



Crown Royal 200 At Watkins Glen Race Report Compilation

Source: Team Race Reports



Frisselle Racing Report

Anyone who might have wondered if the scant .064-second race victory that Brian Frisselle and Mark Wilkins took in Montréal was any kind of fluke got a firm answer on Friday night, as Frisselle and Wilkins combined for a dominating Watkins Glen victory in the Crown Royal 200 for their second consecutive Rolex Sports Car Series race win. Frisselle also set the track record to take the pole position in qualifying on Thursday.

The No. 61 Gold Ford-Riley led 78 of the race's 82 laps as Wilkins brought the car home two seconds clear of the field.

Frisselle opened the race up in mixed conditions and went on an absolute tear, growing his gap to the field from six seconds up to over twenty seconds at one point as he made the most of a switched-on set-up while putting all of his experience to good use to find every ounce of grip available, lapping nearly half the field despite varying levels of rain making

the track feel different every lap around.

“The first win was great, but this one means more because of the way we got it, leading from the pole and really controlling the race,” said Frisselle. “It’s what you dream of. That first stint was so stressful because the track was changing all the time, but I knew we had the lead so I tried to get as much as I could without taking any risks. It was quite a balance, but it worked out great and Mark did an awesome job at the end to keep our lead after the yellow.”

After turning the car over to Wilkins, the conditions evened out and delivered a dry track, leaving the only threat as a full course caution to erase their commanding lead. But that was exactly what happened as a lap 60 yellow for track debris regrouped the field and put Wilkins under direct pressure from the defending race and series champion with twenty laps to go. But the Canadian not only withstood the pressure like a seasoned pro, he grew his advantage at will to come home first for the second Friday in a row.

The No. 47 Brachs/CDOC Ford-Dallara prepared by Doran Racing got off to a difficult race start, as the conditions saw Ricky Taylor spinning on the opening lap into the path of another Daytona Prototype, causing severe damage to the Dallara machine. With Gary Grossenbacher calling the shots from the pits like a field marshal, the Doran Racing crew utilized several consecutive yellow flag pit stops to get the car as road worthy as possible. However, the repairs and car condition prevented the team from working any further up in the order as Frisselle brought the Brach’s car home 17th at the end of 82 laps of racing.

“The car was really loose with all the damage we had,” said Burt Frisselle. “This was a disappointing result, but that is racing in the rain sometimes. The thing is, this car is better every time it comes off the truck, so we know that we are due for a good run with the car. But even when we get everything to come together, it’s still going to be tough to beat Brian and Mark!”

Spirit Of Daytona Race Report

The Spirit of Daytona Racing V8-Porsche-powered Coyote of Guy Cosmo and Marc Antoine Camirand finished the Crown Royal 200 14th in the order on Friday night after posting fast laps late in the two hour wet and dry Rolex Sports Car Series race.

Cosmo started the race from pit lane equipped with wet Pirelli tires as a mass of rain clouds loomed over the track for the 6:30 PM green flag. But the anticipated rains didn't come fast enough, forcing Guy to circulate on rain tires with a mostly dry surface. However, just a few laps later, the rains did come, just not as fast as the team was hoping. This saw Cosmo move to the fore as the Coyote was once again in top-five form.

As the conditions consolidated into full-dry circumstances, Camirand took the controls over from Cosmo on a timely pit stop. As the race played out at a flat-out pace, Camirand was able to make the most of the conditions and set a series of fast lap times to close out the race. But the early tire call and mixed conditions conspired to hold the team back to fourteenth at the checkered flag.

"We were probably too aggressive on our aero package, but we had a good race car late in the race," said team owner Troy Flis. " We gambled last weekend with our fuel strategy and it didn't pay off, but our tire gamble worked out well today. This result isn't entirely what we were looking for, but the performance we had at the end was, so that was an encouraging way to close out the race."

"The car was a lot quicker in the carousel and much more stable in the bus stop, so it was really nice to drive," said Camirand. "I was having a lot of fun out there at the end because I could push really hard and the lap times just kept coming down so that kept me really motivated and I was pushing, pushing all the way to the end. I was happy with the changes we made to the car last night. We were really good in the corners but that was a bit of a compromise for us in the straights, but it was good to bring another finish home with this Porsche-Coyote."

While not expected to participate in the final rounds of Rolex Series competition, the team will still continue to push the development of the unique V8 Porsche Coyote combination, which has shown great promise despite competing a limited schedule against a paddock full of Daytona Prototypes that have years of competition development and experience already. The team is optimistic about the future, and is looking forward to returning to the track to compete with the V8 Porsche Coyote package in the Rolex Sports Car Series.



KROHN Racing Report

Krohn Racing's Ricardo Zonta and Nic Jönsson captured a Top Five finish in Friday's Crown Royal 200 at the Glen race at Watkins Glen International, round 11 of 14 of the 2008 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series schedule.

Eric van de Poele clipped the wall and suffered enough damage to retire the No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola he shares with team owner/driver Tracy Krohn early. The car was retired on Lap 53 of 82 in the two-hour sprint race.

