



## Michael Shank Racing Takes 3rd at Lime Rock Park

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LAKEVILLE, Conn. (31 May 2010)-With fast cars and strong finishes, Michael Shank Racing's debut visit to Lime Rock Park for the GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series round five was a memorable one.

The Memorial Day Classic event was a whirlwind day, with three practice sessions ahead of qualifying at noon, with the 2.75-hour race taking the green flag at 2:00 PM. The team didn't unload with the pace that had been shown in previous testing at the track, but stayed focused and kept improving in the race.

That focus on improvement produced in some positive results, as Michael Valiante and Brian Frisselle scored a season-best result of third in the No. 6 CAP & Associates Ford-Riley.

The sister No. 60 Crown Royal XR Ford-Riley of John Pew and Oswaldo Negri finished seventh after posting some of the fastest laps of the race. The Crown Royal machine's efforts were hampered when a tire went down, and forced Negri one lap down. But his speed could not be denied as he raced his way past the leader late in the event, only to run out of laps before he could move up further.

"Brian did a great job to drive a car that wasn't the best and still be right in the mix up front, and Michael just kept that going when the track cooled," said team owner Mike Shank. "Ozz did a great job--fought all the way back from nearly two laps down, and was faster than the leader at the end. This day didn't start like we were hoping that it would, but to get the 6 car on the podium with CAP & Associates on board is great and its a welcome boost in the points. We also have two cars without a scratch on them, so now we can turn around and focus on getting both cars on the podium at the Glen."

Frisselle got a good start and stayed in the lead pack of four on the tight circuit, which attracted a good crowd on the hillsides for the first-ever running of a combined GT and Daytona Prototype race at Lime Rock Park. Frisselle turned the car over to Valiante on the lead lap during the second pit stop, with the Canadian ace keeping the car at the sharp end of the pack, charging to third place at the finish.

"It was a crazy race!" said Valiante. "The car was the best its been in a long time. As the car rubbered up, the grip got better through the run. Overall it was such a big improvement over what we've had. It's great

to be this competitive. It was good right from my first lap in the car, but stayed consistent and even got better. There were lots of close calls and some moments where I could have pushed harder but I just wanted to bring it home. We've had a tough time the last couple of races so its great to get some momentum and get on the podium so the team is very happy. We have had cars to have much better results than we have, so hopefully we can have a run of podiums and win a race before the year is out."

"It's amazing, it just shows you can never give up," said Friselle about a day that started slow, but kept improving. "This is a great team, and we had great pit stops and they called a great strategy. And thats why we are up here. Michael drove the wheels off the thing, and it shows that in this series even if you don't feel like you have the car to drive, you just have to put your head down and keep fighting. Hopefully we can turn this into some good momentum and pick up more points at Watkins Glen."

The sister Crown Royal XR utilized a different pit strategy, as Pew turned the machine over to Negri during a fast pit stop after an opening stint in the top ten.

"The car was even better than it had been in qualifying but things were getting slippery in the heat, no question," said Pew. "You had to be very careful about getting on the marbles off-line passing GT cars so that was a bit of a challenge. It was too bad about the tire going down for Ozz because he was his normal fast self and just putting in some amazing laps today."

Looking to be set to go to the finish, Negri returned to the pits for fuel and two new tires while fighting in the top ten. Ready with fuel and Pirellis, the Brazilian was set to charge to the finish, only to have to make one extra, podium-thwarting pit stop for a tire going down. That set him up directly behind the race leader on a final restart. Showing a little bit of what could have been, Negri stalked and then passed the race leader as he posted some of the fastest laps of the race, moving up to take seventh at the finish.

"We knew coming into this race that this track would be a tough place for us with the short laps," said Negri. "But we are always competitive. We worked very hard through the practices to make changes and get faster for the race. The puncture was what really effected our race today. We were very quick-you could see that very clearly. We passed the leader. You don't want to mess up anyones race, but you have to fight all the way to the finish. I had to fight to get on the lead lap, just in case. The track came to us a little bit when it got cooler and the car was very fast. Seventh is not bad, and we'll just carry on and look to do a better job at Watkins Glen."

Don Hutchings and Mark Patterson were both on hand at Lime Rock Park to support the team, which will travel directly to Watkins Glen International to prepare for Sahlen's Six Hour race on Saturday for round six of the 2010 championship. Heading into the event, the unofficial points have both team entries slotted into 4th in the championship standings.

Source: [www.michaelshankracing.com](http://www.michaelshankracing.com)  
[www.sundaymanagement.com](http://www.sundaymanagement.com)



#### **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:**

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