

Taking AIM at Watkins Glen

Team concentrates on the details for six hour race

Woodbridge, Ontario (June 3, 2008): Five races in the books, three top-ten results, five top-five qualifying results - including two front row starts and the AIM Autosport No. 61 Ford-Riley now tenth in the overall series championship. Not bad for the team's second year in the Rolex Grand Am Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16. Or so you might think. But ask anyone in the AIM Autosport shop and you'll get a slightly different perspective on the year. Everyone at AIM is expecting a podium, and it can't come too soon.

So far this year, the Exchange Traded Gold No. 61 Ford-Riley has been knocking on the door but the door has either been a bit stiff to push open and on occasion, has just been slammed shut. This weekend at the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen, AIM Autosport is hoping to finally knock the door off its hinges.

"We have led a number of times this year, including all four of our drivers leading at the Rolex 24" noted team principal Ian Willis, "and now we just need to work on leading that final lap. One thing is certain though, we have the car and the drivers to make that happen. The car is quick thanks to Ford power and Mark (Wilkins) and Brian (Frisselle) have been very consistent all season. We just need to work on the little details."

It is the little details that have caused the biggest heartache for the team in this very competitive series. Minor errors in the pits and on the track have caused the team to lose track position at the last two races.

"We are working on having better communication in the pit and with the drivers" commented AIM Daytona Prototype team manager Don Sobering. "Our stops are getting better every race but one misstep can cost you tenths - or more but we do not want to sacrifice accuracy for speed in the pits."

During the Six Hours at The Glen taking place this weekend (June 6 & 7) the focus will be on reliability rather than speed in the pits. This year the team is going with just two drivers rather than three. This puts a bit more pressure on driver fitness but both Mark and Brian have made this a priority.

"Dealing with the heat at Laguna made me very aware of my fitness level" offered Mark. "I made the decision before leaving the track that day that I needed to get to the gym on a regular basis to prepare for the long stints during the six hour race. Of course this can only help me in the long run, especially with a lot more races over the summer months."

Brian has been working out for other reasons. Specifically, he has been working on his pitching arm in preparation to throw out the first pitch at a Buffalo Bisons game - part of a pre-race promotion with Grand Am and Watkins Glen International. Baseball aside, Brian had this to say about the race,

"I am very excited for the upcoming race at Watkins Glen. I really enjoy the longer races and the 6 hour at the Glen in one race I really want to win. The number 61

AIM Autosport Exchange Traded Gold car has been competitive all season and I know it will continue to be a front runner. The race should be very challenging because one thing that is for sure is the weather is unpredictable at Watkins Glen. It should be a great race!"

With the drivers fit and the crew focused, the rest of the equation falls to Ian Willis and race engineer Jim Malicki. The pair has been going over data and strategy to put the best plan into place for Watkins Glen.

"Our goal is to be there at the end" Willis said, "and we hope to be in the lead when the end comes."

Activities for the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen start Friday (6th) with practice and qualifying. The race begins at 11:15 a.m. on Saturday (7th) with the checkered flag falling at 5:15 p.m. The race will be broadcast live on SPEED TV starting at 11:00 a.m. SPEED will show the start of the race and resume broadcasting at 2:00 p.m. through to the checkered flag, (all times Eastern Time)