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Note: Media photos are available.

Baker Takes a Liking to VIR In Saturday's Star Mazda Action

ALTON, Va., April 29 — Although VIRginia International Raceway was completely new to him, as are all the tracks used in the 2007 Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, rookie Jonny Baker of Great Britain recorded a solid ninth-place finish there Saturday in the Andersen Racing No. 6 after starting 13th.

Baker posted the third-fastest lap of the 43-minute/18-lap race, and he felt that if he had qualified better he might have posted a top-five finish here. His fastest lap was a 1:48.138, and took just a tad more time than the fastest laps of the top-two finishers, Dane Cameron and Ron White.

"We were in the top five during practice, but we had an engine problem for qualifying that cost us a good starting position," Baker said. "We have to qualify better, but we raced well. It's a really cool track. It was a good fight. I'm pleased that I was competitive here. I think it bodes well for the rest of the season."

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The driver that did qualify well for the Fairfield, N.J.-based Andersen Racing team, Jonathan Goring of Norfolk, Conn., started fourth but finished 16th due to a spin. Goring didn't hit anything and regrouped quickly, but the positions it cost the young driver of the Skip Barber Racing School-sponsored No. 14 were costly.

Phil Saville of Oak Brook, Ill., started 14th and finished 19th in the Andersen Racing No. 22, which is sponsored by New York Jewelers of Chicago; NVG Residential; Mac Marketing & Advertising Corp. and Chicago Indoor Racing. He had contact with another competitor during the race that damaged one of his car's wheels, but he was able to continue after a pit stop.

Ricardo Vassmer was the most disappointed member of the Andersen Racing team following the race, but considering the severity of his crash he may have been the luckiest.

The popular driver from Caracas, Venezuela qualified tenth but crashed hard in Turn Seven on lap two while he was in seventh place and going for sixth. The car was loose at the time and when it hit the grass it also hit a hole at the edge of the curb, shooting it back onto the track where it made contact with another car driven by Tyson Sy. Both cars caught on fire, and Sy was knocked unconscious. Vassmer pulled Sy out of his car, Sy came to, and the track's medical personnel later pronounced both drivers fine.

Unfortunately Vassmer's PDV and Zoom-sponsored No. 25 was severely damaged, which will affect his racing budget for future events.

The race will be shown on SPEED on Saturday, May 5 at 12 p.m. Eastern.

The next event is May 18-19 at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah.

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The Star Mazda race ended a busy weekend for Andersen Racing, which had nine different cars in action. The two RLR/Andersen Racing Indy Pro Series cars tested for the first time at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Friday and Saturday, while three of the team's Formula 2000 cars tested at Watkins Glen, N.Y. on Friday.

Andersen Racing fields multiple cars in three different series because it wants to offer rising open-wheel stars the most comprehensive development program available. For more information, see andersenracingteam.com.