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Andersen Racing's Krohn Qualifies Fourth As Lara's Crash Shortens Session Saturday in Star Mazda Action

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., March 27 — Andersen Racing's Anders Krohn posted the best results for Palmetto, Fla.-based Andersen Racing Saturday morning during qualifications for the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear, which is appearing at the St. Petersburg street course for the first time ever. Krohn, a Norwegian who now lives in Houston, will start fourth in the 23-car field when the series' race gets off to a standing start Sunday at 11:50 a.m.

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The team's strategy for qualifications was adversely affected by circumstances beyond its control. Under the series' rules, if a driver pits for fresh Goodyear Eagles during the qualifying session, the times he has posted earlier in the session are thrown out and he has to start all over. Since the track conditions were improving throughout the session, the team gambled on changing tires in an effort to improve its speeds.

Although that worked beautifully when the team qualified first through third for the season opener last week in Sebring, Fla., today that strategy was spoiled when Caio Lara crashed and caused an extended red flag. Luckily Lara was not hurt, but Andersen Racing's Tristan Vautier and Mikael Grenier both ran out of time. Vautier, who won the race at Sebring, will start 13th tomorrow. Grenier fared even worse because he only had two laps that counted, so he'll start 21st in the 23-car field.

Two other Andersen Racing drivers who were in the first group for qualifications fared better. Although their session was slowed by a red flag too, Court Vernon qualified ninth and Nick Andries qualified 11th. Vernon, of Key Biscayne, Fla., is making his second start with the team, while Andries, of Pinellas Park, Fla., is making his debut both in this series and as a member of Andersen Racing.

Krohn's car is sponsored by Trallfa Industries, Colosseum Dental, Norse Cutting & Abandonment, Bring Logistics US Inc., SR Transport, ZATGraphics.com, Rioja Tapas Restaurant, Eagles Canyon Raceway and Repcon Media.

Vautier is from Corenc, France. His car is sponsored by Moulin T.P., Cecibon, Circuit du Laquis and Fontanel Promotion.

Grenier is from Stoneham, Quebec. His car is sponsored by NAPA Auto Parts, HS Telecom and Desharnais.

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Vernon is sponsored by Mangroove Boats and Capt. Harry's. Andries is sponsored by Team Pelfrey, Andersen RacePark and the team's overall sponsor, Allied Building Products Corp.

Conor Daly won the pole with an automatic new track record.

Post-qualifying quotes follow:

Anders Krohn: "We had a different strategy than some of the other teams and it would have worked well, but the red flag came out and stayed out and that spoiled our chances. Everybody on the team is sad about what happened. I got one half-decent lap in, but it was less than ideal. That being said, the team has done an incredible job of preparing a car that is fast on both new and old tires. Tomorrow we have to climb back up and take the rest of them."

Court Vernon: "We got cut out on time a little bit at the end because of a red flag too, but I was still able to qualify ninth. The track was getting better and better every lap. Overall I think we have a good car for the race; everything is hooked up and feels great. This is my new favorite track for sure."

Nick Andries: "My car was good. I think 11th is not bad for my first qualifying session in this series. We've been getting faster and faster every session. It's just a case of me getting comfortable with the car and the track. I'm working with the engineers, and we think we can go faster tomorrow in the race. This is an awesome team."

Tristan Vautier: "It was frustrating because we weren't able to fight for a better starting position. It was a team decision and we agreed all together, but it didn't go well. It was something we couldn't control. It's frustrating because the team gave me an incredible car; the set-up is fantastic. I was second in both practice sessions. The team did a great job. We'll see how tomorrow goes. I hope we can make some points."

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Mikael Grenier: “Our strategy didn’t work out because of the red flag. We went out on new tires and then the crash happened and the session was over, so we have to start 21st. I think the half-lap I did on new tires was the best lap I did so far here. But this is a street course and it’s going to be hard to pass tomorrow in the race. We’ll try to do like we did at Trois-Rivieres and take it lap by lap and see what we can do.”

Andersen Racing has its own 1-mile road course test track at its headquarters in Palmetto, Fla., Andersen RacePark. It also has a professional karting team in addition to its Star Mazda and Firestone Indy Lights teams that are competing at the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.

Andersen Racing’s Web site is at andersenracingteam.com. The Star Mazda series’ Web site is located at starmazda.com.

The weekend stats so far follow:

First practice (Friday, 9 a.m. to 9:40 a.m.):

1. Anders Krohn, 1:11.798, 90.253 mph
2. Tristan Vautier, 1:11.812, 90.236 mph
7. Mikael Grenier, 1:12.888, 88.904 mph
9. Court Vernon, 1:13.011, 88.754 mph
11. Nick Andries, 1:13.574, 88.075 mph

Second practice (Friday, 4 p.m. to 4:40 p.m.):

1. Conor Daly, 1:10.656, 97.712 mph
2. Tristan Vautier, 1:10.776, 91.556 mph
3. Mikael Grenier, 1:10.869, 91.436 mph
6. Anders Krohn, 1:11.377, 90.786 mph
10. Court Vernon, 1:11.730, 90.339 mph
11. Nick Andries, 1:11.852, 90.185 mph

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Qualifying (Saturday, 8:50 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.):

1. Conor Daly, 1:10.352, 92.108 mph*
4. Anders Krohn, 1:11.307, 90.875 mph
9. Court Vernon, 1:11.610, 90.490 mph
11. Nick Andries, 1:11.763, 90.297 mph
13. Tristan Vautier, 1:11.999, 90.001 mph
21. Mikael Grenier, 1:16.588, 84.609 mph

* Automatic new track record; new venue for series.

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 program utilizing multiple entries in three different platforms: karting, Star Mazda and Firestone Indy Lights.

A sister company, Andersen Promotions, administers the USF2000 National Championship presented by Cooper Tires and powered by Mazda. It is part of both the Indy Racing League's Road to Indy program and the MAZDASPEED Motorsports driver development system.

Andersen Racing is sponsored by Allied Building Products Corp. 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, andersenkarting.com, andersenracepark.com and usf2000.com.