



26 LAW DRIVE, UNIT C
FAIRFIELD, NJ 07004
PH (973) 287-5600
FAX (973) 227-2202

WEB: www.andersenracingteam.com

For more information:
Linda Mansfield, Restart Communications
E-mail: LindaKMansfield@cs.com
Cell: 317-201-0729

Andersen Racing's Goring Gets Podium Finish at Houston

HOUSTON, April 21 — Seventeen-year-old Jonathan Goring gave Andersen Racing its first Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear podium finish of the year when he placed third Saturday in Race 2, a 30-lapper at JAGFlo Speedway at Reliant Park here.

The 17-year-old from Norfolk, Conn., qualified fifth out of 29 on the 1.7-mile street circuit earlier in the day with his No. 14, which advertises the Skip Barber Racing School, Alfas Unlimited and NPA Graphics. He had a fabulous start and was already up to third by lap four. Dan Di Leo and John Zartarian got around him on a restart to push him back to fifth on lap nine, but then Zartarian dropped back on lap 14 to push him back up to fourth, sandwiched between Dan Di Leo and Russell Walker.

Walker passed him under yellow on lap 20 but quickly realized his mistake and gave him fourth back before a restart on lap 23 with 10 minutes left of the 45-minute race. Marco Di Leo, who had been third, ran into problems on the restart and Goring took the spot, never to relinquish it again. He was home free when a final yellow waved on lap 27 to retrieve Marco Di Leo's car, and the event finished under caution.

New track record holder Dane Cameron led all but the first lap to win the race over Dan Di Leo, Goring, Ron White and Nick Hays. White actually set the fastest lap of the race on lap 17, but Goring was still able to hold him off in the event, which was part of the Lone Star Grand Prix American Le Mans Series (ALMS) weekend.

Ricardo Vassmer of Caracas, Venezuela had an accident in qualifying that forced him to start last in the race. He picked off cars methodically until he got up to 14th place, and ended up 16th at the checkered with his Andersen Racing No. 25, which carries the colors of PDV and Zoom.

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The Fairfield, N.J.-based team's third driver in this event, Jonny Baker of Farnham Common, England, had an incident at the start that affected the steering on his No. 6. Repairs were made and he completed the race six laps down just to get additional street-course experience. He qualified 12th but finished 25th.

Saturday's race at Houston will be televised on SPEED from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern next Saturday, April 28. Everyone who competed in this event will have to set their VCRs to see it because they'll be competing in Round 3 from 3:15 p.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern that day at VIRginia International Raceway in Alton, Va.

For more information on Andersen Racing, which fields multiple entries in the F2000 Championship, the Star Mazda series and the Indy Pro series, see andersenracingteam.com. For more information on the Star Mazda series, see starmazda.com.

Driver quotes follow:

Jonathan Goring: "I started in fifth and got a really good start. We had an understeer issue and I played with the bars and tried to make it better. Then we had some cautions that made it hard to keep my mental focus, but I did.

"I think it's a pretty good result. We had a better motor this time.

"I had one incident with the wall once, but I didn't bend anything.

"I had a good battle going with Marco Di Leo for awhile. I had a good battle with Russell Walker too, but I was able to stretch the gap again."

Ricardo Vassmer: "I hit the wall coming out of Turn 3 in qualifying and caused a red flag, so I had to start the race on pit lane. Adam Pecorari did the same thing, but I was the last one to do it so I had to start last.

"What happened was I hit something with the rear tire and broke the toe link in the back. The car then just went straight into the wall. I lost the wing and the whole corner; it was bad. The team did an awesome job fixing the car so I could be in the race.

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“Then in the race I was doing OK until I got pinched by a guy in a black car and lost three positions. I don't know who it was. I had a good last restart. If I would have been able to pass the guy who chopped me I could have finished 11th. At least Jonathan got a podium for the team.”

Jonny Baker: “We bent a push rod at the start and the steering was messed up. I got back out and got some good racing done, because I wanted to get experience on the street circuits. The more laps I can do the better; it will all help when we get to Toronto and Trois-Rivieres and other places like this.

“The engine went at the end; it really wasn't a good day. But the team did a great job to get me out as it was.”

The stats from Houston:

First Practice (Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.):

1. Dane Cameron, 1:09.028, 88.138 mph
4. Jonathan Goring, 1:09.804, 87.158 mph
10. Ricardo Vassmer, 1:10.552, 86.234 mph
14. Jonny Baker, 1:11.039, 85.643 mph

Second Practice (Friday, 3:25 p.m. to 4:10 p.m.)

1. Dane Cameron, 1:08.411, 88.933 mph
2. Jonathan Goring, 1:08.817, 88.408 mph
11. Ricardo Vassmer, 1:09.351, 87.728 mph
18. Jonny Baker, 1:10.220, 86.642 mph

Qualifying (Saturday, 7:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.)

1. Dane Cameron, 1:08.148, 89.276, NTR
5. Jonathan Goring, 1:08.654, 88.618 mph
12. Jonny Baker, 1:09.611, 87.400 mph
29. Ricardo Vassmer, no time.

Race (Saturday, 3:20 p.m. to 4:05 p.m.)

1. Dane Cameron
3. Jonathan Goring
16. Ricardo Vassmer
25. Jonny Baker