Brian Frisselle and Mark Wilkins celebrated back-to-victories in their No. 61 AIM Autosport Ford Riley after collecting their first Grand-Am victory last week in Montreal.

Tracy W. Krohn, team owner/driver, No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola:

"We debated which tires to start on with dry conditions but looming rain. We started with the rains and thought it was a good idea. It wasn't a horrible decision, it was an operable decision. However, the guys that first started on slicks got a good jump on those of us that started on rain tires. They were catching up really, really fast for the first couple of laps. Then it started raining and we didn't have the same problem because we had rain tires. It then started to dry out again. It seemed like we didn't have the right tire under the conditions for long enough. The car was very difficult to manage in wet/dry conditions at that track. If you put two inches of tire off the ideal line, bad things can happen. I felt bad for Eric because that seemed to happen to him. Otherwise the car felt good and was well-balanced. It wasn't a car issue, it was a tire issue. I was sad we didn't have a better result than that and felt bad for Eric. If you go off the line, it is often not a good result. It was a great drive for Ricardo. He and Nic did very well and it was a really good finish for us to be in the Top Five with the 76 car."

Eric van de Poele, driver, No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola:

"When I got in the car there was a brake overheating problem. After a few laps I locked up the rear wheels and had a spin before the chicane and hit the guardrail. That may have bent the suspension or something on the car. The steering wheel was sideways. I had to pit for new tires and adjusted the brakes and they came back and were better after we decided to put more rear downforce on the car. The car was pretty good. On the restart though, I lost the rear and hit the tirewall and the car came sideways like a little dance. It was a bit dramatic because people said it looked like the car was going to flip. It looked spectacular, but it was not big in the car. I was sorry because our race was done. It's always difficult when you are pushing to be on the lead lap and maybe sometime you push a little too much. Tracy did a very good job in the rain and in drying conditions on rain tires. Unfortunately, the rain arrived a little too late so we couldn't stay on the lead lap. I'm sad for the team and disappointed. It's going to be better at Sonoma. The car will be more competitive."

Nic Jönsson, driver, No. 76 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola:

"It's not a podium finish but it's still a Top Five, which after what has been going on all week, we can be pleased with that. It was a very good call to start on slicks that David (Brown) made. Obviously it was still damp out there. It took us five to six laps to get the tires up to temps. We fell back from the top cars, but as soon as we got the temps in the tires, we ran the same pace as the other guys on dry tires did. Then it started raining again and we decided to stay out. It was a little hairy there for numerous laps. It was the right call. We only did one pit stop. Strategy worked perfect today. We ended up having a good race. I think it was the right call with both strategy and tires today. We'll take fifth today. It was a good race for us."

Ricardo Zonta, driver, No. 76 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola:

"I think that fifth place is good for us today. It was hard to keep up the pace with the car that we had today. We had to save fuel and on a fast circuit like this that makes it hard to compete. Also the tires were taking four or five laps to heat up after the restarts and that made it easy for cars to get around me. The cold weather affected us as well, so fifth is not bad today."

David Brown, Team Manager, Krohn Racing:

"We chose a fairly risky strategy on the 76 car; all the way from what tires we started on to how we managed the fuel and staying out on the slicks. My confidence in the strategy was we have the best two drivers in the car to cope with the conditions and to look after the fuel."

Nic did a good job keeping it on the black bit when conditions were at its worst. And we were competitive, more competitive than we thought we were going to be from practice and qualifying. We took a pretty reasonably sized risk when we pitted by pitting very early. We were on Ricardo for nearly all the race from there on to manage the fuel. He did a great job of managing the fuel. We ran out at the end. It was good. We'll take fifth after a poor performance in qualifying and practice. The car wasn't very good and we really struggled to find a good set-up but it looked like it was in the right area come the race.

Eric had a bit an off making an overtaking maneuver. I believe he slapped the right rear of the right front on the barrier and then continued. He had new tires on the car at the restart, cold tires. It got away from him and he spun in turn 11, quite early in the corner on cold tires and had a reasonably sized accident. It actually didn't do a lot of damage to the car. It had a broken damper and scratched the body quite a lot. It was quite a big hit. The car was completely up on its side and fell down on its wheels thankfully. Eric is fine. The car was retired on the basis that there was a lot of suspension damage and we were not confident in just putting a set of tires on and sending him out.

Tracy had a bit of a long pedal and some vibration and I'm not really sure why. The 75 car had quite a different strategy than the 76 car. It was a little more conservative strategy."

Cheever Racing Report

The second half of the 2008 Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 appears to be a turning point for the development of the Coyote Cars chassis as the driving team of Christian Fittipaldi and Antonio Garcia deliver a sixth place finish for the Crown Royal Cask No. 16 Pontiac powered Coyote Daytona Prototype at the Crown Royal 200 at Watkins Glen.

