

**AIM Autosport comes back to finish fifth at Lime Rock
Team recovers from accident in qualifying to run at the front.**

Lakeville, Connecticut (2010.05.31) AIM Autosport arrived at Lime Rock Park this morning all set for a good day. In the end it turned out not too badly but there were some twists and turns along the way. The single-day event in Lakeville, Connecticut would prove to be a bit of a challenge as everything the team learned in a test here back in April was thrown out the window as weather conditions were drastically different, so it was back to square one.

The team put in some good times in the morning session with Mark Wilkins getting the bulk of the track time as for the next three races, he will be taking the final stint while Burt Frisselle takes over the duties of qualifying the Pacific Mobile No 61 Ford Riley. AIM's engineers came up with a plan for the car and with a very short window between first and second, made some changes for Burt to run during the short fifteen-minute session and get the car set up for qualifying. In qualifying, Burt would set his fast time early, a 49.541 at 109.050 mph, good enough to start on the third row (6th) for the race and that proved to be a good thing when, as Burt put it, "I was pushing really hard", he spun off the track at West Bend and did some significant damage to the car.

"The car was great and I was pushing to get a better time", Burt said, "but it was just a bit too much and off I went catching the tire wall quite heavily. There was damage to the splitter, nose and right front suspension. I just could not believe what had happened. The crew had given me a great car which they would now have to put back together in a very short window before the race."

With less than two hours to get the car to the grid for the race, the AIM Autosport crew furiously set about getting repairs done to the front end. It was quite something to see the Pacific Mobile No 61 Ford Riley roll to the grid and ready to take its position on the third row for the start.

"The guys did an awesome job getting us back in this thing", exclaimed Burt. "I really put the entire crew to the test today and they delivered in a big way. Now it was up to me to get the car to the front and reward them for all that effort."

Burt did manage to put the car up into third spot by lap two and just before the first of five cautions on the day. The team completed its mandatory pit stop under yellow and Burt would rejoin the race in ninth place. For the next forty laps, Burt would be battling hard on the very tight circuit that required a great deal of patience to work your way through traffic. Never more than a second behind the next prototype in line, Burt worked his way up, eventually settling into third place and closing on the leaders. By lap seventy-three, Burt had the No. 61 in a solid second place when the next caution would set the tone for Mark's stint. Burt brought the car in from the second position and the leader's margin all but evaporated under the yellow. Mark was back on track in third place.

Twelve laps later and Mark was up to second place and the team's strategy seemed to be going in their favor. Just eight tours later, on lap ninety-nine, Mark moved into first place. He would lead for twenty laps, his closest threat only once coming within a second of him (.962) for one lap and he generally had a three to five second cushion.

The gap to second was almost thirteen seconds when it all went wrong. Another car had lost a wheel out on the circuit and before the team could call Mark in under the green for his final stop, the race went to a full course caution and the pits were closed. Now the field was bunched up behind Mark and the team would have to pit under yellow which would cost them track position.

"We made a mistake on that call", offered Team Principal Ian Willis. "We had been discussing stopping under green which would have given us good track position going out because of the lead Mark had at the time. We saw the car lose its wheel and basically, we hesitated on the call. It was a miscommunication that we feel cost us a podium today. Tough as it is, that's racing."

At the green, Mark was in eighth and once again fighting in four and five-car battles for position. He would make his way forward, eventually to sit fifth following a long fight with the No. 99 car. Two more cautions slowed the pace and eventually, the race ran out of time and the Pacific Mobile No. 61 Ford Riley would come across the line in fifth place.

"Even though we knew we had a podium car today, we will happily take fifth place considering where we started the day", commented Wilkins. "We came off the truck slow and then made some major changes to help with qualifying. Burt did a great job there but then we had the setback with the accident. But as Burt said, this is a real testament to the entire AIM crew for getting this car rebuilt and making sure not only that it would hold together, but that it could still run at the front - and that it did!"

He continued, "The call on the pit stop was unfortunate but again, that's racing. Sometimes it goes your way, other times not but we stayed in the fight and even had some tense moments when we had to go wheel-to-wheel with the No. 99 late in the race. But that too just shows how well the guys put this car back together and that we could still be racing to the end. Now we head to The Glen with a car we know is fast and is going to roll off the truck ready to race."

After the race, Ian Willis commented, "Everyone did a great job today. The crew kept us in this race by never giving up after the car was damaged this morning and the drivers just kept attacking which was a difficult proposition on this short, tight circuit. We did our best to give Mark and Burt a good car and they did their best by putting it at the front and everyone on the team can be proud of the result."

With the fifth-place finish, the team remains eleventh overall in the series championship but has closed the points gap. Mark and Burt remain third overall in the drivers championship.

The GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 now heads to Watkins Glen, New York for the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen on Saturday, June 5th. The race will be broadcast live in two, two-hour segments on SPEED TV starting at 2:00 p.m and 6:00 p.m. ET. The entire race will be carried live on MRN (Motor Racing Network) affiliates on the Sirius Satellite Network.

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AIM Autosport Facts:

Established in 1995, AIM Autosport's mandate is to identify, train and manage emerging motorsport talent. AIM has provided many young drivers with a solid foundation on which to build a career in professional racing. The success of the AIM driver development programs has been achieved through the dedication of our employees and the ongoing support of our commercial and technical partners. Away from the track, AIM Autosport serves the needs of the racing community with a purpose-built preparation shop situated in the Toronto suburb of Woodbridge, Ontario. AIM fields the No. 61 Ford Riley with drivers Mark Wilkins and Burt Frisselle in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series. The team also competes in the Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear and the Cooper Tires presents the USF2000 Series powered by Mazda. Both series are an integral part of the new Road to Indy driver development series. AIM won the 2008 Star Mazda Championship with driver John Edwards.

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