

Walker Scorches Trois-Rivieres with Last to Fourth Run

TRAFFORD, PA (August 20, 2007) – The Grand Prix of Trois-Rivieres round of the Star Mazda Championship Series schedule is one of the highlights of the schedule for the John Walko Racing team noted team owner John Walko.

"It was great to be in Trois-Rivieres again, it's always a good time there. The fans there love the series, it's a great place to go race."

Most of the 2007 round was frustrating at best though for the defending Star Mazda Team Champions courtesy of several crashes, that was until Russell Walker began his charge through the field.

Walker started at the tail of the field after a miscue in qualifying kept him from registering a single lap at speed. The beginning of the race saw the Texan taking advantage of other driver's opening lap mistakes and picking up a few spots on the grid. From that point forward however Walker utilized an aggressive approach to picking his way through traffic and moving forward on the grid as team owner John Walko noted.

"Russell started dead last but got through the crash in turn one and kept going. He worked his way up through the field and finished fourth mostly based on pace. He was helped a little by the two yellows but for the most part just ran people down and passed them."

While the final result was impressive, the speed was not a surprise to the team.

"Russell was in the top ten in both practice sessions and consistently improving. Were it not for just barely clipping a retaining wall on his opening lap of practice he would have been fighting for a podium rather than working his way through the field."

The thrilling run in the race showcased Walker's abilities and as a result has raised expectations as the season enters the final three races.

"He has absolutely shown what he is capable of in this series and should be racing for wins from this point forward. The next step for Russell is to show that kind of determination and drive in every session of every race weekend from now through the end of the season."

Quebec was not so kind to teammate Charles Anti however. Rather than a breakthrough event for the second year driver it was a series of bad breaks that resulted in very few laps and several crashes.

"The few laps Charles did turn, he was fast. He was on it from the very first lap and was the quickest car on track each time by in the opening practice."

The anticipation was short lived however as Anti made contact with a slower car in that session, launching the car in the air and in to the retaining walls. Anti walked away from the accident but the car was not as fortunate. JWR was forced to lease another car to finish the weekend as the crashed car was damaged beyond repair.

"We rented a car from AIM and rushed just to get it out in the next session. We didn't really have a chance to put a set-up on it, yet he was still pretty quick in the handful of laps. Qualifying was another challenge though. Charles had to be in the slow group, yet within two to three laps he was on the clock with a time that would have probably put him well in to the top ten. But he didn't finish the lap, collecting the wall in the last turn."

The race didn't go any better though despite the best efforts of mechanic Caleb Stream and the JWR crew as a first lap bottleneck resulted in another competitor crashing in to Anti and bending the suspension.

"Caleb had a tough weekend with his car coming back under its own power only once. These guys never quit though and Charles was able to make it out for every session and in a car he had only turned a few laps in, he was still able to qualify 14th."

The team returns to the track this weekend for the Mosport Grand Prix, the second of two Canadian races in a row. With just three races remaining, Walko looks to his duo of drivers to shine.

"Charles started this past weekend strong and Russell finished even stronger. These two have continued to work hard all season. If they put all of the tools they've learned to work and push hard from the very first session each race they can and will compete for podium finishes and wins in this series."

Drivers wishing to join JWR for upcoming tests or races should contact John Walko Racing as soon as possible.

Team Quotes

Eric Langbein, Engineer for Russell Walker:

"We were certainly pleased with the final results this past weekend. Russell proved what he was capable of. It was a very impressive drive to move from the back to the front at Trois-Rivieres where it is difficult to pass. The most impressive thing for the weekend was his ability to put the trouble in qualifying behind him and make some pretty awesome moves in the race to finish fourth. The level of concentration it takes to succeed on a street circuit is even higher than usual and he showed that he has raised that bar personally. He has raised our expectations for the rest of the season. It was a great end to a tough weekend for the whole team."

Russell Walker:

"It was a good end to the weekend; it is amazing what a difference 18 hours can make. I didn't even get one lap in qualifying, I just needed another inch but I didn't have it with the tight confines of a street course and I ended up with a broken upper wishbone. Circumstances in the race helped me out a little but we had a fast car and it kept getting faster throughout the race - the last lap was our fastest. In the past at Trois-Rivieres it could be like a freight train, passing was rare, so I wasn't realistically expecting that big of a jump. The car was great though and it seemed like we were able to set-up and execute passes this year - everyone raced each other hard. It was a good fun race. This was a great start to the end of the season - three races left to land on the podium."

Steve Dreizler, Engineer for Charles Anti:

"Charles showed up, he was ready to go. He was on the trigger from lap one, session one. Pretty much every time he came around in the first session he'd set the new fast lap, then unfortunately he clipped another car while passing and crashed hard - wrote the car off basically. The short version on the race is that it ended in the first turn when cars on either side of Charles crashed. I have to give him credit, he had a massive wreck yet he got right in a new car to him and was right back on it in qualifying and pushing hard."

Charles Anti:

"It was absolutely the worst possible weekend a race car driver could have. We totaled our car in the first session because of someone else's unaware driving. Qualifying was going alright but then I made a small mistake and hit the wall again and then in the race I got collected in the first corner and that was it. I was ready to go and everything was great until the accident. It was frustrating but the worst thing was that it was totally avoidable."

Trois-Rivieres Results:

- 1 Ron White
- 2 Dane Cameron
- 3 Nick Haye
- 4 Russell Walker
- 22 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.