

Team Returns to Form at the Grand Prix of Houston Places Three in Top Six Qualifying Spots

TRAFFORD, PA (April 24, 2007) – In one of the strongest qualifying runs to date for John Walko Racing, the team landed all three cars in the first three rows during qualifying for the Grand Prix of Houston.

Following an unusual rocky weekend at Sebring for the first round of the Star Mazda Series the JWR group was back to where they expect to be, competing at the front of the grid according to John Walko.

"It was a really good weekend, the final results could have been a little better but it was still a very good event. Having three cars up front in qualifying is a strong statement about the team. Also, I think the qualifying results validate our approach of sharing engineering and data across all three cars as everyone contributed and everyone benefited."

Russell Walker, racing in his home state of Texas, had the strongest run for the team on the weekend qualifying fourth and finishing sixth. The second year Star Mazda driver spent much of the race mixing it up in a tight battle for second. Walko noted that this race was a high point for his driver.

"Russell was challenging for third at the time one of the yellow flags came out. The handling went off a little once the green came back out and he ended up with a sixth, which was solid. This was easily one of his best outings ever after qualifying fourth as well."

Newcomer to the team John Zartarian surprised everyone in the paddock by immediately proving to be one of the fastest drivers on track. After qualifying third for his first Star Mazda race, Zartarian ran strong in the early going, ultimately spinning while challenging for second however. The sixteen year old Californian then charged back through the field to finish thirteenth, a very good recovery according to Walko.

"John did a great job working from a top fifteen speed in the opening practice to top ten then by the third session which was qualifying he was third quick. He was really impressive for his first race in a Star Mazda. The spin was unfortunate but it didn't seem to faze him by looking at his times as he sliced back through the field."

For Charles Anti the weekend didn't turn out as hoped, particularly after qualifying sixth. Anti was running solidly in the top ten when he ended up needing to utilize one of the runoff areas on the tight street course.

"Charles qualified sixth and was running a good pace but unfortunately overcooked it heading in to one of the turns and lost a lap while getting turned around and under way again. He was on pace with the leaders after the off despite a bent wing so we left feeling good about the speed and overall package heading in to the next race at Virginia International Raceway."

While the overall race results were not what the team hoped for, Walko still left Houston with a sense that the team was most certainly moving in the right direction.

"We were happy after qualifying, that was good. It is impressive for this series. That was by far the best qualifying this team has ever had, things just clicked. It was great to be back to a regular JWR weekend after a somewhat frustrating opening race. It was a lot of fun, steady progress, everyone got along and a great team effort. It is a shame the results don't show it but I'm not concerned at all as the results don't reflect how good we really were. We feel that we are back to where we left off last season for sure."

Just a week separates the recently concluded race in Houston and the third race in the Star Mazda Championship Series at Virginia International Raceway.

Team Quotes

John Zartarian:

"It was a good weekend. We were able to run and get acclimated at a test last week so we showed up ready to run. We had a little braking problem in the first session but the JWR guys worked through it quickly and from then on we had no problems. We were close to the top five by the second practice then qualified P3. The car was close from the start and we just kept making incremental improvements throughout the weekend. Everything with the car and John (Walko)'s approach to how we were making changes worked very well. We agreed on the changes and were on the same page the whole time, it was a great experience."

John Walko, Engineer for John Zartarian:

"John had really great feedback for the first time in the car. His input was right on the money and it was very easy to engineer the car. Instantly he was right at the front as well; everyone was truly amazed. I think it helped the whole team step things up a notch too as he was able to instantly integrate himself in to our system and contribute to our process."

Russell Walker:

"The weekend started out a little rough but we put our heads down and got to work. The track came to us too and by the time qualifying came around our set-up was amazing. We came out of qualifying well, putting three guys solidly in the top ten. I made a strong move on the opening lap and ran in the top three for awhile. The car was really strong until the handling seemed to go away after a pair of yellows. We were strong the whole way though and showed we are capable of running at the front. Eric, Scott and I are working so well right now and we plan to build on this momentum."

Eric Langbein, Engineer for Russell Walker:

"We were happy with the results and we'll hopefully use the momentum from Houston to carry on to VIR and hopefully look for even better results there. We had a promising test at VIR earlier this year and are feeling confident that we'll have positive results. We were fast in the dry and we also were able to run a lot of laps in the wet so we feel good about our preparations for this race."

Charles Anti:

"Mechanically everything worked great; the car was perfect all weekend. In practice we were in the top fifteen which was a product of learning the course and being cautious. With a street course it is a different approach; getting comfortable is much more important as you have to run right up to the walls. If you make a mistake it bites you really hard and you only get one per session. I was cautious in the beginning then had the off unfortunately. But from that point on the car was great even with a bent front wing."

Steve Dreizler, Engineer for Charles Anti:

"It was a pretty good weekend although we could have had better raceday results for as fast as all three drivers were. Certainly with all three cars qualifying in the top six we feel good as this is where we want to be. There is a lot more pressure in starting and running at the front consistently but that is the kind of challenge we want to be working on. We'll look forward to having our mechanic on the #2 car, Caleb

Stream, back at VIR after missing Houston due to feeling under the weather. As we have come to expect though, Charles' car rolled off the transporter mechanically sound and ran well all weekend long thanks to Caleb's prep work."

Qualifying:

1 Dane Cameron	1.08.148
2 Marco DiLeo	1.08.328
3 John Zartarian	1.08.613
4 Russell Walker	1.08.636
5 Jonathan Goring	1.08.654
6 Charles Anti	1.08.686

Race:

- 1 Dane Cameron
- 2 Daniel DiLeo
- 3 Jonathan Goring
- 6 Russell Walker
- 13 John Zartarian
- 19 Charles Anti

Drivers interested in joining JWR for upcoming tests are encouraged to contact the team soon. Also, drivers interested in discussing their 2007 racing programs should contact John Walko Racing at info@johnwalkoracing.com . Additional team information can be found at www.johnwalkoracing.com.