Fittipaldi delivered another strong start to the race, quickly moving from 8th position to 4th under less than ideal racing conditions on the short course at Watkins Glen International. Pit strategy allowed the Crown Royal Cask No. 16 machine to move into first place for 3 laps of green flag racing, the only other car to score lead laps other than the ultimate victor, the Aim Motorsports entry. A clutch malfunction in the pits during the driver change cost the team precious time, but Garcia was able to refire the engine and delivered a solid second half performance, narrowly missing the top 5 by 1.181 seconds.

Antonio Garcia: "Overall the program and the Crown Royal Cask No. 16 Race Team are moving forward quite well. Other than the clutch problem during the driver change, the Coyote handled very well, allowing me to hold off my competitors and turn in some very good laps and develop a nice rhythm behind the wheel... I think we have a solid team heading into the last races of the season."

Christian Fittipaldi: "Considering where we are in the development of the Coyote, I think that it was a good race, I look forward to the opportunity to spend some more time behind the wheel and give the engineers some more feed back that will turn into more speed under dry conditions... I felt very strong behind the wheel when the track was wet at the beginning of the race... all in all we have made great progress and better results are close at hand."

Team Owner Eddie Cheever: "It's another strong race for the Crown Royal Cask No. 16 Race Team... We had a clutch problem during our driver change that made us lose 25 seconds during the pit stop... otherwise our race strategy worked well and the pairing of Christian (Fittipaldi) and Antonio (Garcia) is coming together nicely... I'm looking forward to Sonoma."

For more information on the Crown Royal Cask No. 16 Race Team and exclusive in-car footage visit www.CheeverRacing.com. To learn more about the Coyote Cars Daytona Prototype chassis, visit www.CoyoteCars.net.



Photo courtesy grand-am.com

SunTrust Racing Report

It was the slightest contact that produced an ever-so-slight slice in the sidewall of the right-rear tire on the No. 10 SunTrust Pontiac Dallara of Wayne Taylor Racing. But that small slice ruined a potentially huge result in Friday night's Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Crown Royal 200 at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International for Max Angelelli and Michael Valiante, who had to settle for a seventh-place finish.

In a race started in conditions just wet enough that roughly half the 20-car Daytona Prototype field opted to start on grooved rain tires and the other half on slicks, Valiante, starting on wets, moved from his third position on the grid to second place behind the pole-sitting No. 61 AIM Autosport entry of Brian Frisselle by the time he completed the fast, right-hand sweeping turn one on the 2.45-mile, 11-turn Watkins Glen short course on the opening lap. His stay in the second position was short-live, however. The caution flag flew for a two-car accident before the first lap was complete, and the track appeared to be drying quickly enough to chase Valiante to pit road for a set of slicks and a topping off of the fuel tank just before the race went back to green on lap four. After restarting in 18th, Valiante passed 11 cars over the next 10 laps in a stellar march back toward the front.

But just as rain began to fall once again on lap 14, Valiante was completing a pass of the No. 75 Krohn Racing entry when he got sideswiped by driver Tracy Krohn. The contact punctured the right-rear tire and a slow leak led to another pit stop on lap 17. The team opted to put rain tires back on the SunTrust Racing machine and opted to take care of executing the obligatory driver change at that point and replaced Valiante with Angelelli as the raindrops continued to fall.

Angelelli, resuming in 11th place a lap down to the leaders, was running lap times several seconds faster than the competitors ahead of him, who were almost exclusively on slicks in the increasingly wet conditions. Angelelli blew past the leaders to get back on the lead lap and worked his way back up to seventh place over the next six laps.

By Lap 28 of tonight's 82-lap event, the once again drying conditions sent Angelelli back to the pits for slick tires and fuel enough to carry him the rest of the way. Angelelli resumed in ninth, quickly picked off two positions, then settled into seventh place behind the No. 16 Cheever Racing entry of Christian Fittipaldi and Antonio Garcia by lap 31. Angelelli could not pick up any spots from that point and seventh place was where he would end up.

"We knew track position is important in this race – it's everything," Angelelli said. "That extra stop for the cut tire basically cut our chances of winning the race. During my stint, I was able to work my way up to seventh behind the 16, which was strong, and I had not enough to overtake him. That was basically it. At the start, we were all in agreement that, in those conditions, we would start on wets. It was a gamble. Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not. At the end, the car was really fast, so I wonder what would have happened if we didn't have to make that extra stop (for the cut tire). That makes me feel very bad."

"The car was handling well all weekend, especially in the last practice session on Friday night, so I felt we had a potential race-winning car," Valiante said. "It was a 50-50 gamble at the start whether to go with rains or slicks. It turned out slicks were the way to go, so we pitted early, which dropped us back. We worked our way back up to seventh, but then, while I was passing Tracy Krohn, he sideswiped me just a little bit and it ended up putting a slice in the tire. So I had to pit again, and at the time it was raining, so we put Max in the car and put on wets. Again, he made up a lot of track position by running some really fast laps while everyone else out there was on slicks in the wet. But we had to stop one more time for fuel and slicks when the track finally dried, and that set us back once again and that was really it for us."

