



## **JWR Duo Endures Long Event at Utah Grand Prix**

**TRAFFORD, PA (May 21, 2007)** – Nearly every aspect of the fourth round of the Star Mazda Championship could best be described as long for the John Walko Racing effort. It was a long tow from Pennsylvania to Tooele, Utah for starters. The track itself at Miller Motorsports Park was long in its own right with 24 turns over a 4.5 miles course netting lap times just shy of three minutes in length.

The overall length of the course though posed some exciting technical challenges for drivers Russell Walker and Charles Anti and the crew alike according to team owner John Walko.

"The track is so long with so many turns that there are so many compromises in terms of setups that numerous approaches can work. You fix one corner and it will hurt you on another part of the track; it is an interesting compromise.

While the facility itself is demanding, so was the event. The Larry H. Miller Dealerships Utah Grand Prix was a four day outing. While track time is always welcome, it also poses additional challenges as Walko noted.

"We were on track no less than eight times over the four days with six practice sessions, qualifying and the race. The race itself really pushed the drivers to the limit as we had our first caution free race in almost two years, a first for either Charles or Russell since joining the series. That much track time is physically and mentally demanding."

The weekend started off well with Anti running in the top five in the opening session and Walker finishing the first day of practice at the top of the charts.

"It started off really well; we ended up quickest the first day with Russell. The track changed a lot not just from day to day but from session to session but we were able to keep up with the changes for the most part. In qualifying Russell may have over driven a little bit, something that happens easily on this track for some reason, but was pleased with car and qualified ninth. Charles had a couple quick laps out of the gate in qualifying, but ended up behind another car and couldn't get a real clean lap after that."

The two drivers had drastically different races once the green flag flew though, a trend that carried through to the end of the grueling affair.

"Charles had a great start and was up in the top five in the opening laps before settling in around sixth. He was incredibly solid during the middle of the event, but tailed off at the end. On the other hand, Russell had a great starting position but got jammed up at the start. The cars were 3 wide and someone made contact with Russell. The right front toe link was bent badly but he did a great job to soldier on with a poor handling car."

Walker finished the race in eighth while Anti just missed the top ten, settling for eleventh after a late race miscue allowed a few drivers to slip by. While the end results did not represent what the team hoped to accomplish, it does give them some definite direction heading to the next round.

"Charles had never experienced a complete green flag race and the level of concentration and endurance required so this gives us some things to work on as we look toward the rest of the season. With Russell, a qualifying time representative of the speed he showed in practice would have had him ahead of the melee at the start and could have resulted in a top five. We look towards Portland now armed with some valuable knowledge gained this week. Hopefully we can put a program together with the third car again because we feel we work very well as a 3 car team in terms of sharing data and working together. I'm confident that a three car effort will show even better results across the board."

The West Coast leg of the season continues with the fifth race in the Championship at Portland International Raceway on June 9<sup>th</sup>. Drivers interested in joining the defending Star Mazda Team Champions for the upcoming races or tests are encouraged to contact the team as soon as possible

### **Team Quotes**

#### **Eric Langbein, Engineer for Russell Walker:**

"Russell continues to impress us; he was first quick on the first day of practice. He is obviously showing his abilities to be as fast as the competition who are all more experienced at the pro level of racing. He had a very mature race for his experience level, overcoming handling issues that were a result of being hit at the start and coming home with a top ten. He has made tremendous progress in the time that he has been with us, and now we can start working on the fine details of race craft. He obviously has speed and is competing on level with drivers who have as much as ten years of pro level driving experience. I have no doubt that he can do it."

#### **Russell Walker:**

"We've been top two before, but never have been fastest at the end of the day like we did this race. We hope to stay there; that's where we're supposed to be. We keep building and building and doing what we need to do and not letting the results, good or bad, affect us. The race didn't start as planned, we got together with someone and knocked the toe-in out. It took a lap or two to get up to speed before the lap times started to drop down again. I was happy with the result all things considered. Although we know we can run up front, we just have to stay there now. We are overdue for that first win. I'm excited about our set up going to Portland, maybe this can be the place."

#### **Steve Dreizler, Engineer for Charles Anti:**

"Charles had a bit of an up and down weekend. In the race he had a great start, between some other people's mistakes and making a few very heads up passes, he made it up to sixth place and stayed there for quite a while. He had a slight off towards the end of the race, losing a few positions and ended up finishing eleventh. One aspect of our program that we have been working on is feedback and communication between us and in that respect we certainly made progress this weekend. In the end he did get the car all the way home and we'll head to Portland looking for a strong race."

#### **Charles Anti:**

"This race was a new experience for me. It was a very long event, combined with what felt like a very long race. In my two years in the Star Mazda Series, this is the first time we've had a race go flag to flag, where I had to be on top of my game for 45 minutes straight. The results weren't bad, but I came away from the weekend with a goal: improving my concentration and conditioning for when we, hopefully, have more clean races."

#### **Miller Motorsports Park Results:**

- 1 Lorenzo Mandarino
  - 2 James Davison
  - 3 Jonathan Goring
  - 8 Russell Walker
-

11 Charles Anti

**Championship Standings:**

- 1 Dane Cameron
- 2 James Davison
- 3 Marco Di Leo
- 10 Charles Anti
- 12 Russell Walker

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](mailto:info@johnwalkoracing.com) . Additional team information can be found at [www.johnwalkoracing.com](http://www.johnwalkoracing.com).

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