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GOSHEN CAPTURES FIRST PODIUM AT PORTLAND



RACE 4:

The Goshen Motorsports team arrived at the Portland International Raceway for the Mazda Grand Prix of Portland. The Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear was the featured event with race 4 and 5 to be held on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

In Thursday's first promoter test session, Billy Goshen piloting the #82 Merv Griffin Entertainment / Global Tracking Communications, Inc. car showed he was going to be a factor in the races by recording the 4th fastest lap at 1:11.256 only .4 seconds off the fast time of Charles Hall. Goshen continued to remain in the top five or six throughout the two days of practice.

Saturday morning's qualifying started at 10:00 A.M. with the 30 car field being split into two groups, with the top fifteen cars getting the green at 10:20 A.M. Within the first couple of laps, Billy had a clear track and began recording times with the leaders. On lap 15, Billy Goshen recorded the 4th fastest time at 1:09.669, putting him on the second row for the first time this year.

The 30 car field lined up for the standing start at 2:00 P.M with Goshen behind John Edwards, the race winner at Salt Lake, with Joel Miller and Charles Hall, both previous race winners, two rows back. When the starter's tree went green, Edwards blew his clutch, but Billy was able to get around him quickly and held off a challenge to come out of Turn 1 in 3rd. Meanwhile, Hall and Miller made contact in their dash to the first turn bringing out a full course caution.

As the race went green again, Alex Ardoin was able to draft past Goshen going down the straightway to take over third. The standings remained the same until race leader, Peter Dempsey, incurred fuel pump problems on lap 23 ending his day. Billy Goshen took the checkered flag on lap 34 finishing third, recording his first podium of the year.

After the race, Goshen said "when Alex passed me I was never able to close the gap. His car was just a little quicker than mine, but I have to thank my engineer, Andy Tagg and my mechanic, Ed Graca for giving me a car that was fast enough to finish third. I am very happy to get my first podium so early in the year, but I know I will hear about the restart from my crew chief Richie Hearn. He is always pushing me to get better and is the reason I am doing so well."

RACE 5:

The Goshen Motorsports team arrived at the track early Sunday morning looking forward to another successful day. Qualifying started at 10:15 with the same format as Saturday. On lap 8, Billy Goshen recorded the 4th fastest time bettering his qualifying time on Saturday, but Hall, Ardoin and Miller all recorded faster times on lap 17 to push Goshen to a 7th place starting position.

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Billy's time of 1:09.475 was only .2 seconds off the possibility of another second row start.

It was, again, a 2:00 P.M. start for the 5th race of the season in the Star Mazda series. This time everyone was able to get through Turn 1 cleanly, with Billy Goshen holding onto the 7th position. The clean start didn't last long, going into Turn 7 Peter Dempsey and Alex Ardoin made major contact. Goshen, being right behind them, had to make an evasive move driving all the way into the grass to avoid the crash. Ernest Otero was able to pass Goshen as he came back onto the track, putting Billy 6th.

After several laps, Goshen was able to get past Otero and set his sites on Joel Miller. The two were running times very close, but Billy was unable to close the gap before they encountered the back of the field. The race continued under green for the entire 36 laps, with Goshen crossing the finish line in 5th, giving him a 3rd and two 5ths in the last three races. With the successful weekend, Billy Goshen now moves into 4th in the Championship standings only 24 points out of the lead.

After the race, Billy said "the tangle between Alex and Peter was kind of hairy; I was right behind them and had to go all the way into the grass to keep from hitting them. When I got past Ernesto, I thought I could catch Joel, but as I was lapping one of the slower cars, he turned down on me and I had to put a wheel off. After that the gap was just too big. I am very happy with the results for the weekend, especially with the points standing so close. I have to thank the entire crew for giving me a great car this weekend."

Goshen Motorsports was especially happy to share their first podium finish with the large group in attendance from sponsors Merv Griffin Entertainment, Baker Commodities Inc., Global Tracking Communications, Otto Environmental Systems and Geneva Companies.

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