The No. 61 AIM Autosport entry, which scored its maiden victory at Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve last Friday, led all but three laps for its second consecutive win tonight. The No. 99 Gainsco Pontiac of Jon Fogarty and Alex Gurney finished second, while the No. 58 Brumos Porsche of David Donohue and Darren Law finished third.

"I'm just disappointed for everybody who worked so hard," said team owner Wayne Taylor. "Our result did not show how fast our car was this weekend. Contact caused a slow leak and that set us back and that's all she wrote. We'll be back with a vengeance at Sonoma."

After taking next weekend off, the Rolex Series picks up with back-to-back events at Infineon Raceway in Sonoma, Calif. (Aug. 23), followed by the first-ever Rolex Series stop at New Jersey Motorsports Park in Millville (Aug. 31).

Grand-Am Race Report

One week after scoring an improbable first victory in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16, AIM Autosport made victory number two look easy Friday night at Watkins Glen International.

Brian Frisselle and Mark Wilkins led 78 of the 82 laps to win the Crown Royal 200, Round 12 of the 2008 Grand-Am Rolex Series season showcasing the Daytona Prototypes on The Glen's 2.45-mile short course.

Wilkins took the checkered flag in last Saturday's Montreal 200 only .064 seconds ahead of Antonio Garcia to win the closest finish in series history. Friday evening, Wilkins won by 1.986 seconds over Alex Gurney.

"It was a tough race and was mentally very fatiguing," Frisselle said of the changing conditions from showers to sunlight in the early stages of the race. "We didn't know what the elements were going to throw at us, because the track was constantly changing. Overall, it was a great result. Mark drove the wheels off the car at the end, and I did my best at the beginning."

Gurney and Jon Fogarty finished second in the No. 99 GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley, cutting the championship lead of Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas to 49 points with three races remaining. The six-time race winning No. 01 TELMEX Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates Lexus Riley was never a factor, placing 13th – two laps down – for the team's worst finish of the season after scoring eight podium finishes in 10 races.

Darren Law and David Donohue finished third in the No. 58 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley, followed by Joey Hand and Bill Auberlen in the No. 23 Ruby Tuesday Porsche Riley and the No. 76 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola of Ricardo Zonta and Nic Jonsson.

The opening laps of the race were run in intermittent showers, causing several of the competitors to start the race on rain tires. The changing conditions led to numerous green-flag pit stops, dropping nearly half the field at least one lap down in the early going.

Frisselle started from the pole and led throughout his 30-lap shift. Wilkins took over and led the 31st lap, before being passed while on pit road by Christian Fittipaldi, who stayed out in the No. 16 Crown Royal Cask No. 16 Pontiac Coyote. Fittipaldi pitted to hand the controls over to Garcia four laps later, turning the lead back to Wilkins.

Wilkins had built up a 19.939-second lead over Gurney on lap 56, when caution waved to retrieve the stalled No. 4 Childress-Howard Motorsports Pontiac Crawford of Andy Wallace.

On the restart, Eric van de Poele lost control, spun in turn 11 and slammed the tire wall, nearly flipping the No. 75 Krohn Racing Pontiac Lola.

That bunched the field for the restart with 19 laps/32 minutes remaining, but Wilkins pulled away. He was passed by Joao Barbosa in late stages of the race, but the No. 59 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley was two laps down.

"We had a great gap, we had a great lead," Wilkins said. "We gave it up and we had to fight at the end. I had to bring this car home for the guys."

The No. 91 Bob Stallings/Riley-Matthews Motorsports Pontiac Riley was eliminated in a first lap incident when the No. 47 Brach's/CDOC Ford Dallara of Ricky Taylor was turned around in turn one and was T-boned by Jim Matthews. It marked the fifth time in six races that the Riley-Matthews team was involved in an incident, threatening to drop Matthews and Marc Goossens out of the top 10 in the point standings.

The event marked the competition debut of the No. 4 AT&T Childress-Howard Motorsports Pontiac Crawford of Wallace and Andy Lally, which finished 19th in the 20-car field. Also debuting in Daytona Prototype competition was the No. 22 Alegria Motorsports Porsche Riley of Carlos de Quesada and Jean-Francois Dumoulin, finishing 16th.

The next action for the Grand-Am Rolex Series will be held August 23 at Infineon Raceway, featuring the Daytona Prototypes sharing an event weekend with the IRL IndyCar Series. The next combined Daytona Prototype/GT race will be August 31, the Supercar Life 250 at New Jersey Motorsports Park.

POST RACE QUOTES

Mark Wilkins, No. 61 AIM Autosport Ford Riley: "It was awesome. I have to thank all of the AIM Autosport crew, Ford, and Roush-Yates for a great engine. We just got this car dialed in during practice and Brian did a spectacular job in the first half of this race and in qualifying. He just was fantastic. When it got a little wet, he kept pushing, he kept it on the track and made no mistakes. You can't make mistakes in this series. We had a great gap, we had a great lead. We gave it up and we had to fight at the end. I had to bring this car home for the guys. It was fantastic.

