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Andersen Racing's Miller and Grenier End Up Third and Fourth When Frenzy Is Over at Trois-Rivieres

TROIS-RIVIERES, Quebec, Canada, Aug. 16 — Andersen Racing's Joel Miller rebuked all comers to score a podium finish while one of his teammates, local favorite Mikael Grenier, came from next-to-last to finish fourth in a street fight more properly called Round 10 of the Star Mazda championship presented by Goodyear on Sunday at the Grand Prix of Trois-Rivieres.

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The Palmetto, Fla.-based super team fielded a quarter of the field.

Miller, of Hesperia, Calif., started fifth in the Andersen Racing No. 2 sponsored by Fader Higher Productions, eSoles Custom Footbeds, Doug Mockett & Co., Burns Truck & Trailer and Brazos Bend Energy Services. He moved up to fourth right away, but then had to battle another one of his teammates, Denis Navarro, as well as Adam Christodoulou for the rest of the distance in the 36-lap race on the tight, 1.521-mile, 10-turn street course.

Miller first moved into third on lap seven by passing Christodoulou. He even held second for two laps after he passed the eventual winner, Alex Ardoin, on lap 12. Ardoin passed him back on lap 13 to push him back to third, however.

Miller stayed in that spot until lap 33, when both Christodoulou and Navarro got by him to put him back where he started, in fifth. He got fourth back when Navarro and Conor Daly, another one of his teammates, had contact on lap 33.

That set up a green-white-checkered restart that changed almost everything. Although polesitter Rusty Mitchell had led every previous lap, Ardoin got around him at the end to win the race. Mitchell finished second. Both Miller and Grenier got around Christodoulou on the last lap too to finish fourth and fifth, respectively, while Christodoulou rounded out the top five.

If Miller's podium finish was hard fought, so was Grenier's fourth-place finish. He couldn't even see the front of the field at the standing start because his No. 17, which is sponsored by NAPA Auto Parts, CAA Québec, Hs Télécome, Desharnais Pneus et Mécanique, 66graphx and Vsm Racing, gridded 19th after problems in qualifying.

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The high school student from Stoneham, Quebec was pointed in the right direction, however, and he blasted off when the green dropped, improving seven positions by the end of lap one to rise to 12th. He got pushed back to 14th under an initial yellow, and after the restart he didn't move up again until he passed Michael Guasch for 13th on lap eight.

On Lap 11 he passed Sean Burstyn for 12th. He got by Kevin Toledo for 11th on lap 14, right after setting the second-fastest lap of the race at that point. He burst into the top 10 on lap 15 when David Ostella dropped from sixth to 13th. Two laps later Grenier passed point leader Peter Dempsey for ninth. He got by Michael Furfari for eighth with 23 laps down, which put him right behind Anders Krohn.

Krohn proved to be difficult to pass. Displaying more patience than most 16-year-olds have, Grenier bided his time until he could safely make his move by Krohn on lap 33, which gave him seventh place. With Miller's drop from fifth to third on that lap, three Andersen Racing drivers were fifth (Miller), sixth (Daly) and seventh (Grenier) at that point, but that only lasted for a second because Navarro and Daly tangled on the next circuit to revert to 11th and 12th in the standings.

That gave Grenier fifth for the restart on lap 35, but he got one more spot on the last lap by slipping by Christodoulou at the end.

Navarro, of Sao Paulo, Brazil, started sixth. His No. 21, which is sponsored by Navarro Medicines Distribution and Allied Interior Products, was as high as fourth too, but he ended up tenth after the incident with Daly.

At least he finished the race. Daly had the fastest car in the 20-car field, proving that without a shadow of a doubt when he set the fastest race lap on lap 23 with a 1:02.138 with his No. 22, which is sponsored by Indeck, Cytomax, College Network and Merchant Services.

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The MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development driver from Noblesville, Ind., started seventh and was in the thick of things until the incident with Navarro. He ended up 14th in the final rundown, right behind Dempsey.

A fifth driver for the Palmetto, Fla.-based team in this race, Richard Kent of Clifton Reynes, England, had even worse luck. He was involved in an incident at the start, and his No. 33, which is sponsored by Traka and Allied Interior Products, didn't finish even a lap. Kent was scored in 19th place in the rundown.

Two Andersen Racing drivers were third and fourth behind Dempsey and Christodoulou in the point standings going into Trois-Rivieres. That is still the case after today's race, although their positions have switched and Miller is now third with 312 points to Daly's 302. Kent, who missed the race at VIRginia International Raceway due to a non-racing injury, dropped from seventh to eighth, while Navarro remains 11th. Grenier, who has only run six of the 10 races held so far this year, is 15th.

Andersen Racing is still second in the team standings, and now has 247 points to JDC Motorsports' 282.

