
Team G.FRO Scores Podium With White in Wet Portland Race

June 10, 2007 - Team G.FRO's Star Mazda Championship effort grew to three cars beginning in the series' fifth round at Portland International Raceway with the recent signing of race-winner Lorenzo Mandarin, 20, for the remainder of the season. Adding Mandarin to the already talented duo of Ron White, 25, and Tyson Sy, 19, Team G.FRO's three-car squad proved to be a potent combination this past weekend as the team scored two top-sixes with White and Sy in a grueling rain-soaked event at Portland.

□ Leading the time charts in both official practice sessions, White, aboard his #69 Team G.FRO/Wunder Bar/Fulton Valley Farms/Truss Systems Star Mazda, qualified fourth in the misty qualifying conditions Saturday morning. Sy was not far behind though, as he put his #68 Team G.FRO/Popsy/Petron Star Mazda an impressive third fastest in practice, just three tenths of a second off his more experienced teammate's pace-setting time, and qualified a strong sixth place.

□ New addition Mandarin however, came to grips with his new machine during practice. Having only taken delivery of his car the day prior to opening practice, the Team G.FRO crew exasperated themselves through late-nights and thorough work to prepare Mandarin's #23 Team G.FRO/Newway/Rossi Motorsports Star Mazda. Nagging teething issues coupled with a driving mistake in qualifying relegated Mandarin to a disappointing 25th place on the starting grid.

□ "What we experienced with Lorenzo's car this weekend was truly unfortunate," stated Team G.FRO Principal Geoff Fickling. "We could have used a test day to shake it down and help ascertain our package, but hindsight being 20/20, our guys did a superior job this weekend in doing everything possible at trackside. Lorenzo proved his talent behind the wheel and I'm confident he'll be where he belongs at Cleveland and beyond-battling up front."

□ The heavy showers came as expected shortly after qualifying and Saturday afternoon's race was a full-wet affair. All three G.FRO drivers managed to avoid a first-turn wreck that took out a handful of cars and White improved to 2nd and Sy to 5th. Mandarin meanwhile, was hit from behind on the pace lap prior to the green flag was even thrown, knocking his rear wing askew. Soon thereafter, Star Mazda officials mandated he pit to inspect the strength of the damaged wing. He was allowed to continue but had to resume the race from the back of the pack.

□ After putting in an amazing drive from the back, Mandarin passed his way all the way to 7th place with two laps to go before his car suffered an APV failure, forcing his engine to quit on the last corner of the last lap. At the finish, the Vancouver, British Columbia-native would officially be scored 15th-obviously not a position reflecting his drive.

□ White meanwhile, quickly took the lead and pulled out a sizeable advantage before the second of many full-course cautions came out. White held the lead for much of the race before his left-rear tire began to grow oblong and he was unable to fend off his closing competition, eventually finishing an extremely close 3rd place. It was White's second podium finish of the season.

□ "We unloaded off the truck with a great car," said White, of Santa Clara, Calif. "The team keeps getting stronger and we could have easily won this one if it weren't for the tire."

□ Sy put in a stellar drive for a young driver running in his first legitimate rain race of his career. He ran as high as 4th place, battled with pole-sitter Marco Di Leo for 5th place in the last ten laps, taking the checkered flag in 6th. Following a post-race investigation, Di Leo may be penalized two positions for a starting infraction, which would improve Sy to fifth.

□ With White's third place, it moves him into fourth place in the Star Mazda Championship points standings, just 22 points behind leader Dane Cameron. Mandarin maintains a tie for fifth place in the points.

□ Next up for Team G.FRO's Star Mazda squad is Round Six for the Cleveland Grand Prix held on the airport runways at Burke Lakefront Airport. Check out Team G.FRO in action at Portland on Speed Channel June 23 at 9:00am PST with a repeat airing on July 1 at 11:00am PST. For more on Team G.FRO, check them out on the web at www.teamgfro.net.