"It was dry for the first few laps and then it got a bit wet. Our lap times slowed down quite a bit and Brian just did a spectacular job to keep the car up front and running strong. We're here at the end at it feels great."

Brian Frisselle, No. 61 AIM Autosport Ford Riley: "It started off a little wet, then went dry. Then it got real wet and super sketchy. It was just a tough race. Mentally, very fatiguing. It was one of those races where you're just on edge the whole time. You don't know what the elements are going to throw at you. The track was constantly changing. Overall, this is just a great result. Mark drove the wheels off the car at the end. I did my best at the beginning."

Jon Fogarty, No. 99 GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley: "It was very difficult. We opted – I made the decision to start the race on slicks based on my recon laps and we were feeling pretty smart about that as the track dried quickly. But, then the rain came quickly again and it became a real handful out there. We saw the pace slow down a bunch. Because of the thirty minute rule, I needed to stay out there on the slicks even though it was wet. The same went for some other guys. It was pretty wild. We had a couple cars start on wets and they went back to wets. All in all it was pretty difficult to hang onto the car. I definitely had my share of moments out there in the slicks. The 61 was on the same strategy as us – tire-wise and pit stop-wise -- and they did a great job. I was able to close on them on occasions. But, things dried out and they were able to pull out. I brought it in and handed it to him in second and Alex kept it there. He did a great job even with it getting dark here at the end of the day and a little bit difficult to see. But, he definitely did what he needed to do. We're very happy with second place."

Alex Gurney, No. 99 GAINSCO/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley: "It was nicer conditions for me for sure. But, a tough race nonetheless."

David Donohue, No. 58 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley: “It was pretty treacherous. I was just wanted to make sure I handed that car over to Darren in good shape. I lost a lot of ground in a 360 spin. We’ve got a little motor and it’s pretty peaky on the power and I just got up on the power and it looped itself. At least I brought it in, safe and sound in third place. But, there was a pretty big gap and the yellow closed it up. That helped even the score. It’s a good day for Brumos racing. We were really hoping for a win, but another podium shows we’re here – shows we’re consistent.”

Darren Law, No. 58 Brumos Racing Porsche Riley: “It was great. The Brumos team did a great job. I’ve got to commend David for an unbelievable first stint with the rain and the dry. He did a great job there. I was just hanging on. I was trying to catch the ninety-nine, but it was so even I just couldn’t get by in the end.”

Michael Shank Racing Report

Michael Shank Racing added to the team’s tally of double top-ten Rolex Sports Car Series finishes on Friday evening as Mark Patterson and Oswaldo Negri finished the Crown Royal 200 eighth in the No. 60 Hospital For Special Surgery Ford-Riley, with the sister No. 6 of John Pew and Ian James taking the checkered flag close behind in ninth.

The two-hour sprint event started on a track still wet from an earlier rain shower, which then dried early in the race only to then see return of wet and challenging conditions with another series of rain showers before finally becoming fully dry in the second half of the race.

Starting the race on dry tires, Pew and Patterson got off to a quick start, and held on tight as the rains came in midway through their stints. With a keen eye on overall race strategy, the team kept the duo out as long as possible before making a tire and driver change within the Grand-Am mandated time window.

That strategy played nearly perfectly, save for a quick spin by Patterson, who was agonizingly close to the pit in at the time.

The conditions improved, and accordingly so too did the times for Negri and James after they took the controls to close out the two-hour Daytona Prototype-only event. The field experienced countless different strategies, as the rain came and went, playing havoc with any tire theory nearly as soon as it was developed.

But the strong pace that both Michael Shank Racing Ford-Riley entries showed in practice and qualifying wasn’t to be denied, as the team rallied to come home with both cars in the top ten. The Crown Royal 200 podium celebrations also marked the return of the Trueman Award medal ceremony as Patterson once again participated in a Watkins Glen podium celebration.

Despite the honor, Patterson was still frustrated by his own spin and a subsequent penalty for speeding in pit lane.

“I am just disappointed for the team to have that happen on my favorite track with a car that was just so fantastic to drive,” said Patterson. “The conditions kept changing and I was on the radio with the team, talking about when to come in and we’d just decided to come in on the next lap, but the car just got away from me for a split second and that was that. But it’s good to at least come away with this Trueman Award and that’s some consolation. I feel for the team because our cars were fantastic this weekend and how Ozz got us back to 8th after taking over back where we were, I have no idea...”

“The car was great,” said Negri and offering his answer on how he was able to make up the lost ground. “The voltage was coming down and I could tell that the motor was missing just a little bit at the high rpm’s but we were still very fast at the end. I felt like we had a car to win today, but racing sometimes unfolds in ways you don’t expect and that was just what happened today. After what happened in Montreal, my focus is just to get Mark the best position possible in the championship and support him 100% with that. We never give up, and we fought all the way to the finish today. So long as the cars are as fast as they were today, we know that the big results will come.”

