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Andersen Racing's Daly Battles Back from Spin To Finish Fifth Sunday in Star Mazda Action at VIR

ALTON, Va., April 27 — Conor Daly's hopes for a top-five finish looked dismal after a 360-degree spin in the middle of VIRginia International Raceway's 3.27-mile, 17-turn road course Sunday afternoon during the second round of the 2009 Star Mazda championship presented by Goodyear.

Daly, of Noblesville, Ind., hadn't done anything wrong to get himself in that perilous position; the Andersen Racing driver spun after a competitor ahead of him checked up unnecessarily. Still, it was Daly who was in a bad spot, with the rest of the field scrambling to get around him.

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Somehow they all missed him and Daly rejoined the fray in a bizarre, 17-lap race that had far more yellow-flag laps than green ones.

When he did have the opportunity to go, Daly did. Despite the lack of many green-flag laps he finished fifth to lead his Palmetto, Fla.-based team's three entries in the event. Daly's car, the No. 22, is supported by the MAZDASPEED motorsports driver development program, Indeck, Cytomax, College Network and Merchant Services.

Mikael Grenier of Stoneham, Quebec, Canada made his first start with the team in the No. 17, which is sponsored by NAPA Auto Parts, CAA-Quebec and HS Telecom. He started fourth and finished eighth.

The team's third driver, Denis Navarro of Sao Paulo, Brazil, recorded the team's best result in qualifying when he was third in the No. 21 sponsored by Navarro Medicines Distribution and Allied Interior Products. He was just 0.404 of a second off polesitter Adam Christodoulou's new track record. Unfortunately Navarro had trouble in the race and ended up 19th in the final rundown.

The next Star Mazda race is May 16 at Miller Motorsports Park in Tooele, Utah. Another Andersen Racing driver, Richard Kent of Clifton Reynes, England, expects to be back in action with the team for that event.

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 offers future open-wheel stars programs in karting, Formula BMW Americas and Firestone Indy Lights. One of its Firestone Indy Lights drivers, Jonathan Summerton, leads that series' point standings.

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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. The series' Web site is at starmazda.com.

Some post-race quotes follow:

Conor Daly: "My car was excellent in the race; it was the best it's been all weekend, actually. It's just unfortunate that with all the yellows, I couldn't make good use of it.

"I was involved in one of the yellows. Heading into Turn 17, somebody up ahead brake-checked and the whole field stopped. I did a 360-degree spin, and cars split me left and right. It was definitely not good. I don't know how everybody missed hitting me, but I was OK. I lost a lot of positions, but I got going again before the yellow came out for another incident.

"I don't know where I was after the spin; maybe ninth or something. Then I just picked off about four other drivers ahead of me and ended up fifth. There weren't many green-flag laps at all."

Mikael Grenier: "It was quite crazy. There were only five green-flag laps or something like that.

"My car was OK; it had a little understeer, but it was fine, really. I got passed on the first restart when someone braked at the front.

"It was my first Star Mazda race and my first race at VIR, and considering everything, I guess qualifying fourth and getting eighth was OK."

The weekend stats:

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Test Session 1 (Thursday, 9:40 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.):

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:47.693, 109.311 mph
- 3. Conor Daly, 1:48.679, 108.319 mph
- 10. Mikael Grenier, 1:50.744, 106.299 mph
- 14. Denis Navarro, 1:51.157, 105.904 mph

Test Session 2 (Thursday, 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.):

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:47.713, 109.290 mph
- 10. Conor Daly, 1:49.354, 107.650 mph
- 14. Denis Navarro, 1:49.597, 107.412 mph
- 15. Mikael Grenier, 1:50.208, 106.816 mph

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

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:47.150, 109.865 mph
- 6. Conor Daly, 1:48.718, 108.280 mph
- 8. Mikael Grenier, 1:49.008, 107.992 mph
- 16. Denis Navarro, 1:49.813, 107.200 mph

Practice 1 (Friday, 12 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.):

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:46.746, 110.280 mph
- 3. Conor Daly, 1:47.681, 109.323 mph
- 4. Denis Navarro, 1:48.020, 108.980 mph
- 8. Mikael Grenier, 1:48.501, 108.497 mph

Practice 2 (Friday, 5:15 p.m. to 6 p.m.):

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:46.051, 111.003 mph
- 4. Mikael Grenier, 1:46.938, 110.082 mph
- 6. Denis Navarro, 1:47.170, 109.844 mph
- 7. Conor Daly, 1:47.418, 109.591 mph

Qualifications (Saturday, 8:35 a.m. to 9:20 a.m.):

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:45.868, 111.195 mph*
- 3. Denis Navarro, 1:46.272, 110.772 mph
- 4. Mikael Grenier, 1:46.415, 110.624 mph
- 6. Conor Daly, 1:46.442, 110.595 mph
- * New track record, breaking James Davison's 1:47.607 set in 2007. The top 14 cars in the 28-car field were all under the old mark.

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Warm-up (Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.):

- 1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:45.873, 111.190 mph
- 3. Conor Daly, 1:46.431, 110.607 mph
- 7. Mikael Grenier, 1:47.008, 110.010 mph
- 13. Denis Navarro, 1:47.335, 109.675 mph

Race (Sunday, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.):

- 1. Peter Dempsey
- 5. Conor Daly
- 8. Mikael Grenier
- 19. Denis Navarro

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, 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.

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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. 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.