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SunTrust Keeps Championship Hopes Alive

Runner-Up Finish at Utah 250 Keeps Angelelli, Frisselle Within Eight Points As Championship Chase Heads to Season Finale at Homestead

(Tooele, Utah) 19 September 2009 - The good news for SunTrust Racing co-drivers Max Angelelli and Brian Frisselle after Saturday's runner-up finish in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series Utah 250: SunTrust's second series championship is very much within reach when the season comes to a close at Homestead-Miami Speedway three weeks hence.

The not-so-good news: the lone car to beat them across the finish line today was the championship-leading No. 99 Gainsco/Bob Stallings Racing Pontiac Riley of Alex Gurney and Jon Fogarty, which widened its lead in the standings from five to eight points and needs only a fourth-place finish or better at Homestead to clinch the title.

And so it was for the No. 10 SunTrust Ford Dallara of Wayne Taylor Racing, which Angelelli had to drive with a vengeance over the final two hours of today's 2-hour, 45-minute event around the mammoth 4.486-mile, 24-turn road circuit just to keep the competition - most notably defending series champion Scott Pruett - behind him. The SunTrust team started the day locked in a second-place tie with Pruett, his co-driver Memo Rojas and the No. 01 Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates team. Today's runner-up finish gave the SunTrust team a two-point edge over the Ganassi team heading to Homestead.

Angelelli did a masterful job of keeping Pruett behind him during the final hour, holding him off through three restarts but finding himself just not able to beat Gurney in the No. 99 car down the long front straightaway to the fast, left-hand turn one on all three occasions.

"You can trust me, we were all three pushing like crazy," Angelelli said. "We absolutely, for two hours, were like qualifying. This is the best I could do. I'm sure it's the same for the (No.) 99 and the (No.) 01. I have no doubt. I could see it in their eyes."

Gurney, who admitted turn one to be his car's "most vulnerable" segment on the racetrack, accelerated through the final turn and onto the front straight on the way to taking the green flag for all three restarts to help build a comfortable gap on Angelelli.

"If I was going to catch him, that was the only place I was going to catch him, as it turned out," Angelelli said. "Well, he figured out that I was pretty slow through the last corner, so he started accelerating before the last corner. Otherwise, if he was driving by the book, I would have overtaken him, for sure, for position No. 1. Unfortunately, he was pretty good in the last corner on the restarts, put a gap on me, and I couldn't do anything. I was better than him in the first corner after the start-finish line."

Angelelli's battle with Pruett, in the meantime, had its moments over the final hour. At one point, the two made contact, but Angelelli was able to continue in the second position.

"I braked too late, locked up my four wheels and he tried to take advantage," Angelelli said. "It was fair. Obviously, I have to defend my position for the championship. He didn't put me at risk. It's always a pleasure to race with Scott (Pruett), especially when I win. Now, if we want to win the championship at Homestead, we're going to have to win the race. We have pretty much no other option."

Frisselle, who joined Angelelli this season and co-drove to victories at the July 4 Daytona event and three weeks ago at Montreal, and six podium finishes in all, did his best to keep pace in the early going with not only Fogarty but a fast-starting No. 12 Penske Racing Porsche Riley of Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas. Frisselle, who qualified and started fourth, got by Rojas in the Ganassi car for third by the third lap but could not close a 10-second gap to Fogarty and Bernhard racing in first and second ahead of him.

"Everything was good," Frisselle said. "I had a decent start, but Memo (Rojas) got the position into turn one. I couldn't really contest it because he had a good run. And then, as the stint went on, I was able to get a good run on him and was able to overtake him. But I really couldn't hunt down Jon (Fogarty) and Timo (Bernhard). They were really fast and I was struggling with oversteer. It was pretty uncomfortable throughout my stint. But the team did a great job. They called an awesome race. And Max did an excellent job bringing the car home in second. It's just tight. All three cars are really strong, all great drivers. We'll just have to get it done at Homestead."

Team owner Wayne Taylor, who co-drove with Angelelli to SunTrust's last Rolex Series championship in 2005, was philosophical about the outcome of today's event and felt encouraged that the championship this season is very much within reach.

"We were tied for second place coming in," Taylor said. "We needed to be ahead of the (No.) 99 car. We just couldn't match them today, but we were ahead of the (No.) 01. So now, the (No.) 01 has dropped to third, and we are second. It's going to be tough, obviously, because of the gap in the points (to the No. 99). But it's not over. We're second in the championship. We just have to keep working. Brian did a good

job this weekend. Max did a good job. The team was fantastic. There was absolutely nothing else we could've done. That's what we had. The (No.) 99 was quicker, and that was it. The good thing is we have a shot at it at Homestead."

The 2009 Rolex Series season concludes in three weeks with the Grand Prix of Miami at Homestead-Miami Speedway. The 2-hour, 30-minute race is set for Saturday, Oct. 10, and runs in conjunction with the Indy Racing League season finale that evening. Rolex Series race time is 1 p.m. EDT with SPEED-TV carrying all the action live.

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