

## Strong Start with Smart Pit Strategy but AIM's Race Ends Early at Iowa

(Newton, Iowa) 14 July 2007-- Smart pit strategy set AIM Autosport into the top five during the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series race on Friday evening, but a steering-rack issue dropped the Canadian team out early. With practice, qualifying and race in one day, the drivers and crew got up to speed quickly on the (Newton) Iowa Speedway infield road course, but the car didn't fare as well.

Mark Wilkins of Toronto qualified the No. 61 Lexus-powered Riley Mk XI ninth on the 17-car grid with a lap of 42.723 seconds on the 1.3-mile track. He drove the first race stint in the "gold car", backed by Exchange Traded Gold, Barrick Gold Corporation, RBC Financial Group and Telus' Mike Network. He lost and gained two positions at the start, then moved up to fourth through the first round of pitstops.

Unfortunately, he was judged to have made avoidable contact with another car, drawing a drive-through penalty that dropped him back to 11<sup>th</sup>. His attempt to regain track position was thwarted by an intermittent steering failure that took him off track. Brian Frisselle of Lynchburg, Va., took over at 1h6, but he, too, was zapped by the steering issue. Suspecting a component break in the steering rack, the team withdrew from the race and finished 15<sup>th</sup>.

### race report

car	time	driver	action
61	start	Wilkins	
	20m	Wilkins	pit – fuel
	35m	Wilkins	drive-through penalty for avoidable contact
	1h03	Wilkins	off-track turn 4, problem with steering rack
	1h06	change	pit – Frisselle in, four tires, fuel, front splitter repair
	1h22	Frisselle	off-track turn 6, problem with steering rack
	1h35	Frisselle	car retired from race

**Ian Willis, AIM co-owner:** "We thought the power steering was overheating, but a component in the steering rack was failing. The power steering was working overtime to try and keep up with it, so it was cutting in and out. We suspect a component broke in the steering rack."

**Brian Frisselle:** "The power steering was going in and out. It would lock turning left or lock turning right and then I couldn't get it to go back the other way. My dad was spotting for me to get me back in [to pit lane] and that was very helpful. I had to cross the track and then take a right and the car wouldn't turn right. It was like a jigsaw puzzle trying to figure it out."

**Mark Wilkins:** "Qualifying was pretty good. The session was cut a little bit short, but I went out and was able to get my quickest time on the one flyer lap. We needed a few more tenths to get up into the top five, which we might have been able to get to given a couple more laps. Overall, it wasn't bad; we started in a good spot."

"We had a problem with the steering rack, which ultimately locked up. I couldn't even steer the car. We weren't really sure where it was going to let go, so with the wall here and the banking, it was a bit of a hairy go. I went off in turn 4 – I turned left and the car wouldn't turn right again, so I just drove straight off. It was a frustrating one."

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