

Michael Shank Racing lead Lexus at VIR

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MSR scores another double top-ten as officiating frustrates Rolex Series' leading sportsman racer

(Alton, VA) 29 April 2007—In winning the final Rolex Sports Car Series race of the 2006 season, **Michael Shank Racing** helped seal the Manufacturer Championship for engine partner Lexus last season, and the Ohio-based team once again contributed to the effort on Sunday afternoon as **Ian James and Burt Frisselle** delivered the highest result for Lexus with a solid sixth-place finish in the VIR 400K with the Playboy-liveried Lexus-Riley.

The sister Michael Shank Racing Lexus-Riley of **Mark Patterson and Oswaldo Negri** finished a disappointed tenth after the distinctive orange and black machine was the victim of multiple incidents of contact during the DP-only event. The result is the third top-ten of the season for the No. 60, and the second double-top ten for Michael Shank Racing thus far in 2007.

"I'm really happy with the team effort this weekend," said team owner Mike Shank. "We had the right strategy and some great pit stops from the guys. Our drivers did a good job and it was good to have Burt back with us this weekend. But, I am not happy with the calls made-or not made- by the officials today. It's really frustrating because Oz has been penalized for doing a whole lot less than was done to us today and it just kept happening all afternoon."

The VIR weekend marked a return for Burt Frisselle to MSR after car owner Henri Zogaib was unable to make the VIR event due to pressing business commitments. Frisselle, who is sharing the No. 61 AIM Autosport Lexus-Riley with his brother during the 2007 season, had a strong run in his return to the team.

"I love racing with this team and it was just a pleasure to be back with them," said Frisselle. "I was really happy with my stint and turning the car over to Ian in third place felt good. It was great to have Ian as a teammate. I really enjoyed my battle out there with Mark Wilkins-it was interesting to be racing against the same car that I will be driving next round at Laguna." Frisselle turned the car over to James, who withstood a vigorous charge in the closing laps to bring the Playboy-liveried machine home in sixth.

"I think we extracted the maximum possible performance out of our package this weekend," said James. "Burt did a great job and the strategy was absolutely spot on. We had awesome pit stops. This is not our best track, so to get everything out of the car and the team is pretty satisfying. I've been under the weather a bit this week, but once I got in the car it was no problem."

The sister Lexus-Riley of Negri and Patterson was well-placed for a top five finish as the race resumed after the final yellow flag period, but contact from other cars significantly altered the handling for Negri as he fought to bring the car home in tenth.

"It was tough," said Negri, who lost count of the different cars that hit the No.60 during his run. "Nic (Jonson) came up and apologized after the race but the car was just horrible after that and the balance was way off. There was nothing I could do but just hold on to get as many points as possible. It's very frustrating because the passes I made were clean, but I guess the way to do it is just to knock people out of the way, I don't know."

The multiple incidents of contact with his car greatly frustrated Patterson, who won the Trueman award in 2006.

“I had a great battle going on with Rob (Finley) and JC (France) at the start, but it was very frustrating to watch Oz’s stint. Why would we want to be here just to be knocked around?” said Patterson. “There is no incentive at all for me to participate in this series when the officiating is so bad.”

Michael Shank Racing will return to Columbus, Ohio and begin preparations for round four of the 2007 Rolex Sports Car Series Season at Mazda Raceway at Laguna Seca. Oswaldo Negri scored the pole position at the Monterey peninsula track in 2005.

About Michael Shank Racing

Based in Columbus, Ohio, Michael Shank Racing (MSR) was formed in 1989 when Michael Shank first began driving racing cars professionally. Shank retired from the cockpit in 1997 to focus his efforts on running the team, which quickly found success in the Champ Car Toyota Atlantic Championship. With several race wins under his belt, Shank was named as Team Owner of the Year twice in four years. MSR joined the Rolex ranks in 2004. MSR has five Rolex Sports Car Series podium finishes.

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