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Trio of Andersen Racing Drivers Finish in the Top 10 In Star Mazda Action at St. Pete

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., March 28 — Andersen Racing's Tristan Vautier, Anders Krohn and Mikael Grenier remain in the top five in the driver point standings for the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear after they all finished in the top 10 in the second race of the 13-race series Sunday at the street circuit in St. Petersburg, Fla. The race was a preliminary event to the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg's IZOD IndyCar Series headliner, which has been postponed until Monday due to rain that fell later Sunday afternoon.

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Conor Daly dominated Sunday's Star Mazda race and took the point lead, but the Sebring winner, Vautier, is still in second place; Krohn is fourth and Grenier is fifth in the championship point standings.

The top four spots remained unchanged throughout the 45-minute race, and Krohn posted the best race results for the Palmetto, Fla.-based team when he started and finished fourth. The Norwegian driver who now lives in Houston was hampered by bad vision and slippery conditions throughout the race because the third-place car of Caio Lara spewed oil during the event.

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.

Grenier recorded the most dramatic drive of the event, coming from 21st to sixth in the 45-minute time span in his car, which is sponsored by NAPA Auto Parts, HS Telecom and Desharnais. The 17-year-old from Stoneham, Ontario got a great standing start and vaulted from 21st to 14th before he made even one trip around the 1.8-mile, 14-turn street course.

He advanced two more positions following a restart on lap four to move into 12th before another one of his teammates, Nick Andries, crashed on lap seven and brought out a full-course yellow. That caution period lasted until lap nine.

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Grenier passed Chris Miller for 11th working lap 12 and moved into the top 10 on lap 15 when Vautier dropped from ninth to 11th. Richard Kent and Grenier both passed Andersen Racing's Court Vernon working lap 17, which put Grenier into ninth place. He passed Kent on lap 21 to advance to eighth, and then edged ahead of Rusty Mitchell on the next lap to nail down seventh. David Ostella was his next target, and Grenier blasted by him working lap 29. By that point his tires were reacting from all that punishment, and he took the checkered in sixth when time ran out with 33 laps complete.

Vautier's drive was one to watch too, as the driver from Corenc, France started 13th and finished ninth. He passed two cars on the initial start too, and cracked the top 10 with five laps down. He passed Chris Miller for ninth place working lap 11, but then dropped back two spots on lap 15 to put him back into 11th place. He passed Vernon on lap 18 to get tenth back, and moved into ninth by passing Kent on lap 23. Kent got him back on lap 26, but Vautier regained ninth on lap 29 by passing Mitchell before time ran out. Vautier's car is sponsored by Moulin T.P., Cecibon, Circuit du Laquis and Fontanel Promotion.

Vernon, of Key Biscayne, Fla., was making his second start with Andersen Racing. He started ninth, ran in eighth place from laps 1 through 16, and finished 13th in a car that advertised Mangroove Boats and Capt. Harry's.

Andries, of Pinellas Park, Fla., was featured on the Jumbotrons surrounding the 1.8-mile, 14-turn street course when he demolished the front of the Andersen Racing No. 81 when he hit a wall in Turn 8 on lap seven. He wasn't hurt, and even had the presence of mind to back out of the wall and drive his crippled car to a safe area off the track surface to limit the time lost by the full-course yellow his wreck caused. He started 11th and finished 21st in his first Star Mazda race ever. Andries' appearance was sponsored by Team Pelfrey, Andersen RacePark and the team's overall sponsor, Allied Building Products Corp.

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There are no Star Mazda races scheduled for April, but the series will appear at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Sonoma, Calif. on May 22 and on the oval at O'Reilly Raceway Park in Indianapolis, Ind., on May 29. The latter is also a new venue for the series, which will share the card with the USAC MOPAR national midgets and the USF2000 National Championship presented by Cooper Tires and powered by Mazda. There is a series test at ORP May 5-6 too.

The complete schedule and other information can be found on starmazda.com and andersenracingteam.com.

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

Post-race quotes follow:

Anders Krohn: "There was a lot of oil on the track. Caio Lara's car was dropping oil from about lap 2. From there on it was like driving in a haze. I couldn't see well at all, and it was very slippery. I don't think I ever locked up my brakes as much in a race as I did today. I was lucky to keep it off the wall.

"I'm grateful for the team's hard work. Races like this show the extreme strength of our team. I'd like to thank my sponsors and the series sponsors, Mazda and Goodyear, too. I'm looking forward to Laguna Seca."

Mikael Grenier: "It was an excellent race for me. I had a great start, and then I just tried to pick off drivers lap by lap. My car was fantastic to drive. At the end the tires were getting done, but for sure it was a fun race. It's unfortunate that we started so far back, but we earned points and we should be OK for the next race, which is at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. I would like to thank my sponsors and Andersen Racing."

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Tristan Vautier: “I had a hard time. I think I gained two positions at the start, but I was unable to overtake many people because I didn’t want to take stupid risks. Some of the drivers in front of me were blocking, and I just didn’t want to risk not finishing. I wanted to finish this race for the points for the championship. It was not worth it to take a stupid risk for one or two points.

“I had a good car, and I’m sad for the team. We were fast, but things didn’t go our way here.”

Court Vernon: “My car developed a basic loss of grip; we had too much understeer on exit, and it was a struggle just to keep up with the other guys. It was frustrating. We’ll have to go over the data and see what we can learn.”

Nick Andries: “It was an experience, for sure. My car developed a lot of understeer, and the track conditions were not good. It was slippery. Caio Lara put a lot of oil on the track.

“The crash happened in Turn 8.

“I have another test lined up with Andersen Racing, and I’ll be at VIR for the Skip Barber race there on April 22.”

The race results:

Round 2 (Sunday, 11:50 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.):

1. Conor Daly,
4. Anders Krohn
6. Mikael Grenier
9. Tristan Vautier
13. Court Vernon
21. Nick Andries

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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 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.