

Lloyd Battles Through Troubles At Chicago

Clerical Medical backed 21 year old Alex Lloyd completed the final round of the Indy Pro Series at Chicagoland Speedway on September 9th.

Alex ran in 2 good practice sessions on Friday 8th, primarily trying to gain as much experience as possible in traffic on the oval, to enable him to use his knowledge in the race and ensure the car worked well in the draft, which is the most important thing on this 1.5 mile track. Upon qualifying, where the drivers run one at a time, Alex and the team ran a quick lap and qualified a creditable 4th on the grid.



"Qualifying went well" proclaimed Alex. "We have been concentrating primarily on a good race set up and a car that worked well in the draft. This 2nd row starting position is very encouraging. I definitely feel we have a good shot at getting our 3rd win in 9 races tomorrow."

On race day, as Alex sat on the grid ready to exit the pits for the warm up lap, he found he had some problems with his radio and was unable to communicate with the team or most importantly with his spotter. As the warm up lap continued, Alex's dash on the steering wheel froze, and so had no lights on the steering wheel to let him know which gear he was in or how many revs he was pulling. This made for an extremely tough race and it meant Alex had to drive the race car based on feel alone and use his mirrors the best he could. As the race started Alex quickly moved into 2nd position. With his mirrors vibrating, distorting the image of the chasing pack, and Alex unable to see challenging cars in the blind spot, he raced hard fighting in the lead pack 2 and 3 wide at close to 200mph. As a caution period came out for an accident this gave Alex an opportunity to glance at the scoring tower to see how many laps there were to go. On the restart Alex struggled getting the optimum start as he was unable to see the revs and when to shift up through the gears causing him to hit the limiter. This dropped him to 6th with 1 lap to go. As the cars exited turn 2 Alex got a good run around the outside of turn 3 and 4 crossing the line in a hard fought 4th place, delivering yet another good result for both himself and the team.

"That was so much fun and yet so irritating at the same time" smiled Alex. "On an oval such as Chicago where cars are running 3 wide it is crucial to have a working radio to hear your spotter letting you know where the other cars are in relation to you, and also when you are clear of a car so you can change your line. To make matters worse, not knowing my revs and having all my dash lights frozen meant I found it very hard to make sure I was in the optimum gear, and most importantly get clean restarts. I think that was what cost us the chance of the win today because we had a great car. Nevertheless, the weekend went very well for us. We have missed 3 of the 6 oval races this year and also the oval tests, so we really were punching well above our weight this weekend. The whole team should be very proud of the job they have done this race and indeed throughout the whole year. It is a shame we missed 3 of the 12 rounds this season as we would have been in with a shot of the championship for sure, but coming away with 2 wins and plenty of other good results is great for me and great for the team."



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