



10101 U.S. Highway 41
Palmetto, Fla. 34221
Tel.: (941) 723-3900
Fax: (941) 723-3992
info@andersenracingteam.com
andersenracingteam.com
andersenracepark.com

For more information:
Linda Mansfield, Restart Communications
Cell: (317) 201-0729
E-mail: LindaKMansfield@cs.com

Andersen Racing's Kent and Dempsey Finish First and Third Saturday In Star Mazda Season Finale

MONTEREY, Calif., Oct. 18 — The final race of the 2008 season for the Star Mazda Series presented by Goodyear was a perfect start for Andersen Racing newcomer Richard Kent, who led every lap Saturday afternoon at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca after winning the pole with a new track record Saturday morning.

Peter Dempsey started second, set the fastest lap of the race and finished third, securing third place in the drivers' championship for the Palmetto, Fla.-based team that had already sewed up the series' team championship before it even unloaded here.

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The third Andersen Racing driver in the race, Jonny Baker, was treated and then released from the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula in Monterey after crashing in Turn 9 working lap 12 of the 45-minute/26-lap race around the 2.238-mile, 11-turn road course. He suffered a concussion and a sprained right hand in the crash.

The race was part of the Monterey Sports Car Championships American Le Mans Series weekend. Kent and Baker were substituting for Charles Hall and Tom Gladdis, respectively, who did not compete here due to financial difficulties. Hall ended up fifth in the final point standings and Gladdis was sixth.

Dempsey got the extra point awarded to the polesitter since Kent isn't registered to run for the championship. It was actually Kent's first Star Mazda race ever, since the 19-year-old from Clifton Reynes, England didn't start the Mosport round earlier this year as planned due to engine problems.

He certainly had no engine problems here at Laguna Seca this weekend, as his new track record of 1:19.935 and his dominate victory attest. Dempsey set the fastest lap of the race with a 1:21.135 on lap nine, but Kent had a 1:21.276 on lap eight with the No. 77, which is sponsored by Traka and Allied Interior Products. Neither had ever driven at this track before this event.

The race began under yellow and minus a standing start after Dave House crashed in Turn 6 on the pace lap. Things actually got underway on lap two, with the three Andersen cars in first (Kent), second (Dempsey) and fifth (Baker).

Alex Ardoin, who won this race last year, passed Baker for fifth on lap three. Baker went off course after a tussle with Ardoin on lap six to drop to 14th, but the young man from Farnham Common, Buckinghamshire, England who finished second to his Andersen Racing teammate, Anders Krohn, in the 2008 F2000 Championship Series kept on digging with the Allied Interior Products No. 5.

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Up ahead Dempsey, of Ashbourne, County Meath, Ireland, had whittled Kent's lead to 0.435 of a second by lap 10 with his No. 21, which is sponsored by Quayside.ie, LotusWorks, Center Jewellers.ie, Motorsport Ireland, Allied Interior Products and Trojan Complete IT Solutions. The margin between them was 0.872 of a second on lap 12 when Baker crashed to bring out the second and final full-course yellow. He said a punctured tire might have been the cause of the crash, which occurred in a very high-speed portion of the track.

The green came out again on lap 16 with 15 minutes to go. John Edwards had to finish third or higher to win the championship and he stayed in that position until lap 22, when Dempsey went off course in Turn 6, which allowed Edwards to get the runner-up spot. Dempsey got back on course quickly and still finished third. At the checkered Kent had a 2.171-second lead over Edwards, while Edwards had a 0.385-second advantage over Dempsey. The interval between Dempsey and the fourth-place finisher, Joel Miller, was 2.770 seconds. Ardoin rounded out the top five.

The race is scheduled to air on SPEED at 1:30 p.m. Eastern time on Saturday, Nov. 8. Times are subject to change; please see speedtv.com for updates.

Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. In addition to winning the Star Mazda team championship in 2008, it also won the F2000 Championship this year and finished sixth in the Firestone Indy Lights series. It is the official development team of Rahal Letterman Racing. For more information see andersenracingteam.com, andersenracepark.com and starmazda.com.

