But I'm extremely grateful to Dan Andersen for the opportunity he gave me this year. He really did everything he could for me. I also want to thank Remi Lanteigne and Jim Desautel, but especially Dan Andersen."

Brad Jaeger: "I guess Gerardo and Russell Walker were battling. Russell spun in the center of the corner, and he

kept his brakes locked up. I saw him in plenty of time and I thought the outside would be the best place to go to avoid him, so I went to the outside.

"Then Ross Smith checked up. I guess that was because he saw something happening to Gerardo, and I hit Ross. I was just at the wrong place at the wrong time.

"Before that I had a good run going, but when the dust settled and I looked things over my car's upper A arm was bent. I saw Gerardo upside down, and I had no clue as to what had happened to him.

"My car was pretty good. It took a couple of laps to come in, but it seemed like just as the car was starting to come in, then the yellow came out."

The stats from Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca:

Test Session 1 (Thurs., 9:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.):

1. Adrian Carrio, 1:22.819, 76.070 mph
14. Micky Gilbert, 1:25.643, 73.561 mph
16. Brad Jaeger, 1:25.825, 73.405 mph
23. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:26.285, 73.014 mph

Test Session 2 (Thurs., 11:55 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.):

1. Ryan Justice, 1:21.951, 98.312 mph
12. Micky Gilbert, 1:24.095, 95.806 mph
13. Brad Jaeger, 1:24.118, 95.780
19. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:24.883, 94.917 mph

Test Session 3 (Thurs., 3:10 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.):

1. Mark Wilkins, 1:21.670, 98.651 mph
5. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:22.369, 97.813 mph
14. Micky Gilbert, 1:23.495, 96.494 mph
26. Brad Jaeger, 1:24.606, 95.227 mph

Combined Thursday Testing Times:

1. Mark Wilkins, 1:21.670, Thursday final practice, 1:23.394, 1:22.164, 1:21.670.
6. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:22.369, Thursday final practice, 1:26.285, 1:24.883, 1:22.369.
14. Micky Gilbert, 1:23.495, Thursday final practice, 1:25.643, 1:24.095, 1:23.495.
21. Brad Jaeger, 1:24.118, Thursday second practice, 1:25.825, 1:24.118, 1:24.606.

Official Practice Session 1 (Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.):

1. Ryan Justice, 1:21.533, 98.816 mph

16. Micky Gilbert, 1:23.731, 96.222
17. Brad Jaeger, 1:23.775, 96.172 mph
19. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:24.143, 95.751 mph

Official Practice Session 2 (Fri., 12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.):

1. Ryan Justice, 1:21.426, 98.946 mph
14. Brad Jaeger, 1:22.654, 97.476 mph
15. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:22.765, 97.345 mph
22. Micky Gilbert, 1:23.908, 96.019 mph

Combined Times for Friday:

1. Ryan Justice, 1:21.426, Friday final practice
15. Brad Jaeger, 1:22.654, Friday final practice
17. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:22.765, Friday final practice
21. Micky Gilbert, 1:23.731, Friday morning practice

Qualifying (Sat., 8 a.m. to 8:40 a.m.):

1. Adrian Carrio, 1:20.532, 100.04 mph
11. Gerardo Bonilla, 1:21.265, 99.14 mph
16. Brad Jaeger, 1:22.044, 98.20 mph
21. Micky Gilbert, 1:23.095, 96.95 mph

Race (Sat., 11:35 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.):

1. Ryan Justice
17. Micky Gilbert
34. Gerardo Bonilla
35. Brad Jaeger

Final Driver Point Standings (Unofficial):

1. Adrian Carrio
6. Gerardo Bonilla
18. Ramiro Scuncio
28. Brad Jaeger

Final Expert Series Point Standings (Unofficial):

1. Gerardo Bonilla, 208
2. Brian Thienes, 166