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Andersen Racing's Gladdis Says 'Oh Yes I Can,' And Wins First Half Of Star Mazda Doubleheader at Portland Saturday

PORTLAND, Ore., July 26 — Apparently if Tom Gladdis is forced to stay out of the cockpit of his Andersen Racing No. 5 Star Mazda car for any reason, he's even more determined to put his foot to the floor the next time he's behind the wheel.

The 17-year-old Gibraltar resident from the Isle of Wight, England wasn't allowed to compete in the last Star Mazda race, held at Watkins Glen International, due to New York state laws prohibiting drivers under the age of 18 from competing there.

If that wasn't bad enough, Gladdis got a case of food poisoning at a test at Canada's Mosport International Raceway after the Watkins Glen race, forcing him to miss the second day of that test.

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The time he spent out of the car made him all the more determined to make up for lost laps in the first half of a weekend doubleheader at Portland International Raceway Saturday. In the morning he earned his first pole in the series, which is presented by Goodyear, and then in the afternoon he won his first Star Mazda race when he beat Alex Ardoin to the line by 1.648 seconds in a 34-lap/45-minute contest on Portland's 1.977-mile road course. Billy Goshen placed third.

The lap Gladdis ran to earn the pole was timed in 1:08.936 (103.244 miles per hour), which wasn't quite as fast as Pablo Donoso ran to earn the track qualifying record here in 2005 in another Andersen Racing car. Gladdis also set the fastest lap of the race with a 1:09.942 (101.759 mph) with his No. 5, which is sponsored by Marrache & Co., the international law firm of Gibraltar.

One of Gladdis's Andersen Racing teammates, Peter Dempsey, started third and got by him at the start. Dempsey, who is entertaining a new sponsor here, LotusWorks, in addition to Center Jewellers.ie, Quayside.ie, Allied Interior Products and Trojan Complete IT Solutions, led laps two through 23 with Gladdis right behind him until Dempsey's car suffered possible fuel pick-up problems and sputtered to a stop. Gladdis went on to win, while all Dempsey got for his equally brilliant drive was 24th place in the field of 30, much to the chagrin of all those sponsors and his fans back home in Ashbourne, County Meath, Ireland.

The third driver representing the Palmetto, Fla.-based team at Portland, point leader Charles Hall, didn't even get that far on Saturday. His car, which is sponsored by Blimpie, AccentBanking.com, Pardoes Solicitors and Allied Interior Products, was hit in the rear at the start and the driver from Sheffield, England didn't complete a single lap of Saturday's race.

They'll all try again tomorrow, with qualifying at 10 a.m. local time and the second half of the doubleheader following at 2 p.m. local time. SPEED will show both races at noon Eastern on Aug. 9, the same day the Star Mazda contingent will be competing at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis.

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Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. It is the official development team of Rahal Letterman Racing. For more information see andersenracingteam.com, andersenracepark.com and starmazda.com.

Some post-race quotes follow:

Tom Gladdis: "Peter got a really good start and passed me. He was in front for 23 laps, and then he slowed down in Turn 6 and I retook the lead.

"I had some problems with lapped traffic. Near the end Ardoin was pushing me because by that point my tires were pretty much shot. But I still had more than a 1.5-second lead over him at the end, and I set the fastest race lap too.

"Not getting to drive at Watkins Glen and the food poisoning at Mosport made me more determined than ever. I was determined to get back in the car and do well.

"We were the only ones to break the 1.08-second mark in qualifying, and the only ones to break the 1.09-second mark during the race. I want to thank everyone at Andersen Racing, especially my engineer, Mike Reggio, and my mechanic, Dave DeMarchi; my parents; my sponsors; Mazda and Goodyear."

Charles Hall: "It happened in the first corner of the first lap. I got a good, clean start. [John] Edwards must have had clutch problems. I went on drivers' right, everybody else went on drivers' left, and I got hit in the rear.

"I ended up in a concrete retaining wall. It wasn't a really hard hit, but it was hard enough to do some damage."

The weekend stats so far:

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Test Session 1 (Thursday, 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.):

1. Charles Hall, 1:10.802, 100.523 mph
5. Tom Gladdis, 1:11.285, 99.841 mph
7. Peter Dempsey, 1:11.489, 99.557 mph

Test Session 2 (Thursday, 1 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.):

1. John Edwards, 1:09.953, 101.743 mph
2. Tom Gladdis, 1:10.448, 101.028 mph
4. Charles Hall, 1:10.628, 100.770 mph
6. Peter Dempsey, 1:10.964, 100.293 mph

Official Practice Session 1 (Friday, 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.):

1. John Edwards, 1:09.348, 102.630 mph
2. Peter Dempsey, 1:09.479, 102.437 mph
3. Tom Gladdis, 1:09.661, 102.169 mph
6. Charles Hall, 1:09.904, 101.814 mph

Official Practice Session 2 (Friday, 1:15 p.m. to 2 p.m.):

1. Tom Gladdis, 1:09.967, 101.722 mph
2. Charles Hall, 1:10.095, 101.536 mph
5. Peter Dempsey, 1:10.641, 100.752 mph

Qualifying for First Portland Race (Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.):

1. Tom Gladdis, 1:08.936, 103.244 mph
3. Peter Dempsey, 1:09.361, 102.611 mph
6. Charles Hall, 1:09.877, 101.853 mph

First Portland Race (Saturday, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.):

1. Tom Gladdis
24. Peter Dempsey
29. Charles Hall

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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, its F2000 team is also 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.