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Kent Wins the Pole For Andersen Racing In Star Mazda Action Thursday at Sebring

SEBRING, Fla., March 19 — Anyone who thought Richard Kent's dominating performance in the 2008 season finale of the Star Mazda championship presented by Goodyear was a fluke was proven wrong Thursday at Sebring International Raceway.

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After testing the waters last October resulted in a pole, a new track record and a victory at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in his first race in this series, the Andersen Racing rookie won the pole for tomorrow's 2009 season opener at Sebring with a lap in 2:00.285 (110.737 mph) during qualifying Thursday afternoon on Sebring's 3.7-mile road course.

Kent, of Clifton Reynes, England, drives the Andersen Racing No. 33 sponsored by Traka and Allied Interior Products. After a cat-and-mouse game of tire management with the other teams here, Kent's fastest lap came on the 17th of 19 laps he ran in the 45-minute qualifying session.

All four of the Palmetto, Fla.-based team's Star Mazda drivers competing here are rookies, but all four were in the top six at some point or another during practice here. Unfortunately two of the four encountered rare problems with their cars during qualifying, but Joe D'Agostino of Brownsburg, Ind., qualified 11th for the team with a time of 2:01.630 (109.512 mph) in a car sponsored by Classic Mazda of Orlando, Fla., Allied Interior Products, Lafarge and Arai Helmets.

Gearbox problems spoiled the qualifying run of Conor Daly of Noblesville, Ind., who will start 16th tomorrow in the No. 22 sponsored by Indeck, Cytomax, College Network and Merchant Services. Tomorrow's race supports the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring, an American Le Mans Series (ALMS) race that Daly's father, Derek, won in both 1990 and 1991. Conor Daly's qualifying time for his first Star Mazda race ever was a 2:02.455 (108.775 mph), which occurred on his seventh of eight laps.

Andersen Racing's fourth driver here, Denis Navarro of Sao Paulo, Brazil, will start 25th in the field of 28 after his car suffered a problem with its right-front suspension during qualifying. Like Daly, Navarro was able to bring his car, which is sponsored by Navarro Medicines Distribution and Allied Interior Products, into the pits safely despite the problem. His fastest lap was his third of eight, when he was timed in 2:03.853 (107.547 mph).

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Tomorrow's 45-minute race begins at 3:55 p.m. Eastern, and live timing and scoring is slated at imsaracing.net. Check starmazda.com for future TV broadcast information.

Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. and Lafarge North America. It is the official development team of Rahal Letterman Racing. In addition to Star Mazda, it fields cars in karting, Formula BMW Americas and Firestone Indy Lights.

The team's Web site is located at andersenracingteam.com. Information on the team's 1-mile road course test track at its headquarters can be found online at andersenracepark.com.

Driver quotes follow:

Richard Kent: "I'm glad we got the pole, but each run I had traffic. I didn't get two clean laps in a row. There was always someone around so I couldn't get a really clean lap in to really nail it down. I think I can go faster.

"It's going to be tough tomorrow. I want to thank Traka, Allied, and everyone at Andersen Racing, especially my mechanic, Alan Oppel, and my engineer, Remi Lanteigne.

"The track wasn't as fast as it was yesterday. Every time the ALMS cars go out it makes the track slippery for us. Our race tomorrow is in the afternoon, which is good."

Joe D'Agostino: "We had a pretty conservative strategy with the Classic Mazda car, and a good plan to manage our Goodyear Eagle tires.

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"We went out on scrubs, and the tires were good. We made a small adjustment, and then came in for stickers. That set is our race tires, so we didn't want to use them up. I did one flying lap, which was my quickest lap of the session. Then traffic didn't allow me to get another good lap in, but we came in because we wanted to save those tires for the race.

"We made another change, and just got caught out a little on that. But it's nice to be back in the car. If I can find enough sponsorship to stay in the car for the rest of the season, we'll learn things here that will help us the rest of the season."

Conor Daly: "The gearbox let go. I felt something earlier during practice, but we couldn't find anything wrong with it. Today it just let go. I came back into the pits in third gear and just parked it."

Denis Navarro: "I hoped to be in the top five, but a right-front suspension piece broke. I couldn't do much. I didn't go off, but it ended my session early. We'll make repairs, and I think the car will be good for the race."

The stats so far:

Test Session 1 (Monday, 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.):

1. Adam Christodoulou, 2:00.90, 110.166 mph
4. Richard Kent, 2:02.243, 108.963 mph
5. Conor Daly, 2:02.372, 108.848 mph
10. Joe D'Agostino, 2:03.702, 107.678 mph
21. Denis Navarro, 2:05.944, 105.761 mph

Test Session 2 (Monday, 1:20 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.):

1. Joel Miller, 2:01.240, 109.865 mph
2. Richard Kent, 2:01.738, 109.415 mph
4. Conor Daly, 2:02.149, 109.047
11. Joe D'Agostino, 2:04.005, 107.415 mph
25. Denis Navarro, 2:07.376, 104.572 mph

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Test Session 3 (Tuesday, 10:05 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.):

1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:59.787, 111.197 mph
4. Richard Kent, 2:00.078, 110.928 mph
5. Conor Daly, 2:00.335, 110.691 mph
9. Joe D'Agostino, 2:02.084, 109.105 mph
26. Denis Navarro, 2:19.296, 95.624 mph

Test Session 4 (Tuesday, 4:40 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.):

1. Richard Kent, 1:58.989, 111.943 mph
2. Conor Daly, 1:59.796, 111.189 mph
5. Joe D'Agostino, 2:00.319, 110.706 mph
26. Denis Navarro, 2:03.662, 107.713 mph

Practice Session 1 (Wednesday, 1 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.):

1. Conor Daly, 1:59.743, 111.238 mph
5. Richard Kent, 2:00.595, 110.452 mph
6. Denis Navarro, 2:00.699, 110.357 mph
13. Joe D'Agostino, 2:01.760, 109.396 mph

Practice Session 2 (Thursday, 8:40 a.m. to 9:20 a.m.):

1. Richard Kent, 2:00.020, 110.982 mph
6. Conor Daly, 2:01.363, 109.753 mph
7. Joe D'Agostino, 2:01.402, 109.718 mph
13. Denis Navarro, 2:02.127, 109.067 mph

Qualifying (Thursday, 1:45 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.):

1. Richard Kent, 2:00.285, 110.737 mph
11. Joe D'Agostino, 2:01.630, 109.512 mph
16. Conor Daly, 2:02.455, 108.775 mph
25. Denis Navarro, 2:03.853, 107.547 mph

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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 the Lafarge Group:

The Lafarge Group is the world leader in building materials, with top-ranking positions in all of its businesses: cement, aggregates, and concrete and gypsum. With 90,000 employees in 76 countries, the Group posted sales of 17.6 billion Euros and net income of 1.9 billion Euros in 2007. Lafarge North America Inc. ("Lafarge North America" or "Lafarge"), a Lafarge Group company, is the largest diversified supplier of construction materials in the United States and Canada.

The Lafarge Group is the only company in the construction materials sector to be listed in the 2008 "Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World." With the world's leading building materials research facility, the Lafarge Group places innovation at the heart of its priorities, working for sustainable construction and architectural creativity.

For more information about Lafarge North America, go to lafarge-na.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 Americas, Star Mazda 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, brothers 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. and Lafarge North America. 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.