

Michael Shank Racing Qualifies on Third Row at Barber Motorsports Park

Michael Shank Racing Media Contact: □Matt Cleary, Sunday Group Management
media@sundaymanagement.com □317.908.2975 (mobile)

Tune In: Porsche 250 (SPEED, Saturday, 1:30 PM ET).

LEEDS, AL (9 April 2010)-Michael Shank Racing will start Saturday's Porsche 250 from the third and fifth rows as the team looks to make the most of round three of the GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal 2010 championship at Barber Motorsports Park.

Brian Frisselle will start the No. 6 The Pit Stop at Norris Lake Ford-Riley from sixth on the grid after setting a fast time of 1:20.518 seconds, with John Pew setting a personal best lap time of 1:21.618 seconds with the Crown Royal XR Ford-Riley on the 2.3-mile circuit outside of Birmingham to secure ninth on the grid.

The team is targeting a return to the podium at Barber Motorsports Park and extending its run of top-three finishes at the Alabama track.

"We aren't exactly where we were hoping to be at this point," said team owner Mike Shank. "But we know what we need to do with both cars to be ready for the race. John did a great job, particularly since he had no radio and we're really happy with the job he did with the Crown Royal car today. Brian just didn't have the grip that he needed, so the guys will be working hard to find a little more speed out of both these cars, so hopefully we can come up with some small changes to put us closer to the front."

Pew's session was indeed compromised when his radio didn't fully engage, locking him out of communication from the team. But his working relationship with co-driver Ozz Negri made it much less of an issue, as Negri's normal on-radio coaching was having its desired effect despite the communications issue.

"Even though I couldn't hear him in my headset--I could hear him in my head!" said Pew, who qualified 10th at the track last year on his way to a podium finish. "We work really hard on getting the car set up for the conditions, and Ozz is a great driver coach so I could hear his advice on every corner, even though he wasn't actually getting through on the radio. The car is great--I'm very happy not only with how it felt in qualifying, but I also think that we will have a very good race car once the race starts so I'm excited to get the race started tomorrow."

Frisselle, who qualified third at the track last year, was disappointed not to be able to match that pace as he looks to keep the streak of podiums for Michael Shank Racing at the track going in the 2.75 hour race on Saturday afternoon. As the team looks to make changes to the car, there is an extra challenge at hand as the combined race weekend schedule with the IZOD IndyCar Series will see the GRAND-AM runners not return to track action until the field prepares to take the green flag for the race.

The track will also likely have a different set of characteristics, as the smooth pavement takes on the rubber from the Indy Lights and IndyCar series runners, in the meantime.

"We struggled with overall grip today, so we were just a little bit off of where we needed to be with the car," said Frisselle, who put the time between races to good use by traveling to Vancouver and entering some kart races with Valiante. "We were losing ground in the long-duration corners, so that hurt us. The car is balanced-no big issues on that side but we just need to be making more grip. It will be interesting to see what this track is like after the IndyCar guys run today and tomorrow, but I guess we will find out once the race starts!"

Saturday's race is slated to take the green flag at 12:30 PM local time, with SPEED bringing live coverage.



About Michael Shank Racing:

Based in Columbus, Ohio, Michael Shank Racing was formed in 1989 when Mike 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. Michael Shank Racing joined the Rolex Sports Car Series in 2004 as the team proved as quick in endurance racing as in the sprint formula car format. Michael Shank Racing scored a debut Rolex Series win in 2006 at Miller Motorsports Park, and fans selected the victory as the 2007 Rolex "Moment of the Year." After opening the 2008 season with a front-row sweep of the Rolex 24 At Daytona, the team closed out the year taking wins in the final two races of the year.



About Crown Royal Canadian Whisky:

Crown Royal Canadian whisky is the number one selling Canadian whisky brand in the US by value and has a tradition as long and distinctive as its taste. Specially blended to commemorate a grand tour of Canada made by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain in 1939, Crown Royal Canadian whisky's smooth, elegant style reflects its aristocratic origins and is considered the epitome of Canadian whisky.

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