Post-race quotes follow:

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Richard Kent: “The car was flawless; I’m so happy! I ran wide in Turn 5 once and Peter closed right up, but I kept my head down and kept working on it. Then with about 7 or 10 laps remaining Peter went off. There weren’t many laps left, and the gap was staying the same so it worked out fine for me. I want to thank Remi Lanteigne and Chris Vallee and the whole team for giving me such a great car. And of course we have to thank Mazda, Goodyear and Allied too. The Goodyear tires were excellent; they stayed constant throughout the race.”

Peter Dempsey: “My radio wasn’t plugged in right before the race, and with the yellow at the start I didn’t get a chance to get a run on him there. I had to just sit there and hope he’d make a mistake, but he didn’t make a big enough one for me to get by. I tried to save my front tires and we had a slight understeer, and I just went off in Turn 6 and that’s how Edwards got by. I went off in the gravel for about 400 feet and then came back on the track.

“I feel really bad for the team because I really wanted to win this race for them. But I have to thank everyone for a really good year. I especially want to thank Quayside.ie, LotusWorks, Center Jewellers.ie, Motorsport Ireland, Allied Interior Products and Trojan Complete IT Solutions. And of course Mazda and Goodyear, and everyone on the Andersen Racing team, especially Bob Markley, my engineer, and Peter Beck, my lead mechanic.”

Jonny Baker: “I think I just hit my head in a strange way. I can remember going off, but not hitting the wall. I spent about two hours at the hospital and then they let me go. They say I have a concussion and a sprained hand. I’ll be fine.

“It felt like I had a puncture. Maybe something broke, but I think it’s more likely I went over debris or something and had a puncture.

“The car felt fine at the start of the race. Then I had an incident with Ardoin, and it was never the same from that point on. It had understeer and oversteer. Then I crashed, and that’s about all I know.”

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The weekend's stats:

First Test Session (Thursday, 11:05 a.m. to 11:40 a.m.):

1. John Edwards, 1:21.507
5. Peter Dempsey, 1:22.976
6. Richard Kent, 1:23.475
7. Jonny Baker, 1:23.527

Second Test Session (Thursday, 3:55 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.):

1. Joel Miller, 1:21.564
3. Richard Kent, 1:21.829
4. Peter Dempsey, 1:22.089
8. Jonny Baker, 1:22.853

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

1. Richard Kent, 1:21.074
3. Peter Dempsey, 1:21.615
11. Jonny Baker, 1:23.120

Second Practice Session (Friday, 1:05 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.):

1. Joel Miller, 1:21.661, 98.66 mph
3. Peter Dempsey, 1:21.761, 98.54 mph
4. Richard Kent, 1:21.964, 98.30 mph
6. Jonny Baker, 1:22.260, 97.94 mph

Qualifying for Round 12 (Saturday, 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.; 25-car field):

1. Richard Kent, 1:19.935*
2. Peter Dempsey, 1:20.121
5. Jonny Baker, 1:21.028

* New track record, breaking Dane Cameron's 1:20.491 set in 2007.

Results of Round 12 (Saturday, 12:15 p.m. to 1 p.m.):

1. Richard Kent
2. John Edwards
3. Peter Dempsey**
23. Jonny Baker

** Fastest lap of the race with a 1:21.135, 99.30 mph

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Official Top 10 in Drivers' Points; Top 11 of 12 Finishes Count

1. John Edwards, 422
2. Joel Miller, 406
3. Peter Dempsey, 398
4. Alex Ardoin, 365
5. Charles Hall, 342
6. Tom Gladdis, 334
7. Billy Goshen, 324
8. Ciao Lara, 286
9. Kristy Kester, 284
10. Taylor Hacquard, 281

Official Top 10 in Team Points:

1. Andersen Racing, 370
2. JDC Motorsports, 291
3. Mundill, 266
4. World Speed Motorsports, 179
Goshen Motorsports, 179
6. Kester Racing, 171
7. Mitchell Motorsports, 98
8. Team Tomlin, 7.

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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 won the team championship for 2008 for both the F2000 Championship Series and the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. It finished sixth in the 2008 Firestone Indy Lights team standings.

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.