

Lloyd Dominates At Sonoma

Isle of Man driver, Alex Lloyd dominated in Sonoma at the Infineon Raceway (Sears Point) in the Indy Pro Series on the 26th and 27th August double header weekend.

Due to the hectic schedule there was no practice session, and straight into the first of the two 45 minute qualifying sessions on Friday. Conditions were warm and dry, and Alex posted the quickest time for provisional pole in the first session at a 1 min 24.0. In qualifying session 2 times were a lot quicker and Alex unfortunately got held up in traffic on his new tyre lap which meant he failed to make the pole and so qualified on the front row in 2nd position for race 1 on Saturday. In addition, he had a gear problem.

"I am disappointed not to be on pole" claimed Alex. "We had the edge throughout both sessions until the last few minutes when I got blocked on my quick lap. Sometimes that's just the way it goes. On a track like this, where overtaking is near impossible, it's going to make it a lot tougher but I think we have the pace to win."

In race 1 Alex maintained his position at the start and immediately began hounding the race leader. Alex knew he had his work cut out, as this track is well known for being difficult to overtake. Despite giving it everything he had, Alex finished the race in 2nd place with the fastest lap of the race.

"I really wanted the win but on days like this where I gave it everything I had to make the pass, but there were no opportunities, we have to be content with 2nd," said Alex. "We were all over him, but on this track it is so hard to get by someone of a similar speed. Any other track I think we could have gotten the win, but without a mistake there was nothing I could do. The team did a great job, the car was really good but we just needed the pole."



Due to this weekend being a double header – two races on the same weekend - the top 6 places in race 1 were reversed for the grid for race 2. This meant that Alex would start race two in 5th position.

In the main race, Alex made a fantastic start from the 3rd row and almost took the lead going into the flat out turn 1, but the car on pole squeezed a fast-approaching Alex to the wall forcing him to back off and drop to 6th.

Alex then took 5th round the outside of turn 2. He dived into 4th going into turn 5, and then claimed 3rd into turn 6.

"Because the race was early morning the track temperature was very low and therefore the track

was very slippery. This gave me the chance to take advantage of others being cautious and make some aggressive passing manoeuvres," explained Alex. "It was a spectacular opening lap!"

On lap 4 Alex dived down the inside of the 2nd place car into the final hairpin. With just one car left and Alex all over the gearbox of the leader, a caution period came.

Alex made a superb restart on lap 9, and took the lead around the outside of turn 1 rounding off a sensational first 10 laps.

With no one else seemingly able to make any overtaking moves, Alex quickly pulled a huge gap on the chasing cars. Within 10 laps the gap had grown to 8 seconds. For the remaining laps, Alex settled his pace and nursed the tyres, making sure the number 26 AFS Racing machine crossed the finishing line in 1st place after a dominating performance, to provide Alex and the team with their 2nd victory of the season.

“What a day,” beamed Alex. “I had the best car out there, I took chances when they came, and pushed like hell for the first 10 laps.



To pass on this track in dry conditions is almost impossible in evenly-matched cars, but in the slippery conditions we faced at the start, you have to take risks and go by feel. I was so desperate to win that I did whatever it took to get into the lead. From then on I had such a good car I could just drive at 80% and was still able to pull away comfortably from the pack.

The difference today was that the track was so slippery it produced those rare opportunities to pass - I think I was the only driver to maximize those opportunities. I must say a huge thank you to everyone at AFS Racing. These guys work so incredibly hard and it's great to be able to repay them with a win as convincing as this one was.”

With one race left in the series, the championship heads to the 1.5mile oval at Chicago for the season finale on 9th September.

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