

AIM Autosport finishes 11th at Daytona

Seven laps lost while crash damage repaired

Woodbridge, Ont. (July 5, 2010) — AIM Autosport's Pacific Mobile/Biosign Ford Riley Daytona Prototype sports car finished 11th on Saturday in the Brumos Porsche 250 held at Daytona International Speedway. The team was knocked out of contention following the first pit stop when contact resulted in damage and a lengthy pitstop for repairs. The 11th-place finish dropped drivers Mark Wilkins and Burt Frisselle to third in the championship, 22 points behind the leaders.

Following Friday morning's practice and qualifying sessions, the team openly hoped for rain as a lack of time at Daytona this season hindered their dry set up. The crew made changes during the afternoon and hoped they'd found the solution. On Saturday morning when the car went out for final practice, there was, unfortunately, little joy.

As the 11:15am start approached, it was 79°F and cloudy. Wet tires were close at hand as the possibility of rain was forecast.

As the qualifying driver, Mark was in the car for the start of the 2h 30m race. Initially losing a place, Mark slotted into 6th and hounded car 77 for several laps until managing to complete a pass.

On lap 14, the first caution of the day sent most teams scurrying for the pits. After taking on fuel and tires, mark exited the pit and headed back toward the track on the inside lane of the pit exit. Car 01, on the outside, moved across, clipping and completely removing the nose of the AIM car. A few moments later the cars touched again, causing additional front-end damage to the AIM car.

To make things worse, Mark had to stay out of the pits while the GT class finished its stops. Finally, he came in for repairs, steam shooting from the car's exposed and damaged radiator.

Mark sat in the pits for nearly 12 minutes while the crew made repairs. When he headed back to the track he trailed the entire field—including the GT cars—7 laps behind the leaders.

Electing to treat the race as a test session, the team began to make progress finding the elusive dry set up and when Mark handed the car over to Burt on lap 34, Burt found the car had improved.

During the final stop for fuel and pressure-adjusted tires, Burt finally had the car to post front-running laps. There was nothing to be done about the 7-lap deficit, but the team's perseverance paid off and when the checkered flag flew after 83 laps they had moved up to 11th in the Daytona Prototype class.

"We came into the weekend in a strong points position and left with a poor result." said Mark. "Contact in the pits and unnecessary contact on track put us out of contention. I owe my team an apology for making a poor decision on track which cost us championship points.

"I'm eager to get to New Jersey where we have been quite strong in the past. Thanks to all of our fans and supporters. We will look forward to getting back on track and continuing to fight for a win."

"I was really disappointed in our result at Daytona," said Burt. "We missed a great opportunity for another podium finish. Mark and the 01 were racing hard out of their pit boxes and it is unfortunate that the damage cost us several laps. I can't wait to get to New Jersey and put this race behind us as I feel we will be contending for the win and working to make up lost ground in the points championship."

"Missing the Rolex 24 and the test sessions at Daytona is what really cost us," said Ian Willis, chief engineer and AIM Autosport principal. "The race was our test session and, by the end of it, our pace was where it needed to be."

Next on the schedule is the NJMP 250 presented by Crown Royal at 1:00pm on July 18 at New Jersey Motorsports Park. The race will be broadcast live on SPEED (television) and MRN (radio).

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AIM Autosport

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 Autosport 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. For more information about AIM Autosport, visit www.aimautosport.com.

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