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Andersen Racing Is Off to a Great Start At Miller Motorsports Park; Dempsey Fastest Thursday and Friday

TOOELE, Utah, May 16 — In what a local TV meteorologist pronounced as one of the nicest days of the year here weather-wise, Andersen Racing's Peter Dempsey set the fastest lap in Star Mazda practice Friday at Miller Motorsports Park.

Dempsey was also the fastest in testing here Thursday.

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Indeed, in the five test/practice sessions held here Thursday and Friday, Dempsey topped the charts in two of them while his fellow Andersen Racing teammate, Charles Hall, was also at the top of the charts twice.

A third Andersen Racing driver, Tom Gladdis, was the fastest of the drivers for the Palmetto, Fla.-based team in the final practice session on Friday, recording the third-fastest time despite a fairly strong wind.

Jonny Baker, one of the team's regular F2000 drivers, is driving a fourth Andersen Racing Star Mazda car here this weekend too. He's a temporary replacement for Juliana Gonzalez, who was not able to attend this event.

Dempsey's fastest lap so far was a 1:45.021 (104.482 miles per hour) Friday morning with his No. 21 sponsored by Center Jewellers.ie and Quayside.ie. He's from Ashbourne, County Meath, Ireland.

Hall's fastest lap so far is a 1:45.309, at 104.196 mph, run in the same session. Blimpie, AccentBanking.com and Pardoes Solicitors sponsor the driver from Sheffield, England.

Gladdis's fastest lap so far is a 1:45.509, at 103.999 mph, with his Marrache & Co. No. 5, the pride of Gibraltar.

Baker ran a 1:47.006, at 102.544 mph, in the last practice session on Friday to prove that he's a contender here too.

Qualifying for the second race of the year in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear will be held here tomorrow from 9:25 a.m. to 10:10 a.m. local time followed by the 45-minute race at 4:15 p.m. The event is part of the Larry Miller Automotive Group Utah Grand Prix.

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At 4.486 miles, Miller Motorsports Park is the longest road course in North America. This weekend the 29 Star Mazda cars here are utilizing the facility's 3.048-mile outer course, however, as are the American Le Mans Series headlining cars.

Tomorrow's Star Mazda race will be televised on SPEED at 3 p.m. Eastern time May 31.

The series' third race of the year will be held at Watkins Glen, N.Y. June 7.

Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. For more information see andersenracingteam.com and andersenracepark.com. The series' Web site is at starmazda.com.

Driver quotes:

Peter Dempsey: "I've had a pretty good run so far. I haven't been in the car since Sebring, but I've been fastest in two sessions so far, so I'm happy!

"That last session we worked on our race set-up, not our qualifying set-up.

"The car has been brilliant; the Andersen Racing team has really worked hard."

Charles Hall: "The car is brilliant! I can't wait for tomorrow!

"The track is really nice. The wind was interesting yesterday. It was upsetting the car in some places but helping it in other places, so it equaled out.

"We've been making good progress with the car. Everything is positive. I'm happy!"

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Tom Gladdis: "I've been off a few times because in the beginning the car was a little unpredictable, but we've been working on it and now it's consistent on old tires so I'm happy. I think we made a good jump forward today for our race set-up. We ran our race set-up this afternoon and we were third fastest, so that's good.

"I want to thank my engineer, Mike Reggio, and my mechanic, Dave DeMarchi, and everyone else at Andersen Racing."

Jonny Baker: "I got off to a rather difficult start, but Ian [Lacy, his engineer] and Chris [Vallee, his mechanic] have done an awesome job and we're bringing it around now. Tomorrow we'll be on new tires, so we should go even faster.

"It's taken me a little time to get used to these new tires and get comfortable, but now I'm really looking forward to tomorrow."

The stats so far:

Test Session 1 (Thursday 8:40 a.m. to 9:10 a.m.):

1. Charles Hall, 1:45.988
4. Peter Dempsey, 1:46.756
11. Tom Gladdis, 1:47.655
18. Jonny Baker, 1:49.318

Test Session 2 (Thursday 11:20 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.):

1. Charles Hall, 1:45.644
3. Tom Gladdis, 1:46.250
8. Peter Dempsey, 1:46.729
16. Jonny Baker, 1:47.766

Test Session 3 (Thursday 3:40 p.m. to 4:10 p.m.):

1. Peter Dempsey, 1:45.045
3. Charles Hall, 1:45.668
5. Tom Gladdis, 1:46.335
13. Jonny Baker, 1:47.685

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First Practice (Friday, 8:40 a.m. to 9:25 a.m.):

1. Peter Dempsey, 1:45.021, 104.482 mph
3. Charles Hall, 1:45.309, 104.196 mph
6. Tom Gladdis, 1:45.509, 103.999 mph
22. Jonny Baker, 1:47.956, 101.641 mph

Second Practice (Friday, 1:10 p.m. to 1:55 p.m.):

1. John Michael Edwards, 1:45.526, 103.982 mph
3. Tom Gladdis, 1:45.843, 103.671 mph
4. Peter Dempsey, 1:45.938, 103.578 mph
5. Charles Hall, 1:45.975, 103.541 mph
12. Jonny Baker, 1:47.006, 102.544 mph

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About Allied Building Products Corp.:

Allied Building Products Corp., headquartered in East Rutherford, N.J., is one of the largest roofing and siding distributors in the United States. Founded in 1950 with five employees and two trucks, today it is a \$1.8 billion building material distribution company with over 3,500 employees, more than 200 branches in 30 states, well over one million square feet of office and warehouse space, and an inventory of approximately 85,000 products, from residential roofing and siding to doors, windows, waterproofing, manufactured stone, interior products and commercial roofing systems. For more information see alliedbuilding.com.

About Andersen Racing:

Andersen Racing strives to provide the best and most comprehensive training possible for future open-wheel superstars while giving its marketing partners media exposure and hospitality opportunities at some of the most prestigious events in North America. It provides a unique, three-step program utilizing multiple entries in three different series: the F2000 Championship (webcast), Star Mazda (televised on SPEED) and Firestone Indy Lights (televised on ESPN2). In 2008 it will field multiple entries in 42 races in 19 states and provinces at some of the best facilities on the continent, including the famed Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Andersen Racing's principals, brother Dan and John Andersen, have extensive experience in series administration as well as team management. They've worked with many of today's top open-wheel stars, including several Indy 500 winners.

Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. It is the official development team of Rahal Letterman Racing, which competes in the IndyCar Series. In addition, Andersen Racing's F2000 team is the official factory team of Van Diemen. The team is headquartered at Andersen RacePark, an 18-acre facility in Palmetto, Fla. that includes a 1-mile test track. For more information see andersenracingteam.com and andersenracepark.com.