The next race is Aug. 29 at Mosport International Raceway in Bowmanville, Ontario. The season then concludes with races at Road Atlanta Sept. 25 and Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif. on Oct. 10.

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 in Palmetto, Fla. can be found online at andersenracepark.com. Information on its karting program can be found at andersenkarting.com.

The series' Web site is at starmazda.com.

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Post-race quotes follow:

Joel Miller: “This race was a lot like Road America was last year; there was a lot of push-comes-to-shove things going on.

“I dropped back originally but then there was a full-course yellow and we went back to the original starting order, which was good for me.

“The majority of the race I was following Ardoin, who made his car quite wide. I was able to get by him but he was able to get me back. Then Conor and Denis crashed, and I passed Christodoulou for third in Turn 3. The car was one of the best ones I’ve ever had. I want to thank everyone at Andersen Racing as well as my sponsors, especially Fader Higher Productions, eSoles Custom Footbeds, Doug Mockett & Co., Burns Truck & Trailer and Brazos Bend Energy Services.”

Mikael Grenier: “My car was just perfect to drive. I was patient, but I pushed very hard all the way. The car was easy to drive, which allowed me to be able to push hard. I wasn’t close to any of the crashes. I guess Anders Krohn was the hardest driver for me to pass. I got a good draft going down the straight, and I passed him under the braking zone.

“There’s no more budget for me to do any more races this year, but I’ll be back with Andersen Racing next year. I want to thank everyone on the team for their help this year. It was great to finish my season with a good result.”

Denis Navarro: “I’m really disappointed because my car was good. We were right there with the leaders, nose to tail. Basically I was just waiting for a good run. I just didn’t see Conor coming at all. There was a lot of confusion on that lap. Joel got passed by Christodoulou and then got him back, and all four of our cars were very close.

“My car wasn’t really damaged. I was able to continue and finished tenth. I’m just disappointed because I had a good car and I thought we would finish much higher than that.”

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Conor Daly: "It was just one of those racing incidents. Before the crash I had just passed Adam, and I was up to third or fourth. Then all of a sudden the car wouldn't go into gear right, and I fell back to seventh or eighth.

"I got by Anders and I was running behind Denis, and then my car momentarily died on the backstretch. It came to life again, and I did the fastest lap of the race.

"Miller ran wide and going down into the first corner, I was on the inside of Miller and I don't think Denis saw me. I got on the brakes late because I was trying to pass Miller, and when I got on the brakes I got on them as hard as I could, but unfortunately Denis didn't see me and we had contact. It was a shame. I had the best car all weekend.

"I had contact with Dempsey in qualifying and that kind of screwed us up too, and then some random things. But we were very fast here, so overall it was encouraging."

Richard Kent: "My race was over before it started today. I didn't make it out of Turn 1 on lap one because I got involved in an incident. It was more of a bump than a crash. There's just one bit of damage to my car, but unfortunately it was enough to force me out. Now all I can do is keep my fingers crossed for Mosport."

The weekend's stats:

Practice 1 (Friday, 12:30 p.m. to 1:10 p.m.):

1. Adam Christodoulou, 1:02.901, lap 18
4. Richard Kent, 1:03.897, lap 22
7. Joel Miller, 1:04.204, lap 8
11. Denis Navarro, 1:04.529, lap 26
13. Conor Daly, 1:04.763, lap 11
16. Mikael Grenier, 1:05.478, lap 18

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Practice 2 (Friday, 5:35 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.):

1. Conor Daly, 1:01.978, 88.330 mph, lap 27
6. Joel Miller, 1:02.709, 87.300 mph, lap 26
10. Richard Kent, 1:02.876, 87.069 mph, lap 24
12. Mikael Grenier, 1:02.952, 86.963 mph, lap 27
13. Denis Navarro, 1:03.008, 86.886 mph, lap 32

Qualifying (Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.):

1. Rusty Mitchell, 1:01.341, lap 10*
5. Joel Miller, 1:02.041, lap 12
6. Denis Navarro, 1:02.103, lap 13
7. Conor Daly, 1:02.118, lap 11
9. Richard Kent, 1:02.166, lap 14
19. Mikael Grenier, 1:05.066, lap 12

* — New track record

Round 10 (Sunday, 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.):

1. Alex Ardoin
3. Joel Miller
4. Mikael Grenier
10. Denis Navarro
14. Conor Daly
19. Richard Kent

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 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 83,000 employees in 78 countries, the Group posted sales of 19.0 billion Euros in 2008.

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.

In 2009 and for the fifth year in a row, the Lafarge Group was listed in the "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 or contact Louise Muth, director of external communications, at (703) 480-3707.

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 program utilizing multiple entries in three different platforms: karting, 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, andersenracepark.com and andersenkarting.com.