The rainy outing was much more satisfying for Pew than the Mid-Ohio event in June, as he relished running on the high-speed Glen short course layout despite the highly challenging, and constantly variable, track conditions.

“That was a great challenge for the drivers because for a while, the track was different every lap and you had to just fight to find whatever grip you could out there,” said Pew, who continues to build his own momentum in the Trueman Award championship standings. “But I love this track and the car was great. The team did a great job to have a car that was fast in the dry, but still very driveable in the wet, so I’m really happy with my stint. Congrats to Mark on getting the Trueman medal tonight, but hopefully I can get him back at Infineon.”

“There wasn’t too much we could do at the end with the way the field was sorted out,” said James. “So even though the car was very quick, we just didn’t get to make up any more ground at the end so I just brought it home in good condition and stayed out of trouble.”

The Rolex Team Championship standings, which currently provisionally have the Michael Shank Racing entries 5th (No. 60) and 8th (No. 6), are sporting razor-thin margins and continuing to tighten every round, something that everyone is mindful of.

“It’s great to come home with two cars in the top ten, but on the other hand we know we could have potentially had two cars in the top five if the conditions had played our way a little bit,” said team owner Mike Shank. “So to have such a great weekend with really fast cars but not come out of here with a little more advantage points-wise is a bit of a disappointment. But we have to be happy with the job everyone did this weekend and the cars don’t have a scratch on them, so now we can head home and get working on preparing for Infineon right away.”

DORAN Racing Report

EXTENDING THE STREAK – DORAN RACING SCORES ITS 9TH TOP-10- IN THE CROWN ROYAL 200 AT WATKINS GLEN

The two-car Doran Racing team extended its streak of top-10 finishes to six in a row and nine in total for the season with a 10th-place finish in the Crown Royal 200 at Watkins Glen. The #77 Kodak Doran/Dallara Ford co-driven by Memo Gidley and Brad Jaeger qualified 14th and finished 10th in Round 12 of the 2008 Rolex Sports Car Series. It was at this track earlier in the season that the #77 car scored the team's best finish so far this season with a 5th-place result in the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen. The Gidley/Jaeger duo has also scored finishes of 7th in Mexico City and 6th Daytona.

"We were very fast in testing here after the six-hour, but we weren't quite on the pace in early practice for this event," said Gidley. "Then we found something in the mechanicals of the car, not the setup, fixed that and had a good car for the race. Unfortunately, because of the weather and the early pace of the race we were a lap down by the time I got in the car and at that point there's only so much you can do. The car was wicked fast but we just ran out of time before we could move up any further. Still, the race was full of positive indicators that we're making progress - - we were the fastest Dallara in the field and set the third-fastest lap of the race - so I'm confident we'll keep getting better in the final three races of the season."

Gidley, the very talented and widely respected American driver who was born in La Paz, Mexico and now makes his home in Novato, California, has made a name for himself as one of the most committed drivers in the paddock, driving and winning in everything from karts to Indy Cars and stock cars to prototypes. His co-driver, Brad Jaeger is a recent graduate of Vanderbilt University where he was a member of their Formula SAE team, has a racing resume that includes karting, Sports 2000, Skip Barber, F2000, Star Mazda and the Indy Pro Series.

"Once we found and fixed the mechanical problem that was causing handling issues, the #77 Kodak car really improved and we were looking good for the race," said Jaeger. "Unfortunately I had less than desirable conditions for my stint. The weather brought in a light rain that was completely inconsistent and always moving around the track. I never knew what to expect when entering into a corner. We were out on dry tires like many of the teams so the car was really sliding around. We got through the race with no damage and a respectable finish, so now the team can work on making the car better for the next race at Infineon instead of making repairs. I won the FF2000 championship there in 2004 and have been back there twice with Star Mazda and once with the Indy pro series last year so I'm really looking forward to the next race."

Doran Racing's #47 Brach's Candy/CDOC Dallara co-driven by Burt Frisselle and Ricky Taylor had a more difficult time of it. After qualifying in 9th place for the start of the 200-mile, Daytona Prototype-only race, the team looked well-positioned for a good finish. However, in the slippery conditions and confusion of the opening lap, Taylor spun and was hit hard by another car causing substantial damage. The Doran Racing crew was able to make enough repairs for the car to continue and finish the race, but finished 17th after spending five laps in the pits.

"It was just one of those things that happens at the start of a race under these conditions," said Frisselle. "Ricky did a great job qualifying the car and unfortunately he was in the wrong place at the wrong time when the incident happened. The car ahead of him was slow to accelerate which forced him into a three-wide situation and the car got out from under him. The Doran Racing team did a heroic job to get the car back into the race and the fact that the Dallara could take a hit that big and go on to finish the race is a real testimonial to how strong and well-designed the car is. I'm confident the team will have the car back in top shape for the race at Infineon in two weeks. Our

sponsor Brach's will have a lot of people there and we want to put on a good show for them and achieve a good result for the team."

