



Strong Winds Play Havoc With Star Mazda Teams at Milwaukee Oval Test



Milwaukee Mile (May 22, 2009) -- Team GDT, fielding a car for Skip Barber standout driver Ashley Freiberg joined the twenty other Star Mazda Championship cars for a series sponsored two day test at the legendary Milwaukee Mile late last week. The Star Mazda series had not run on an oval since the 2006 season so none of the current drivers had had any experience on a big oval.

“The first day was a learning experience for us (Team GDT) as it was for all the teams and drivers in the paddock” said team manager Paul Mata. “We tried to come with a set up that was safe and predictable with the idea that as Ashley gained confidence we would dial in a more aggressive set up” added Team engineer Bob Markley.

Although the temperature for the two day Star Mazda test at the historic Milwaukee Mile was perfect, the constant winds of 15 to 20 mph and the wind gust adding another 5 to 10 played havoc with teams and their car set ups. A challenge for even the 2nd and 3rd season Star Mazda veterans, Ashley in only her 3rd time ever in a pro car posted times faster than some of these seasoned drivers and only 3 or 4 tenths off some of the lead drivers in the series.

Unfortunately the winds picked up early and threw a monkey wrench into the mix for all attendees. “The problem with wind on an oval is it either is pinning the front end or canceling it out and you get to experience all that fun in one big very fast corner” commented Chuck West GDT’s driver coach. “ If this was a predominantly oval racing series, no one would have been out on track for most of the day, I lost count of how many times drivers saved their cars in turn two, I’m surprised only one car hit the wall today ” added Chuck.

Day two started out much better with little wind and Ashley posting a quick time in the 28.6’s. “I could have gone faster but we are taking our time removing the under steer from the car” said Ashley, the fearless “Pink Nightmare” as her fans call her. But by lunch time, the wind gusts were back and although not as constant as the day before, they took their first two victims in turn two, one from Anderson Racing and unfortunately Team GDT’s own driver, Ashley Freiberg. “The problem with wind gust is that it totally unbalances the car suddenly, there’s nothing the set-up or the driver can

do at that moment” Bob Markley the teams engineer explained. “The unique thing about turns one and two at this track is the grand stands in turn one act as somewhat of a wind buffer, unfortunately they end in the middle of the corner right before the clipping point so you get hit by the wind at the heaviest loaded portion of the corner” Team coach Chuck West added. “You don’t even get a fighting chance to save it, you get hit, you get sideways and you get into the wall, the only thing the driver can do is go to the brakes as fast as possible to shed speed to minimize the damage.” In all, 4 drivers lost the wind battle in turn two.



“You always hate to end the day like that but I think all the teams and drivers learned a lot in the two days” said team manager Paul Mata “ Ashley did an excellent job considering she has very limited time in the car” Paul added. “It seemed she was not that intimidated by the challenge, she saved the car a few times just like the veterans. I think she has the talent to be here next year for sure.” voiced Chuck, also adding, “The ovals are a blast to race on but remember the famous Indy saying”: “There are only two kind of oval drivers, the ones that have hit the wall and the ones that are going to hit the wall.” All the Indy 500 winners have personal experience with this one”.

For more info contact;
Paul Mata, Team Manager
Team GDT
214-282-1646