

**AIM Autosport fights back to fourth at The Glen**  
**After six hours of racing it comes down to less than half a second.**

Watkins Glen, New York (2010.06.06) From first practice on Friday morning, everything was going in the right direction for AIM Autosport and the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley and right through the checkered flag for the Sahlen's Six Hours of The Glen, things continued to go well. At the end of two full days of practice and competition, the team left Watkins Glen with a strong gain in points in the GRAND-AM Rolex Sports car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16. They also gained confidence in their chances of stepping on the podium a few more times this year when at the end of this six-hour 'sprint', they would miss a third-place finish by less than half a second after taking a calculated gamble on the final pit stop.

Quick throughout all the practice sessions, Burt Frisselle and Mark Wilkins seemed poised for a good run in the race and they did not disappoint. Burt started by putting the car on the second row for the start having qualified third on Friday afternoon. In fact, he was just one-tenth of a second from putting the car on the front row and the speed of the car and the determination of the drivers showed as Burt slotted into the third position from the start and then started to pull away from the rest of the field along with the leaders. Burt would hold that position comfortably through the first forty-five minute segment of the race leading up to the mandatory pit stop. He continued to reel off fast laps for the car and even had to contend with a sudden downpour that affected only parts of the racing circuit. Burt would even extend his lead over the fourth-place car during the rain showers.

Burt brought the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley in at the forty-two minute mark and the car took on a fresh set of Pirelli P-Zero tires, a full load of fuel and a new driver. Mark Wilkins was now at the controls and he was back on track in fourth place. Early in his stint, the skies opened up again and the track became a bit treacherous for a few laps. Mark would move to third briefly when the No. 90 car ahead spun, but he was being cautious, as the track was quite slick and the No. 10 car snuck past. As Mark was making the call to possibly come in to switch to rain tires, the skies cleared and the track dried very quickly. Other than a few sprinkles, the race would stay dry for the duration.

On a dry track, Mark would set fast laps for the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley until the first caution came on lap sixty-six, exactly two hours into the race. Mark would pit and hand the car back to Burt who would go back on track in third place. Burt would now be in the car for a double stint.

The race settled into a rhythm with Burt once again in control of third place. At the end of three hours of racing the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley remained third and on lap ninety-nine, Burt would set the car's fastest lap of the race, a 1:42.225 at 119.735 miles per hour. A lap later and he is in the pits for fuel following the same strategy as the leaders. Burt returns to the track in fourth as the new leader was on a different strategy but they would soon have to come in and Burt would get down the front straight before the other car could exit the pits. The Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley is back to third but with the No. 10 close on his heels. A fourteen lap battle ended with Burt getting held up by a back marker and dropping back to fourth. But the race was coming up to the four hour mark and cars would soon be coming in for fuel and tires.

Burt had a very strong stint in the car but after two hours on a humid day with 81F (27C) ambient temperatures, he was ready to get out and hand the car off to Mark to finish the race.

"The car was just great", Frisselle said after his stint. "Ian and Jim have given Mark and I another great car that we can race at the front and the entire crew has done a fantastic job on the car preparation and in the pit stops. We have been in the top five all weekend long and it has a lot to do with the guys behind the wall." He continued, "We had some tough battles out there in the last couple of hours but we are still in contention. I'm not sure if we haven't enough for the 01, although I'm not sure anyone does, but with the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley, we have a car that can be on the podium. Now we settle in for the final two hours and see what happens."

The handoff to Mark came under the second full course caution of the race and with the leaders in the pits, Mark was able to leapfrog back into third as the crew put in a great stop while the car they were battling had a slight hiccup that would give Mark track position. Mark would now settle into third place and the team began to work strategy for the final stop. Up to this point of the race, there had been only two caution periods and it looked like things would continue that way. Mark held off a charging No. 99 to control third place while chasing down the No. 10 and a shot at the second step of the podium. But all the teams would need another pit stop before the end of the race.

With about one hour and ten minutes to go, the race would have its third caution. With all the cars coming to pit lane and taking into consideration there had been fewer cautions than expected, AIM decided to get as much fuel in the car as possible to get it to the end of the race under green flag conditions. The seconds ticked away as the rest of the field all seemed to be taking on less fuel and gaining track position. It seemed that everyone was gambling, but with a different strategy. Mark lost two positions in the pits, the only time the car would fall out of the top five all day. But if the race stayed green, the rest would almost certainly have to come in for a splash of fuel to get to the end making AIM's decision to go for a full fuel load seem like the right one.

Mark passed the No. 6 to get into the top five and was chasing down the No. 90 when a full course caution came for a fire at the entrance to pit lane. The six-lap caution was enough to give those who might have short-filled a bit of a breather. Now Mark would have to focus on moving up one car at a time. He did report in that, "The car feels great" and he was on a charge when the race went green. Luck was on AIM's side when the No. 99 had a spin from third place and fall back, elevating the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley to fourth.

For the final fifteen laps Mark was on the bumper of the No. 90 crossing the line each time no more than one or two tenths back. "I tried everything to get around him", Mark commented after the race. "I had the car sideways through the turns trying to carry more speed, but it was just not meant to be. As they say, it is one thing to catch the car ahead and something else altogether trying to get past. Antonio (Garcia) drove a great race and I could not push him into making a mistake."

The race would end after one hundred and ninety-one laps with Mark bringing the Pacific Mobile/Biosign No. 61 Ford Riley across the line in fourth place just four-tenths of a second out of third.

Both Mark and Burt had nothing but praise for the crew and the excellent work they did to once again give them a front-running car on back-to-back race weekend.

On his way back to the trailer after the race, Team Principal Ian Willis commented, "It is heartbreaking to be so close and just miss the podium like that. We made a call on fuel strategy that, up to that point seemed like the right thing to do. The race had every indication it would go green for the duration but as we all know, anything can happen." He continued, "Despite that, we were still in the battle to the end and Mark put in an amazing effort and was so close at the end. Burt's stints were equally amazing and he kept us in this race fighting through every corner and his double stint coming after only a short break. The effort by everyone on the team and the final result just gives us more drive and focus as we head into the next race."

With the fourth-place result, the team has moved into a three-way tie for eighth in the series championship and just four points out of sixth. Burt and Mark have fallen to fourth in the driver's championship by three points but the gap has closed to second place. There are six races left in the series.

The GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series presented by Crown Royal Cask No. 16 now heads to the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio for the EMCO Gears Classic on June 18 and 19. That race will be broadcast live on SPEED TV starting at 5:00 p.m and 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.

Photo Credit: Chris Jameson

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