The #47 car's contributions to the Doran Racing top-10 streak include its debut in Round 2 at Mexico city where the team finished 9th, followed by an 8th at VIR, 7th at Mid-Ohio, 5th at Barber and 9th in Montreal. The two cars the Doran Racing team has been campaigning throughout the 2008 Rolex Series season look the same, but are different underneath. The #47 car is all-Dallara, while the #77 car is a Doran chassis fitted with Dallara bodywork featuring enhanced aerodynamics and increased downforce. Both cars are powered by 500 horsepower Roush-Yates Ford V-8 engines.

Doran Enterprises is Dallara's official spare parts distributor and approved repair center for that series. In addition, Doran Designs will fabricate certain special parts for the marque. Doran Racing has a successful history of working with Dallara and won the Daytona 24 Hours in 2002 with a Dallara Sportscar LMP1. While Doran Racing has prepared and fielded race cars in a wide variety of series for many years, from Indy cars to NASCAR trucks, the Lebanon, Ohio-based team is particularly noted for its successes in sports car endurance racing, including being the first and only team in U.S. history to win the 24 Hours at Daytona, the 12 Hours of Sebring and the Watkins Glen Six-Hour race in the same year (1998).

The next event, Round 13 on the 2008 Rolex Series schedule, is the Armed Forces 250 at Infineon Raceway in Sonoma, California on August 21 - 23. Activities begin with a 2-hour practice session from 4:45 to 6:45 pm Thursday, August 21. The 15-minute qualifying session takes place from 4:30 to 4:45 pm Friday, August 22 and the 250-mile/102-lap/2 3/4-hour race is scheduled to take the green flag at 3:00 pm Saturday, August 23. The race will be broadcast tape-delayed on SPEED TV at 12:00 pm (ET) Sunday, August 24.

Southard Motorsports Report

"Rain, rain, go away!" The children's chant was being echoed in the minds of many during the Crown Royal 200. The Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series' second visit of the season to Watkins Glen International - the first on the 3.4-mile, 11 turns 'Short Course' - was threatened by rain throughout the weekend. Before the start of the 200 mile Daytona Prototype (DP) event the skies opened-up leaving the track wet and the decision makers scratching their heads. The choice was made that Shane Lewis (Jupiter, Fla.) would start the No. 3 Southard Motorsports Lexus-Riley on wet weather, grooved tires. That pre-race call would begin to haunt not only the Steve and Martha Southard (Powell, Ohio) operation but other top DP teams as well within laps of the green flag. Lewis and co-driver Bill Lester (Atlanta) would ultimately finish 14th after a day of fighting with Mother Nature. "Rain, rain, go away or come and stay!"

Lewis, a multi-time Grand-Am event race winner, started tenth and made early progress on the grooved rain tires despite no new precipitation falling. When a downpour struck on lap two the daring call by the Powell, Ohio-based program seemed to be perfect. In an effort to get ahead of the field, as they did at the Montréal event last week, the red, white and blue prototype pitted under the first caution brought on by the showers. Returning to the track with fuel only, the cascade of unfortunate timing began as the rains stopped again. As the still dark clouds held-back their contents, the track began to dry under the heat of each passing lap by the large Grand-Am field. By lap five, the track was too dry for wet weather rubber and the tires began to blister. Losing time and positions to those who opted to risk the start on dry tires, the No. 3 was called in for slicks. As improbable as it seemed, with the next lap the rain returned again. A quick stop for the rain tires would put the Southard machine back further in the field but kept the car safely on course until the rain stopped again, this time for good. A final change to slicks and to put Lester into the car would leave the Southard Lexus-Riley five laps down to the leaders. Lester would recapture one lap on his way to crossing the now completely dry finish line in 14th.

Quotes

Steve Southard, Owner: "We were one of three cars that started the race on rain tires [the others being the numbers 01 and 10]. The weather radar looked green all over, the track was wet but it wasn't raining at the start. Two laps in it started to rain and two cars came together in Turn One bringing out a caution. We decided that an early stop might be the smart thing to do to get the mandatory stop out of the way. Five laps later it stopped raining and dried out. We stopped for slicks when Shane told us that the rain tires were going away. One lap later it started to rain again. Slicks are OK in damp conditions if you can first build some heat in them but it was wet enough that we could not build any heat in the slicks. It was again time for wets. We made another pit stop for rains and, of course, it stopped raining. This time for good. We put Bill in the car and finished the race on slicks. I hope we never have to race in those kinds of conditions again. I would prefer to have it either rain or, better yet, go away and not have to deal with changing wet conditions."

Shane Lewis, Driver: "The whole race for us was decided at the start. It all came down to tires. We never seemed to be on the right type. We had a pretty good qualifying run and high hopes for the event. The track was pretty wet and the sky was pretty dark so we made the call to start on the rain tires. We had to stop when the rains [rain tires] started to blister. As soon as we did the skies just opened up and the car was everywhere on the slicks. Another stop and we were done for. The 'short course' at Watkins Glen is just too quick. Once you go down a lap you are done. There is almost no way to make it up. The tough part is we had a pretty good car. It just wasn't our day again but we were in pretty good company in the call."

