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## Michael Shank Racing Sahlen's Six Hour Watkins Glen Report

Watkins Glen, New York (5 June 2010)-Michael Shank Racing driver Michael Valiante emerged without injury from a frightening fire during Saturday's Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen. The car was running in top-ten position late in the event as Valiante was set to close the race after strong drives from fellow pilots Mark Patterson and Brian Frisselle. The sister No. 60 Crown Royal XR Ford Riley of Ozz Negri and John Pew finished the race in eighth after completing 190 laps at the classic up state New York track.

Team owner Mike Shank began making plans for a recovery even before the checkered flag fell.

"I am not sure what we are going to do just yet, because the car is probably too damaged for our home race at Mid-Ohio," said Shank. "We had a solid day going with both cars, and some great driving from our guys, all around. This is a big hit to take, but we will work on finding a way to be back on track, whatever we can do to make that happen. The biggest thing is that Michael got out of the car without getting hurt."

"The motor was going away, and we were struggling with power," said Valiante to the SPEED broadcast. "It caught on fire almost faster than I could get out of the car. I'm lucky to get out as quickly as I did. It's a shame because the Michael Shank Racing guys work so hard. The flames were everywhere and the car got really hot, very fast."

Deepening the disappointment was the strong pace shown by the No. 6 CAP & Associates drivers before the day ended in a ball of flames.

"I'm thankful that Michael got out of the car safely. The car was really consistent, and I was able to run it on the limit the entire time," said Frisselle. "That's the only way you can be competitive in this series, being on the limit, all the time. I have to hand it to the Shank guys for having another great car for us today. Mark and Michael did a great job. I couldn't believe the amazing lap times that Mark was throwing down. It was a great effort."

The weekend marked the return to race action for Patterson, who was enthusiastic about his stint after going to work in the middle stages of the race.

"It was great to be back with the entire Michael Shank Racing team-the crew, Mike, all the guys, this was just fantastic," said Patterson after his stint. "Man, this car was beautiful--full tanks, and even with cold tires, I could still do a decent out lap. The car let me do it. When we restarted

with all these wonderful pro drivers in front and behind us--Every trick I thought I had to throw at them, I think they had all learned them years ago! So I just tucked in and followed them and was able to set some nice laps. We took off some aero, it was a great decision. It was fabulous into the bustop, you could brake really late with the way the wind was there. And then Bang! Back on the accelerator. This car was awesome. It was great to be back!"

Negri and Pew were one of the few two-man driving teams, bringing memories of Negri's debut win with Patterson at Miller Motorsports Park. The Crown Royal XR had a stout outing, working to recover from a caution period scoring issue that saw the car having to fight from one lap down.

"The car was very good," said Negri. "I was running qualifying laps from start to finish in my stint. It was tough with no yellows, just relentless." said Negri. "We need to see what happened with the wave-by on the yellow flag because we lost a lap with that and we didn't think that should have happened. But we fought for everything we could get today. John didn't put a wheel wrong all day. I put my whole heart into driving this car today. I'm relieved that Michael is ok after that fire. That was horrible to drive by and see your team car like that. We will be fighting back at Mid-Ohio."

The six hour race was originally suspected to be a very wet affair, but the weather held off early in the race, only to come into play some ninety minutes into the race, giving the drivers another challenge on the long Grand Prix circuit.

"It's obviously a shame about what happened with the six car today, just such a hard thing for this team that works so hard. At least Michael was ok," said Pew about his old co-driver. "As far as my time out there, I had a blast. It was really challenging, with the rain being harder in different parts of the track, and almost dry in others, so it was different every lap. It was just like driving my go-kart, sliding around everywhere but it was fun. Hopefully the team can find a solution with the six car and we can have a strong race for the entire team at Mid-Ohio."

The team will announce plans for the EMCO Gears Classic at Mid-Ohio early this week. Thanks to the outreach of support and offers of help from competitors in the GRAND-AM paddock in the aftermath of the incident.