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Andersen Racing Tests Car Upgrades And Still Sets Fastest Laps At First Official Star Mazda Test of '09

PALMETTO, Fla., Feb. 6 — With a car upgrade package to sort out, Andersen Racing Team Manager Michelle Kish said last week's first official 2009 Star Mazda series test wasn't about setting the fastest times.

Still, Kish had to be pleased when that's just what her team accomplished Jan. 27-28 at Sebring International Raceway in Sebring, Fla., with drivers Adam Christodoulou and Conor Daly.

The Palmetto, Fla.-based team's engineers, mechanics and drivers worked together quickly and efficiently with the series' new aero and suspension components, shocks and engine mapping changes. The result was the fastest two lap times of the test, including Christodoulou's fastest lap overall with a 2:00.150 (110.861 miles per hour), set in the third of five sessions.

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Driving the Andersen Racing No. 21 sponsored by Allied Interior Products, the reigning British Formula Renault champion wasn't far off the track record of 1:59.986 even though he first drove on this track and first drove this type of car at a private test just a few weeks earlier on his first visit to America. Christodoulou, 19, who hails from Litchfield, England, is definitely a fast learner as well as a fast and consistent driver, as he topped the charts in three of the five sessions and he was second in the other two.

Also representing Andersen Racing, the reigning team champion of the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, was the driver who set the second-fastest lap of the test, Conor Daly. The 2008 Skip Barber National champion who is part of the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development program went back home to Noblesville, Ind., with that distinction thanks to a lap in 2:00.753 (110.308 mph), just 0.603 behind Christodoulou.

Christodoulou, Daly and JDC Motorsports' Joel Miller were the only drivers to break into the 2-minutes-and-change lap times during the test, although Andersen Racing's Richard Kent wasn't far behind with a 2:01.620. Kent, of Clifton Reynes, England, won the 2008 Star Mazda season finale with Andersen Racing.

Also competing in Andersen Racing livery at the test was Kevin Toledo, a driver from Chile who will be working with Eliseo Salazar's new Star Mazda team when it receives its new cars.

In the second practice session on Wednesday Christodoulou was second, Kent was third, Daly was fourth and Toledo was eighth, which bodes well for the team when it returns here for the season opener March 20 as part of the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring program.

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“We weren’t able to get the new parts before Sunday afternoon, so the crew had to work really hard to fit everything and then keep up with a pretty intense test plan,” Kish said. “In the end we did end up with three of the fastest cars out there. There is still more to be learned and more work to do, but we feel very confident going into the first race at Sebring.”

Anyone needing information about joining the team, which competes in karting, Formula BMW and the Firestone Indy Lights Series in addition to Star Mazda, may contact team co-owner Dan Andersen at dandersen@andersenracingteam.com or (201) 532-9630. Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. and it is the official development team of Rahal Letterman Racing, which competes in the IndyCar Series and the American Le Mans Series.

The team’s Web site is at andersenracingteam.com. Information on the team’s 1-mile road course test track at its headquarters in Palmetto, Fla. can be found online at andersenracepark.com.

Driver quotes follow:

Adam Christodoulou: “The test went extremely well. In the first session on Tuesday afternoon we were fastest straight out of the box, and the second day went well as well. It was picture perfect, really. We had a new wing and rockers and several other new components to work with, but we had no problems with the car and we were first or second in all five sessions.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect with the new wing, but everything went well. Andy Listes, my engineer, and Alan Oppel, my mechanic, and I worked well together. Every session we did we seemed to go forward. We still have some work to do, but I definitely think we’re on the right path.

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"I still haven't signed yet, but I'm working towards getting the budget to do the whole year with Andersen Racing. I feel we can be a championship contender."

Conor Daly: "Since the season is fast approaching, this test was very important. We also had new parts on the car from the series to test, so there was quite a bit to learn!

"The test went extremely well for me. I learned so much more about the car and how it reacts to different changes to the setup. I think the team and I are very prepared for the first season."

Richard Kent: "Despite having some technical difficulties during the test, the test program ran well and we are all positive and looking forward to the first race in March."

The stats:

First Session (Tuesday, Jan. 27, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.):

1. Adam Christodoulou, 2:00.945, 110.138 mph
3. Conor Daly, 2:02.134, 109.061 mph
8. Richard Kent, 2:04.747, 106.776 mph
15. Kevin Toledo, 2:05.971, 105.739 mph

Second Session (Tuesday, Jan. 27, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.):

1. Adam Christodoulou, 2:01.372, 109.745 mph
 4. Conor Daly, 2:02.180, 109.019 mph
 13. Kevin Toledo, 2:04.057, 107.370 mph
- Richard Kent, no time

Third Session (Wednesday, Jan. 28, 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.):

1. Adam Christodoulou, 2:00.150, 110.861 mph
 2. Conor Daly, 2:00.753, 110.308 mph
 13. Kevin Toledo, 2:03.925, 107.484 mph
- Richard Kent, no time

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Fourth Session (Wednesday, Jan. 28, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.):

1. Joel Miller, 2:00.790, 110.274 mph
2. Adam Christodoulou, 2:01.541, 109.593 mph
3. Richard Kent, 2:01.620, 109.521 mph
4. Conor Daly, 2:01.692, 109.457 mph
8. Kevin Toledo, 2:02.904, 108.377 mph

Fifth Session (Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2:50 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.):

1. Caio Lara, 2:01.363, 109.753 mph
 2. Adam Christodoulou, 2:01.667, 109.479 mph
 5. Conor Daly, 2:02.062, 109.125 mph
 6. Richard Kent, 2:02.117, 109.076 mph
- Kevin Toledo, no time.

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.

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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, four-step program utilizing multiple entries in four different platforms: karting, Formula BMW, Star Mazda (televised on SPEED) and Firestone Indy Lights (televised on VERSUS). In 2008 it fielded multiple entries in 42 races in 18 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 presented by Hoosier Racing Tire and the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear. Two of its drivers finished first and second in the F2000 driver point standings, while another was sixth. Three of its Star Mazda drivers placed third, fifth and sixth in that series' driver standings. RLR/Andersen Racing finished sixth in the 2008 Firestone Indy Lights team standings, while one of its drivers placed fifth in that series' driver point 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 and the American Le Mans Series. The team is headquartered at Andersen RacePark, an 18-acre facility in Palmetto, Fla. that includes a 1-mile road course test track. For more information see andersenracingteam.com and andersenracepark.com.