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Andersen Racing's Daly Blasts From Eighth to Second As the Star Mazda Set Tackles Iowa Speedway

NEWTON, Iowa, July 11 — Andersen Racing's Conor Daly transformed an eighth-place starting spot into a second-place finish last night at Iowa Speedway in the Pizza Ranch 100, the seventh round of the 2009 Star Mazda championship presented by Goodyear and the first one ever on this seven-eighths mile oval designed by NASCAR's Rusty Wallace.

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Daly's excellent finish was a sweet turn-around for the Noblesville, Ind.-based driver, who was involved in an accident on lap one of an earlier oval-track race at the Milwaukee Mile on June 20. Friday night's runner-up finish vaulted him from sixth to fourth in the championship point standings, just two points out of third. The MAZDASPEED motorsports development program driver also provided excellent exposure for his sponsors, which include Indeck, Cytomax, College Network and Merchant Services.

Daly survived several restarts and steadily clawed his way up the scoring pylon, settling into second place around the halfway point. Lapped traffic also posed challenges, but only polesitter Peter Dempsey was ahead of him when the checkered waved after 100 laps of torrid competition.

Unfortunately the other three Andersen Racing drivers were all involved in accidents and didn't finish the race.

Denis Navarro was spectacular in qualifying, turning in his best performance of the season when he was just 0.016 of a second off Dempsey's time to earn the second starting spot. Unfortunately the Sao Paulo, Brazil-based driver was caught up in a crash coming out of Turn 1 just three laps shy of the halfway point when a lapped driver spoiled the races of both Navarro and Alex Ardoin. Navarro's No. 21, which is sponsored by Navarro Medicines Distribution and Allied Interior Products, ended up 16th in the 21-car field in the final rundown.

Richard Kent, who like Daly was a winner at New Jersey Motorsports Park in June, qualified seventh but finished 18th. The driver from Clifton Reynes, England drives the No. 33 sponsored by Traka and Allied Interior Products. After someone ahead of him checked up preparing for the initial start, Kent was hit from behind and spun before the green even was displayed. He reported to the rear for a second attempt to get the race going, but luck was not on his side Friday. Taylor Hacquard and Jorge Goncalvez crashed together hard on that restart and one of their cars rolled down the track in front of Kent and hit him, putting him out of the race entirely with only three laps complete.

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That was one more than the newest member of the Andersen Racing team, Joel Miller of Hesperia, Calif. A loose spark plug wire spoiled his qualifying run to put him at the rear for the start. He took off like a rocket initially, advancing to about 11th before he got caught up in the same accident that Kent did to end up 21st in the final rundown. His No. 2 is sponsored by Fader Higher Productions, eSoles Custom Footbeds, Doug Mockett & Co., Burns Truck & Trailer and Brazos Bend Energy Services.

Another Andersen Racing Star Mazda driver, Mikael Grenier of Stoneham, Quebec, was forced to miss this race as he searches for additional marketing partners to join NAPA Auto Parts, CAA-Quebec, HS Telecom, Desharnais Pneus et Mécanique, 66graphx and VSM Racing in his racing efforts.

All four Andersen Racing Star Mazda cars sported the logo of Best Friends Animal Society as a salute to that not-for-profit animal welfare group, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this month. The donated signage drew attention to Best Friends' quarter century of service to the welfare of abused, abandoned animals at its 3,700-acre sanctuary in southwestern Utah, and for its on-going campaign work across the United States. Best Friends' No More Homeless Pets program includes national campaigns in key American cities to address the problems of saving pit bull dogs, speaking out against puppy mills, addressing the problem of cat overpopulation and striving that one day there will be no more homeless pets. More information on the organization can be obtained at bestfriends.org.

After the Iowa race, both Daly and Miller are in the top five in points, as Daly is fourth and Miller is fifth. Kent is ninth, Grenier is tied for tenth and Navarro is 14th.

Andersen Racing, the defending Star Mazda team champion, is still second in the 2009 team standings with six of 13 races remaining. Two of them are coming right up July 25-26 as the Autobahn Chicago road course hosts a doubleheader July 25-26.

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Allied Building Products Corp. and Lafarge North America sponsor Andersen Racing, the development team of Rahal Letterman Racing. 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.

Post-race quotes follow:

Conor Daly: "I ended up second. On the first start it was a bit messy, but I went from eighth to third or fourth before the yellow. Then they put me back to ninth or something. I don't know why; maybe it was a complete restart. Then on that restart I just picked people off. The car was really good.

"There were a lot of crazy things happening and I didn't want to get caught up in anything. It took me about half the race to get up to second, and by then Peter had built up too big of a gap. I had to work through too much lapped traffic too. But it was a really good race for me. It was a momentum builder going into Chicago, and it's good to get a really good finish after Milwaukee. This was definitely fun; flat-out, high-speed stuff."

Denis Navarro: "My car was very good. I was ready for my first top-three finish, but unfortunately it didn't work out tonight. The car was perfect. I was especially happy to have started on the front row for the first time. That was the highlight for me."

Richard Kent: "I didn't make it to the finish; I got hit from behind. Then there was a big crash between 3 and 4 and one car rolled down the track in front of me and hit me, and that was that."

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Joel Miller: "In qualifying the spark plug wire fell off. Then in the race I got a great start. Richard had his problem, but I think I went from 20th to 14th on the outside right away. Then on the restart I got two other cars in Turn 1 and then got around another one on the backstretch. Then there was a big accident, and to avoid getting involved I had to spin, and that put me right into the wall. But before that I had a car that I could have gone to the front with, which was great for my first race with Andersen Racing. Now it's off to the road courses, where we hope for better results."

Friday's stats follow:

Practice 1 (9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.):

1. Peter Dempsey, 22.066, 142.754 mph, lap 26
4. Conor Daly, 22.308, 141.205 mph, lap 27
11. Joel Miller, 22.392, 140.675 mph, lap 25
12. Denis Navarro, 22.561, 139.621 mph, lap 30
14. Richard Kent, 22.843, 137.898 mph, lap 13

Practice 2 (12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.):

1. Peter Dempsey, 22.277, 141.401 mph, lap 61
4. Richard Kent, 22.339, 141.009, lap 82
7. Denis Navarro, 22.369, 140.820 mph, lap 6
8. Joel Miller, 22.384, 140.726 mph, lap 45
9. Conor Daly, 22.436, 140.399 mph, lap 11

Qualifying (3 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.):

1. Peter Dempsey, 22.200, 141.892 mph
2. Denis Navarro, 22.216, 141.790 mph
7. Richard Kent, 22.383, 140.732 mph
8. Conor Daly, 22.384, 140.726 mph
20. Joel Miller, 23.696, 132.934 mph

Race (8:30 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.):

1. Peter Dempsey
2. Conor Daly
16. Denis Navarro
18. Richard Kent
21. Joel Miller

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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, 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.

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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.