



Furfari Impressed in First Season

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

When the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear wrapped up at Laguna Seca earlier this month, so did the first season of open-wheel racing for Toronto teenager Michael Furfari. Though he was the youngest driver in the series, the sixteen-year-old impressed from his first race of the season and continued to turn heads going forward. Thirteen races and seven top tens later he was the top Canadian in the championship, and looking back he still likes to start at the beginning.

“Sebring really stands out in my mind, and not just because it was my first race,” Furfari said this week from his Toronto home. “I started 12th, but stalled at the start and went to last. Then I made it all the way back to 12th, only to have someone spin out in front of me and send me to the back of the pack again! After that I did it again, and made it back to finish 12th out of 28 in my very first race.”

It was an auspicious start to be sure, yet his second outing was anything but. After improving his qualifying to start P11 at Virginia International Raceway, Furfari was collected in another car’s spin and retired before completing a lap. It was an incident that proved memorable because it would be his only retirement of the season, an incredible feat for a driver with next to nothing in terms of race experience, and one debuting in one of the world’s premier open-wheel championships.

“I’m very proud of that, for sure” he said of his ability to get the car to the checker in his first season. “From the first race to the last, I just kept a positive attitude no matter what was going on around me, tried my hardest and turned everything into a learning situation.” The approach was successful, and he did much more than simply get the car to the line. Furfari had seven top-ten finishes on the season with a high-point being sixth in Chicago. He had a stretch that included five consecutive top tens, and scored 329 points to finish tied for ninth in the championship. Sebring proved his favourite drive, but race three and Miller Motorsports Park proved his favourite venue.

“I liked Miller because it was a fast, but technical track,” Furfari said in summarizing his season. “It was also very smooth, and had a variety of corners to challenge the drivers. I liked the ovals a lot too, especially because of the high speeds and banking. Racing at night in Iowa was also a lot of fun, as was getting to race at home in Canada. Overall I think my first year in cars went very well. I finished in the top ten, and beat out a lot of drivers with much more experience than I had.”

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Michael Furfari is a grade eleven student at St. Thomas of Villanova College. After just one season of racing, he is currently ranked #34 among North American Formula Car drivers including those in: Indy Lights, the Atlantic Championship, Star Mazda, F2000, Formula BMW and the Skip Barber National Championship. He completed the 2009 Star Mazda Championship with generous support from his family, Furfari Paving, Toromont Caterpillar, Bitumar Inc., Canadian Asphalt Industries Inc., Slipform Construction, LaFarge, and Mundill Motorsports.