AIM Autosports Race Report

From victory lane in Montreal to victory lane at Watkins Glen. Back to back wins in races that stand in stark contrast of each other. After combining to lead all of fifty yards at the Montreal 200 the week before, Brian Frisselle and Mark Wilkins would go on to dominate the Crown Royal 200 at Watkins Glen leading all of four laps. Both sprint races came down to strategy - and dogged determination by every member of the team. That determination shows up every day at the track and every day in between.

Following the win - and subsequent Friday night celebrations at Montreal, the AIM Autosport crew were back at the track Saturday morning to prep the car and get it on the hauler for The Glen. By mid day Wednesday, the entire crew was in Watkins Glen ready to get to work so the Exchange Traded Gold No. 61 Ford Riley would be set to go for practice and qualifying. From the start, Brian and Mark would work with the engineers to find the right setup for the conditions. The team had tested on the Watkins Glen short track earlier this season but under quite different conditions as the temperatures were some twenty degrees higher. Cooler temperatures and threatening storms meant looking at all the possibilities for setup. The crew would also practice - again and again, driver-change pit stops. With the racing being so close, time lost in the pits means positions lost on the track.

The preparation paid off starting with qualifying. Brian had thrown down a lap in the 1:05's and was building a gap for another run when a caution came out. At that point the No. 61 was sitting first by three-tenths but others were closing in. On the restart for the session Brian would improve each lap and on his final run, turn a 1:05.243 at 135.186 mph to record AIM Autosport's second pole of the season meanwhile shattering the Daytona Prototype qualifying record for the Watkins Glen short track by 1.7 seconds.

By race time it was becoming obvious that weather could play a factor. The AIM Autosport brain trust decided to stick to their original strategy of starting the race on slicks. The decision proved correct as Brian jumped into the lead from the drop of the green and the team never looked back. There were some hairy moments when rain hit sections of the track during Brian's stint yet he set a comfortable pace that allowed the No. 61 Ford Riley to pull out a six second lead over the defending champion 99 car. Brian held pace and worked through traffic to bring the car to pit lane from first place on lap thirty-one. This is where those practice pit stops by the crew paid off as the 99 car chose to pit on the same lap. The AIM crew changed drivers, tires and fueled the car increasing the gap by another second. Mark exited the pits in second place however as the 16 car which was running third took over the lead as they were on a different strategy. When the new leader pitted two laps later, Mark resumed the lead and went on to build a 23 second gap to second place.

On lap fifty six a second caution flew eliminating the large lead built up by Mark and the 99 car in second place looked ready to race. After a third caution on the restart and with fourteen laps to go, Mark continued to "focus forward" and began to pull out a two second gap. He would come to the checkers to record AIM Autosport's second win of the season by 1.986 seconds. Back to back wins and only the second team to score multiple wins in 2008.

Officially, the No. 61 Ford Riley led all but three laps of the race. The win has moved the team to sixth in the series championship, just eighteen points out of third with three races to go. Brian and Mark are tied for tenth in the drivers' championship. AIM Autosport is now third in laps lead this season for teams. In driver laps lead Mark is now fifth and Brian is ninth.

The drivers and team principals had this to say after the race:

Mark Wilkins: "It was awesome. I have to thank all of the AIM Autosport crew, Ford, and Roush-Yates for a great engine. We just got this car dialed in during practice and Brian did a spectacular job in the first half of this race and in qualifying. He just was fantastic. When it got a little wet, he kept pushing, he kept it on the track and made no mistakes. You can't make mistakes in this series. We had a great gap, we had a great lead. We gave it up and we had to fight at the end. I had to bring this car home for the guys. It was fantastic."

Brian Frisselle: "This one is for the entire AIM Autosport crew. They do a fantastic job week after week to get us here and put a great car out there for Mark and I. After the win at Montreal the energy changed on the team. You could feel it. Everyone was lighter and we were just purely focused on winning ... The last win we had a little bit of luck, but this was pure pace. And we showed them what we got."

Ian Willis: "What a great way to come back after having to miss our first win in Montreal. Although Montreal is in our home country Watkins Glen is the closest race to our Toronto base making it a 'home' race as well. The Montreal win was definitely good fortune but this win was definitely due to performance. I am so proud of this Team and the last two races are just reward for the hard work and effort that everyone has been putting in since the start of the season."

Andrew Bordin: "I am truly amazed to see how passionate our guys are. Everyone has really put 100% into making this happen and the hard work is showing itself. These guys are the first to arrive at the track and among the last to leave. That dedication is being noticed around the paddock and it is paying off for the team on the track. As for our drivers I am very pleased to see the winning attitude and confidence they bring to the track everyday that essentially drives the entire team in this positive and progressive environment."