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GOSHEN TAKES HOME SIXTH PLACE FINISH AT NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS PARK

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The Goshen Motorsports Team arrived at the New Jersey Motorsports Park on Thursday September 11 to prepare for the Star Mazda double header weekend. The new facility located in Millville, New Jersey would be the host for Round 9 and 10 in the Star Mazda Series. The team was expecting another large group to be in attendance from Premier Partners: Otto Environmental Systems, Geneva Companies and Passion 4 Life. Also, the team was looking forward to welcoming their Premier Sponsor for the weekend, Pasternak & Baum & Co. Inc.

Friday was going to be action packed with three test sessions throughout the day. The first started at 8:00 A.M. with Billy Goshen recording the 12th fastest time at 1:19.297. Any off track excursion resulted in harvesting a substantial amount of hay, so it was important to get a good feel of the track before pushing too hard.

In the second practice, Billy moved up to 10th with a time of 1:17.410. The final practice of the day was held under threatening skies with Goshen continuing to improve, recording the 8th fastest time at 1:17.252. The Star Mazda Series has been fortunate to have avoided rain so far this season, but a steady rain starting shortly after practice, put Saturday's event in question as to whether it would be on rains or slicks.

The team awoke to a wet track and clearing skies. Based on the conditions, Crew Chief, Richie Hearn, decided there was nothing to be learned from running the session, so Goshen sat on the grid waiting for the track to dry. It was definitely a good decision as several cars slid off the track and had to be towed back covered in mud.

By the second session, the track was dry and Billy was again 8th fastest, but the time of 1:17.880 was an indication of a developing problem. Qualifying started at 1:00 P.M. and it was immediately obvious there was a major problem with the engine. Billy Goshen recorded the 12th fastest time at 1:18.297 on lap 7 and the crew pulled him two laps later as his times continued to deteriorate. The crew worked furiously to fix the problem before the 4:00 P.M. start for Round 9. Billy got a good start, but it didn't take long for the team to realize the problem still existed. Goshen had to settle for a 12th place finish.

After the race Billy said "cars were going past me down the straightaway like I was standing still. I thought about waiving as they went by. It was not fun, but I had to nurse the car along and just finish the best I could for points."

The decision was made to install a new engine and the crew did a magnificent job, working into the early hours of Sunday morning to get the car ready for the 9:30 A.M. qualifying. A much happier Billy Goshen qualified 9th with a time of 1:16.446.

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The 10th race of the Star Mazda Series started Sunday afternoon at 2:20 P.M. It was a clean start and Billy came out of Turn 1 holding his position. On Lap 3, it was J. C. Kester, Tom Gladdis and Goshen nose to tail coming onto the straightaway. As Gladdis pulled out to pass, Billy went with him and then pulled along side Gladdis. For a time, it was three abreast heading down the straightaway for Turn 1. Gladdis and Goshen went into the turn side by side, but Gladdis could not hold on and went off the track moving Billy into 7th.

Goshen quickly closed the gap with the #77 car of Charles Hall and several laps later they passed the #31 car of Valle Makela. The three maintained pressure on each other for another 3 or 4 , but Hall and Goshen gradually pulled away. For the balance of the race, Billy continued to challenge Charles, but was not able to find a spot to pass on what is now considered a fast but narrow track. In the later stages of the race, the two of them were closing the gap on the 3rd and 4th place cars, but the checkered came out before they could get it done. Billy had to settle for 6th in what turned out to be a very entertaining race.

After the race, Billy Goshen said "I was very happy with the results, especially after yesterday. I am now solidly in seventh in the points standing and closed the gap a little for sixth. I kept the pressure on Charles the entire race hoping he would make a mistake, but he didn't. The race was a lot of fun." Charles Hall was quoted as saying "Goshen was relentless".

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